

**THIS LAND IS OUR PLACE:
PROPERTY OWNERS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LAND
IN THE GREATER PARK ECOSYSTEM
OF
ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK**

By

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ABSTRACT

St. Lawrence Islands National Park (SLINP) is one of Canada's smallest national parks. In order to secure a future for biodiversity, Parks Canada must therefore work beyond the park's boundaries to engage area residents in conservation on private lands. Despite an increasing understanding of the distribution of species and habitat in the region surrounding SLINP, Parks Canada still has limited insight into the landowners upon whom conservation efforts depend. This study employed interviews with owners of large (>50 acre) parcels in areas of interest for conservation and a hermeneutic methodology to explore the dimensions of landowners' relationships to the land. Findings suggest that landowners may adopt a land ethic when their values and connection to the land are threatened, but that their management actions are constrained by competing interests. Management recommendations are provided to assist Parks Canada in working with landowners towards a shared vision of conservation for the region.

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**“The battle to conserve biodiversity will be won or lost on the lands between
the protected spaces.”**

(G. Merriam, as cited in Hounsell, 1999, p.82)

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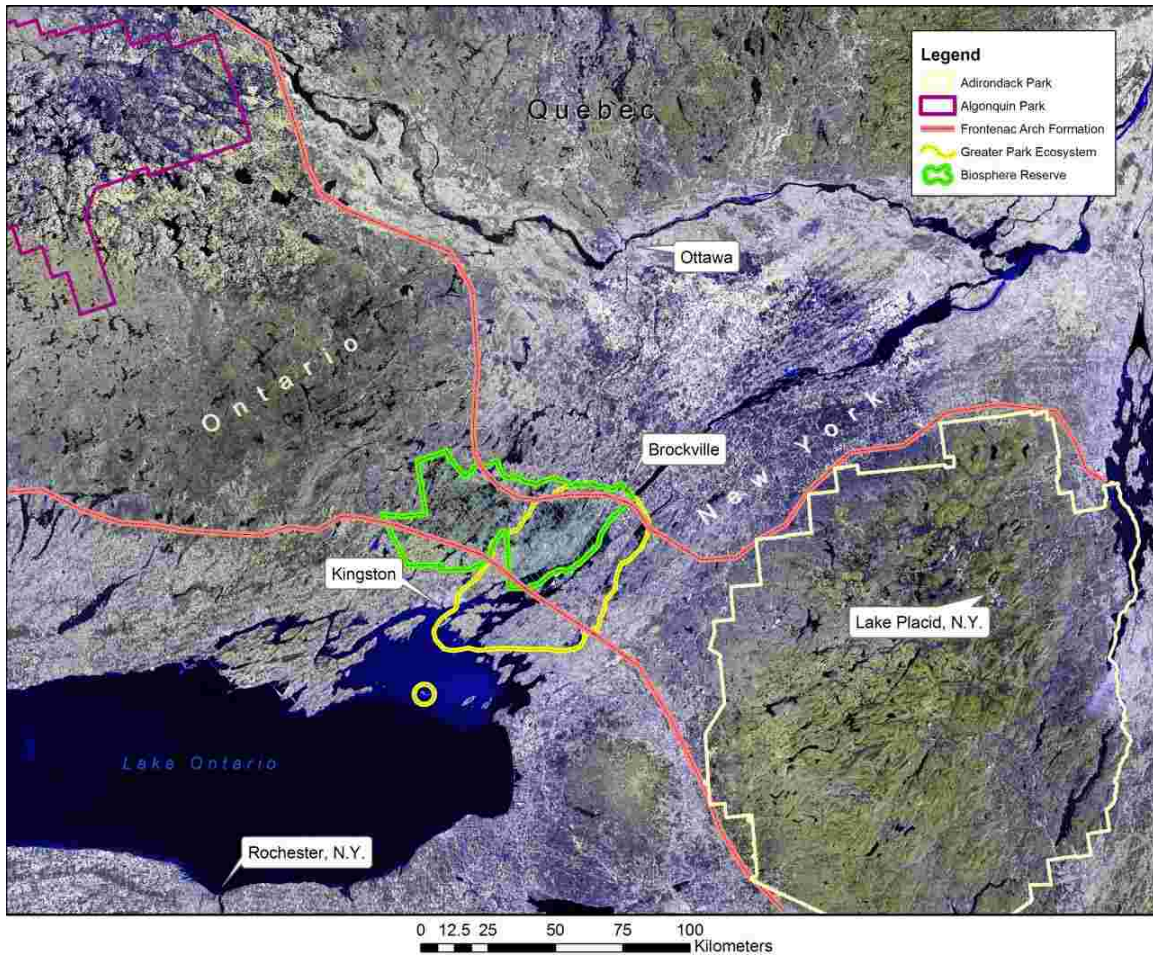
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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Research Setting

St. Lawrence Islands National Park (SLINP) consists of a suite of islands and several areas of the mainland along a 100 kilometre stretch of the St. Lawrence River between the towns of Kingston and Brockville in south-eastern Ontario (Francis & Leggo, 2004). The park is situated in an ecological transition zone, where five forest regions overlap (Carlson & Farr, 2006) and is located along the Frontenac Arch, a geological feature that links the Canadian Shield to the Adirondack dome in New York State (Figure 1; Parks Canada, 1998). The Arch, a north-south oriented granite ridge, is responsible for the region's rugged topography, making it unsuitable for agriculture. As a consequence, there has been less anthropogenic modification of the landscape than in most of southern Ontario (Francis & Leggo, 2004). As the Arch emerges from the St. Lawrence River, it also produces the "thousand islands" for which the area is renowned. Due to these biogeographical characteristics, the region has a high biodiversity, supports a range of habitats and species at risk, and acts as a key corridor for species movement (Carlson & Farr, 2006).

SLINP managers have identified a *greater park ecosystem* (GPE), an area of approximately 5,000 km² defined by watershed boundaries around the park where ecological drivers are of primary interest (Figure 1; Francis & Leggo, 2004). The Canadian portion of this area (3,000 km²) is the focus of interest for this study. The GPE includes a mosaic of human land use and natural vegetation, and is approximately 60% covered by forest, 5% by scrublands, 5% by wetlands, 15% by aquatic cover types, 10% by agriculture, and 5% by urban areas (Francis & Leggo, 2004). Habitat fragmentation



Greg Saunders, 2007

Figure 1. *Regional Setting of SLINP and the GPE*

due to ongoing residential development in the GPE is one of the key issues affecting the park's ecological integrity (Francis & Leggo, 2004).

SLINP is embedded in a landscape that features conservation initiatives at varying spatial scales and with varying degrees of protection. Only a small proportion (0.2%, or 120.4km²) of land in the GPE is under formal protection, including the national park, a provincial park, nature reserve, regional conservation authority and crown lands, and private property protected through some form of conservation agreement (Francis & Leggo, 2004). Private landowners, whose land donations and conservation agreements

are responsible for 15% of the protected land in the GPE (Francis & Leggo, 2004), are the primary land managers in the region.

At a broader scale, and beyond the boundaries of the GPE, the geological feature of the Frontenac Arch has become a symbolic and functional focus of conservation on an international scale. In 2002, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization designated the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (Figure 1; Parks Canada & Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association [CBRA], 2005). The Biosphere Reserve designation represents a community-level commitment to balance biodiversity needs with economic development (Parks Canada & CBRA, 2005). In addition to the Biosphere Reserve, with its focus on sustainable use, the Algonquin to Adirondack (A2A) Conservation Initiative extends the conservation effort across the international boundary in to the United States along the Frontenac Arch (Figure 1). The A2A initiative seeks to maintain ecological connectivity between Algonquin Provincial Park in Ontario and Adirondack State Park in New York State (Merriam 1995; Stephenson, 2001). SLINP is an important component of both the Biosphere Reserve and the A2A initiatives, as it acts as a core protected area in the regional landscape.

1.2 Landscape-Scale Conservation

Although protected areas offer an important means of conserving biodiversity, they cannot functionally achieve conservation objectives without working as part of a broader system (Brown & Mitchell, 2000), particularly when they are of limited size. Conservation of habitat in the matrix of private land outside protected areas has thus become a critical focus of conservation strategies (Brown & Mitchell, 2000), and is an increasingly urgent need for species at risk (Deguise & Kerr, 2006).

SLINP is among the smallest national parks in Canada, with recent land acquisitions bringing the total area to approximately 25 square kilometres (G. Saunders, personal communication, June 25, 2009). Given the predominance of private land in the GPE of SLINP and the small and fragmented land holdings of the park, Parks Canada must work beyond the park's boundaries to secure a future for biodiversity (Deguise & Kerr, 2006; Francis & Leggo, 2004; Parks Canada, 1998).

In recognition of this need, park managers are working with partners in the region on a variety of initiatives that represent a *landscape-scale* approach to conservation. A landscape-scale approach treats the landscape as a continuum of conservation, and seeks to maintain ecological processes and linkages within the landscape and connections between protected areas (Brown & Mitchell, 2006; Laven, Mitchell & Wang, 2005). The shift to landscape-scale conservation has been characterized as a key element of the modern paradigm for protected areas, which are now seen as anchors in a network of strictly protected areas, embedded within sustainably-managed lands that include ecological corridors and buffer zones (Nelson & Sportza, 2000; Phillips, 2003).

1.3 Research Need

Conservation on private land is politically sensitive and inherently complex, yet critical to landscape-scale conservation efforts and legally mandated protection of species at risk. Integrating conservation into land-uses around protected areas ultimately requires effective collaboration with regional landowners (James, 2002; Knight, 1999; Norton, 2000). Conservation biologists have thus come to acknowledge the importance of working with local residents, understanding their perspectives of the environment within which they live, and incorporating their values and traditions of caring for the land into conservation strategies (Mitchell & Buggey, 2000).

Despite an increasing understanding of the distribution of species and habitat in the GPE, Parks Canada still has limited insight into the landowners upon whom landscape-scale conservation efforts depend. Previous survey work (Thousand Islands Area Residents Association, 2000) in the GPE has suggested that residents conceptually support regional conservation, and that they highly value the natural environment. Yet a knowledge gap remains, in that little is known about residents' understanding of and commitment to conservation at the private property level, and how their relationships with the land influence the decisions they make regarding their properties. The lack of knowledge regarding landowner support for conservation on their lands makes it difficult to develop and promote conservation to landowners in a manner that is meaningful and relevant. The need for a landscape-scale approach to conservation, combined with the lack of knowledge regarding the bases of property owners' interactions with their properties suggests a need for further research.

Parks Canada has undertaken a suite of research endeavours in order to set priorities for regional conservation initiatives and to improve its understanding of local landowners. This study is one component of a multi-year project to collect information for the development of a strategic approach to land conservation in the GPE, which includes:

- i) The development of a geographic information systems (GIS) vegetation layer for the GPE and broader Biosphere Reserve area, which will be used to create predictive models of regional habitat for wildlife, including species at risk (Leggo, 2005);
- ii) A survey to assess the attitudes and knowledge of residents of the GPE regarding conservation (conducted in 2007), and

- iii) A series of in-depth interviews with rural landowners within and around corridors of conservation interest in the GPE, to explore property owners' relationships with the land (this study).

The GIS map and habitat models will identify priority areas on which to focus conservation efforts, and the social science data will provide an understanding of regional residents' knowledge of conservation needs, their interaction with the land, and their level of support for conservation action on their lands. The information will be shared with regional planners and used to develop programs and tools to build landowner support for conservation and foster stewardship on private lands.

1.4 Research Questions and Objectives

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the range of landowners' relationships with their surroundings, as well as the attributes of the land and the regional landscape that they value. By examining how landowners relate to the land and the wildlife and habitat it supports, this research project will help Parks Canada and partners develop programs and policies that are rooted in local perspectives and understanding. Dialogue with landowners will also establish whether the vision of regional conservation promoted by Parks Canada and partners converges with landowners' understanding of regional conservation needs.

1.4.1 Research Questions

Rather than attempt to develop a model of the specific variables that may determine landowners' behaviours, this study will explore several facets of landowners' relationships with the land. The investigation will focus primarily around landowner values, knowledge, concerns, and actions, as well as barriers to conservation. The core question to be investigated through this research project is:

- In the GPE of SLINP, what are the major dimensions of the relationships between property owners and their land?

Two primary sub-questions will be investigated:

- Are landowners concerned about any particular elements of their land and the surrounding landscape, or about wildlife, and how do they address those concerns?
- How might Parks Canada use this information to enhance communication and collaboration with landowners?

1.4.2 Research Objectives

The objective of this study, as a component of the broader research program outlined in Section 1.3, is to explore how property owners in the GPE of SLINP value and understand their land and the broader landscape, particularly in terms of the ecological attributes and conservation needs of the region. Specific objectives of the research are:

- To explore landowners' perspectives of their property's values, conservation and otherwise;
- To evaluate landowners' understanding of conservation needs in the region, and their support for conservation;
- To gain insight into landowners' awareness regarding how their choices may affect wildlife and habitat, including species at risk; as well as how collective actions may be affecting the regional landscape and values they have identified;
- To evaluate what kinds of stewardship actions landowners may be undertaking or be willing to undertake;
- To evaluate barriers to conservation on private land, via exploration of sources of

conflict and differences in understanding between conservationists and private landowners; and,

- To outline the implications of landowners' relationships with the land for the development of programs to support conservation action on private land.

This research will allow the researcher to evaluate if support for conservation extends beyond the conceptual level, and to explore common ground and sources of conflict in order to facilitate collaboration between landowners and protected area managers.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Parks Canada managers are actively engaged in programs aimed at conserving biodiversity beyond the boundaries of the national park; however, in order to be effective, these programs must reflect the interests and understanding of regional landowners. This research is intended to provide a basis for deepening and broadening the impact and relevance of communications with property owners regarding conservation initiatives in the region (Mitchell & Buggey, 2000). The study's findings should assist Parks Canada and other conservation partners in working effectively with private property owners by providing information to enable the development of programs and policies that are relevant in the local context. Although the applicability of results to other locations is limited by the nature of the study, the findings highlighted in the results and discussion chapters may be of interest in other areas where similar issues have arisen, and will contribute to further discussions about the significance of human-environmental relationships to national park managers.

1.6 Chapter Organization

This document is organized into nine chapters. Chapter two expands on the context provided in this chapter to provide a theoretical framework for the study, by outlining key concepts in the literature used to guide the research. The third chapter reviews the hermeneutic methodology used in this study, including data collection and analysis techniques. Chapters four to six present the study results in terms of key themes that emerged and were explored during discussions with property owners. Chapters seven and eight discuss what those findings mean in terms of property owners' willingness to undertake conservation actions. Chapter nine concludes the study and presents management implications and recommendations for Parks Canada managers.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Overview

In order to work with landowners towards conservation on private lands, Parks Canada must understand landowners' relationship to the land. Ultimately, a coordinated and landscape-scale approach to conservation, which involves and respects landowners and communities and is adapted to the local context is the only means to ensure the maintenance of biodiversity into the future. As stated by Mitchell (2003):

The foremost principle of conservation...is to focus on people's relationship to the land, where all conservation starts. Whether called a land ethic, a sense of place, a stewardship imperative, or simply a love of nature, conservation is lost without people connecting at a personal level to land and resources. (p.9)

The following sections review theories that informed this study and the research design. The first section introduces the concept of a land ethic and the second grounds this research in the study of place. The final section examines barriers to conservation that may lead to a gap between conceptual and actual support for conservation.

2.2 The Notion of a Land Ethic

In his book *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold (1966) spoke of the need for a *land ethic*, which he saw as a necessary and logical extension of co-operative modes of conduct to the broader "biotic community" (p. 239). In describing the notion of a land ethic, Leopold referred to it as "an ecological conscience...[that] in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land" (1966, p. 258). Wendell Berry (1977) further elaborated on the need for a land ethic in his book *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, although he uses the terms "responsible use" (p.26)

and “kindly use” (p.30). Much like Leopold, Berry noted the requirement for individuals, collectively, to take responsibility for the land, stating, “The use of the world is finally a personal matter, and the world can be preserved in health only by the forbearance and care of a multitude of persons” (1977, p. 26).

Almost a half-century after Leopold wrote of it, the concept of a land ethic is still inherent in the conservation movement, although the term *stewardship* has more currency today. Stewardship has been recognized as a central element of the landscape-scale conservation approach, and can be defined as “efforts to create, nurture, and enable responsibility in landowners and resource users to manage and protect land and its natural and cultural heritage” (Brown & Mitchell, 2000, p. 71). Stewards can be seen as individuals who manage their land in the best interests of the environment, and on behalf of society as a whole, to benefit future generations (Beresford & Phillips, 2000).

The recently passed *Species at Risk Act* ([SARA], 2002) incorporates stewardship, in the context of conservation measures on private land, as a fundamental part of the strategy to protect wildlife and habitat in Canada. The Act may lead to increasing scrutiny of the role of the individual landowner in protecting biodiversity, as it includes legislative measures to impose protection of designated *critical habitat* (habitat essential to the survival or recovery of the species) on private lands when there are imminent threats to species’ recovery or survival (SARA, 2002).

2.3 Research into Place

Research into place provides a means of examining landowner relationships with the land. Place research has evolved to include many concepts, including research into place attachment, place identity, place dependence, place satisfaction, and place meanings, all of which are captured by the term *sense of place*. Broadly, the term *sense of*

place refers to a body of research that views landscapes as social as well as physical environments, and examines the relationships between people and place. Place is thus understood as a venue for human experience and interpretation, rather than merely a setting with specific physical attributes (Stedman, 2003). Human interaction with the land results in the development of emotional bonds (place attachment), and produces a landscape imbued with meanings (place meanings) that reflect the social and cultural experiences (Stedman, 2003) as well as the self-identity (place identity) of the individual (Manzo, 2003). Williams and Stewart (1998) interpret sense of place as “the collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values and feelings that individuals or groups associate with a particular locality” (p.19).

Research has suggested that understanding local residents’ connection to place may help land managers understand expectations of how places should be managed and anticipate public scrutiny of and reactions to management proposals (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995; Cheng, Kruger & Daniels, 2003; Eisenhauer, Krannich & Blahna, 2000). In addition, the evaluation of landowner’s sense of place may assist in identifying relevant programs and conservation messages for private land owners, and help avoid disagreements related to conflicting understandings of place (Ryan, Erickson & De Young, 2003; Yung, Freimund & Belsky, 2003).

2.3.1 Sense of Place as a Basis for Conservation Action

Individuals’ sense of place may play a significant role in determining their relationship to place, or land ethic. For instance, meanings that people attribute to place not only express values and attachment, but also represent understandings of how individuals should behave in a place (Cheng et al., 2003). Sense of place may thus

become a motivating influence to prompt landowners to take individual or collective action to conserve their connection to the land.

The connection between sense of place and actual land stewardship action by landowners is not clear in the literature, although several studies have noted connection to place as the basis for support for conservation. A study by Vaske and Kobrin (2001) to evaluate if attachment to local natural resources resulted in environmentally responsible behaviour suggested that attachment may influence behaviour, although the specific behaviours that were examined (such as recycling) were not place-based. According to Peterson and Horton (1995), Texan ranchers' connection with the land was critical to both their self-identity and their understanding of stewardship as the appropriate relationship to the land. Ryan et al. (2003) determined that farmers were motivated to undertake conservation behaviour along riparian corridors by their attachment to the land and their desire to practice good stewardship. Numerous studies (Cheng et al., 2003; Kaltenborn, 1998; Stedman, 2002; Yung et al., 2003) have suggested that place identity as well as attachment to place and to specific place meanings may motivate landowners to fight proposals that threaten landscape characteristics that they value.

Research into landowners' connections to place may assist in the development of policies and programs that are rooted in local perspectives and that build on mutual interests between scientists and landowners (Brook, Zint & De Young, 2003; Peterson & Horton, 1995). As stated by Williams and Stewart (1998), "Sense of place can be the shared language that eases discussions of salient issues and problems and that affirms the principles underlying ecosystem management" (p.18). Sense of place can thus provide common ground that landowners and conservationists can draw on to achieve conservation goals.

2.4 Barriers to Conservation Action

Although the notion of landowners acting collectively to conserve wildlife and habitat on private lands is promising, translation of this notion from concept to reality may be problematic. There are a multitude of influences on landowner's management decisions, and research has suggested that landowners' actions are often contrary to their professed interest in conservation (James, 2002). In a study of farmers in England, Carr and Tait (1991) determined that discussing conservation at a conceptual level rather than in a specific behavioural context could lead to an overestimation of conservation support. This suggests that there is a gap between conceptual and actual support for conservation.

In order to encourage the implementation of a land ethic, it is therefore important to understand not only motivating influences but also barriers to conservation and measures that may help overcome those barriers (Thompson, 2004). While it is not possible to identify all the reasons for the gap between notional support for and implementation of conservation practices, various influences on individual behaviour have been investigated.

Knowledge, beliefs and values have been variously evaluated as factors that influence attitude, or as direct influences on pro-environmental behaviour (Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig & Jones, 2000; Olli, Grendstad & Wollebaek, 2001; Stedman, 2002; Thompson, 2004). Motivating influences (in addition to sense of place) include a sense of obligation to future generations (Ryan et al., 2003), and the desire to preserve a way of life and the landscape's heritage values (Brook et al., 2003; Fischer & Bliss, 2008). Additional behavioural influences include personal values; information and the manner in which it is delivered (e.g. sources, context and amount) (Brook et al., 2003); social pressure (for example, to maintain a preferred aesthetic or a visual appearance that is

perceived to convey a message of stewardship) (Brook et al., 2003; Carr & Tait, 1991; Ryan et al., 2003; Thompson, 2004); economic interests and the need to “make a living on the land” (Brook et al., 2003; Fischer & Bliss, 2006, p.636); conflict with and mistrust of land management agencies and conservationists, and the desire to protect autonomy on private property (Brook et al., 2003; Fischer & Bliss, 2008; Reading, Clark & Kellert, 1994).

Landowners’ property management decisions may embody numerous contradictions as they factor multiple and sometimes competing interests, such as those listed above, into their decision-making process (Fischer & Bliss, 2008). The following sections review research into barriers to conservation that was of specific interest to this study.

2.4.1 Knowledge and Communication as Barriers to Conservation

Although landowners may feel knowledgeable about their land and the wildlife that depends on it, a failure to recognize the limitations of this knowledge and competing interests may result in land management decisions that are inconsistent with a professed conservation ethic. A study by Fischer & Bliss (2006) of rural woodlot managers in Oregon suggested that despite some knowledge about ecological systems and management objectives that reflected stewardship intentions, competing economic objectives and the limitations of landowner knowledge constrained their conservation actions. Similarly, a 2003 survey of rural Canadian landowners suggested that although landowners were motivated to act as stewards on their land, their knowledge, particularly of wildlife habitat, species at risk and how to increase the environmental benefits of their management practices limited their conservation behaviour (Environics Research Group).

Researchers have suggested that conservation approaches that are respectful of local expertise may be more successful than expert-based approaches (Hunter & Brehm, 2004; James, 2002). A lack of respect for and consideration of landowner knowledge on the part of government land management agencies and conservationists in policy development and land use planning, and the privileging of scientific understanding over experiential knowledge may alienate landowners and prevent successful implementation of conservation programs (James, 2002; Peterson & Horton, 1995). Peterson and Horton (1995) investigated Texan ranchers' perspectives of government intervention on private lands in response to an endangered species listing. Their study determined that ranchers perceived themselves as stewards of the land whose years of experience in taking care of the land were disregarded by government experts. Although both the ranchers and government resource managers subscribed to "some version of Aldo Leopold's [1966] land ethic" (Peterson & Horton, 1995, pp. 159-160), the opportunity to build on this shared perspective in order to undertake collective conservation action was missed.

Thompson (2004) contends that landowners are unable to recognize the harm that may stem from their management actions, particularly when ecological problems are the result of the cumulative actions of multiple landowners in a region. Thompson (2004) suggested that merely transmitting environmental education information to property owners, such as information about species at risk, is unlikely to be enough to overcome barriers to conservation action. Brook et al. (2003) recommend collaborative processes that recognize landowners as "respected partners in conservation" (p. 1647) to empower landowners and increase their perceptions of local control and of the fairness of land use planning processes.

An understanding of local context may be paramount in achieving a cooperative

approach to conservation, as in order for information to resonate with landowners, it must be seen to be relevant. Hunter and Brehm (2003) suggest that scientists and policymakers should be educated about local residents' perspectives, rather than calling for an educational campaign for local residents who may exhibit a lack of understanding regarding conservation issues and reasons for species decline. Studies have suggested that incorporation of place-based knowledge into discussions regarding land management practices and respect for landowner's working knowledge of the land may improve the relevance of programs about conservation for local residents (Hunter & Brehm, 2003; James, 2002). Information that is customized to reflect local concerns and context and that is delivered via social networks (e.g. family, friends and neighbours) or locally-based groups may be more effective than broad-reaching campaigns by government or conservation groups (Brook et al., 2003; Fischer & Bliss, 2008; Milburn, 2007).

2.4.2 *Conflict as a Barrier to Conservation*

Research into relationship to place provides a means of identifying sources of conflict that may act as barriers to conservation efforts. As Williams and Patterson (1996) observe, "individuals, groups, and communities construct and experience places in the landscape in subjective ways that matter to them" (p. 518). Study of place provides a means for managers to recognize these perspectives, which may result in strong reactions to proposed management policies based on landowners' expectations and goals for an area (Yung et al., 2003).

Conflict between the government and private property owners over the extension of conservation interests onto private land is a common thread in research. As noted by Stacy James in a 2002 essay entitled *Bridging the Gap between Private Landowners and*

Conservationists, “when conservation initiatives affect property use, it is only natural for landowners to feel threatened and concerned” (p.270).

Participants in a recent study of rural landowners in southern Ontario suggested that government control was a barrier to conservation, as landowners desire both “help and autonomy” (Milburn, 2007, p.81). Yung et al. (2003) contend that understanding how resident’s perspectives on conservation and government control are bound up in their sense of place may assist governments in anticipating and avoiding conflicts around land management proposals. Carr and Tait, in a 1991 study comparing the conservation attitudes of farmers and conservationists, concluded that although at a superficial level, the two groups shared some understanding, fundamental differences represented a barrier to conservation. In particular, they noted that the two groups had disparate understandings of the “conservation problem” (p.285); where conservationists saw habitat loss and associated effects on wildlife as the key issue, farmers saw increasing government control of their land management practices as the primary problem.

Conflict with the government may result in mistrust of conservation efforts, even if they are understood to be beneficial to wildlife. For instance, a 1994 study of the region surrounding Yellowstone National Park by Reading et al. indicated that despite understanding that species survival was dependent on coordinated conservation effort at a landscape-scale, residents also believed that ecosystem management might increase government control over public and private land and negatively affect communities and lifestyles. Brook et al. (2003) suggested that landowners in the United States may even be motivated to harm the habitat of endangered species in order to avoid government intervention. This possibility was borne out in Canada in 2007, when a group of Ontario

landowners cleared a 9-acre section of land to protest the impacts of the recently-passed SARA on private property rights (Craggs, 2007).

Opposing goals for an area may also result in conflict that becomes a barrier to collaboration towards conservation goals. For instance, Yung et al. (2003) determined that long-term residents in an area of north-central Montana valued and wished to protect the pastoral landscape, whereas new residents valued and wished to protect wilderness in the area. The place meanings embraced by newcomers, government land managers and conservationists conflicted with long-term resident's understanding of place and threatened their attachment to the land (Yung et al., 2003). This led to backlash and mistrust of conservation plans for the area, as discussions over land use were diverted into a struggle over who controlled the future of the area (Yung et al., 2003). A 2005 study of community members along the Niobrara National Scenic River in Nebraska (Davenport & Anderson) similarly found that place-based meanings related to rural character influenced attitudes towards landscape change and led to conflict between community members and those perceived to be *outsiders* (such as government land managers and recreational visitors) over future management plans for the river corridor.

Overall, although the bases for individuals' stewardship actions, or land ethic, may vary, they may ultimately be place-based, in that they may stem from a desire to safeguard local values. In this regard, conservation efforts may benefit from stewardship as a result of disparate, yet complementary objectives (Beresford & Phillips, 2000). In order to further individual and community commitment and involvement in conservation, it is therefore worthwhile to understand local perspectives and identify complementary, place-based understandings and values that can serve as a basis for collaboration

(Mitchell & Buggey, 2000) and to identify sources of conflict that may counteract landowners' stewardship intentions.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The overarching objective of this study, to explore landowners' relationships with their property and the surrounding landscape, is best suited for a methodology which allows an in-depth exploration of the dimensions of landowners' relationships with the land. The approach chosen can be classified as falling within an interpretivist paradigm, with a hermeneutics-based research framework (Patterson & Williams, 2002). In this research framework, the researcher understands reality as subjective in nature (Davenport & Anderson, 2005) and the emphasis is on exploring the "depth, variety and qualities of an individual's experience and perceptions" (Evely, Fazey, Pinard & Lambin, 2008, p.54). Patterson & Williams (2002) note that hermeneutics is particularly suited to studies that intend to explore meanings and values associated with nature and investigate barriers to communication, areas of common ground, and sources of conflict related to setting and resource management.

In accordance with this research paradigm, the researcher used key informants to select study participants (respondents) amongst property owners in the GPE, semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data, and a hermeneutic approach to data analysis. Specific elements of this methodology are discussed in greater detail in the sections below.

An ethical review was undertaken prior to initiation of the research, in compliance with the Royal Roads University policy on research involving human subjects (Royal Roads University, 2004). To protect respondents' anonymity, all respondents were

assigned a pseudonym following data collection, which was thereafter used in data analysis and reporting.

3.2 Sampling Methodology

The purpose of sampling is to achieve representativeness, in that the sample should meaningfully represent the phenomenon being explored in a study (Patterson & Williams, 2002). Since the overarching goal of the study was to explore the dimensions of property owners' relationships with the land, a sampling methodology that captured the range of these relationships was appropriate, rather than one that aimed at producing a statistically generalized overview of the distribution of various perspectives across the regional population (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995; Patterson & Williams, 2002). The goal of this study sample, to represent both the range of landowner relationships with their properties and to obtain a depth of insight into these relationships, was suited to a purposive sampling strategy (Patterson, 2000).

A list of potential respondents was generated through a *chain referral* or *network sampling* approach, a non-probability sampling method that relies on referrals to identify study participants (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995; Davenport & Anderson, 2005). Key informants from Parks Canada, Charleston Lake Provincial Park (a provincial park located in the GPE), a provincially-funded stewardship council, and local community groups were used to generate the initial list of respondents. This resulted in a list of over 60 potential respondents, with some landowner names suggested by multiple informants.

The final sample was selected from the list provided by key informants by focusing on the following core principles, designed to maximize participant diversity and suitability for the research objectives:

1. The sample should represent the diversity of landowner types identified in the

GPE.

2. The sample should capture the major viewpoints amongst these different types of landowners.
3. The sample should focus on areas identified as significant in the maintenance of biodiversity.

Further information on the means of sampling according to these principles is outlined below.

3.2.1 Representing Diversity in Landowner Type and Perspectives

In order to represent landowner diversity, the researcher worked with key informants to identify general categories of property owners predominant in the GPE, including year-round residents, recreational property owners (seasonal cottagers and recreational properties with no dwelling), farmers and woodlot owners, or combinations thereof. In discussing prospective respondents with key informants, the researcher aimed to obtain property owner names in each category of land ownership and to assess the breadth of backgrounds and attitudes these property owners held (Yung et al., 2003) prior to final sample selection.

3.2.2 Targeting Properties of Conservation Significance

Respondent selection targeted areas identified as significant in the maintenance of biodiversity (Hunter & Brehm, 2004), where conservation efforts and communications will focus in the future. Although originally priority habitat mapping results from the mapping component of the study (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3) were to be used to identify priority areas for respondent selection, a delay in completing the habitat mapping necessitated a different sampling strategy. In lieu of the priority habitat maps, a vegetation management plan completed by SLINP staff (McPherson, 2006) was used in

discussions with key informants to indicate target areas within which respondents were to be enlisted.

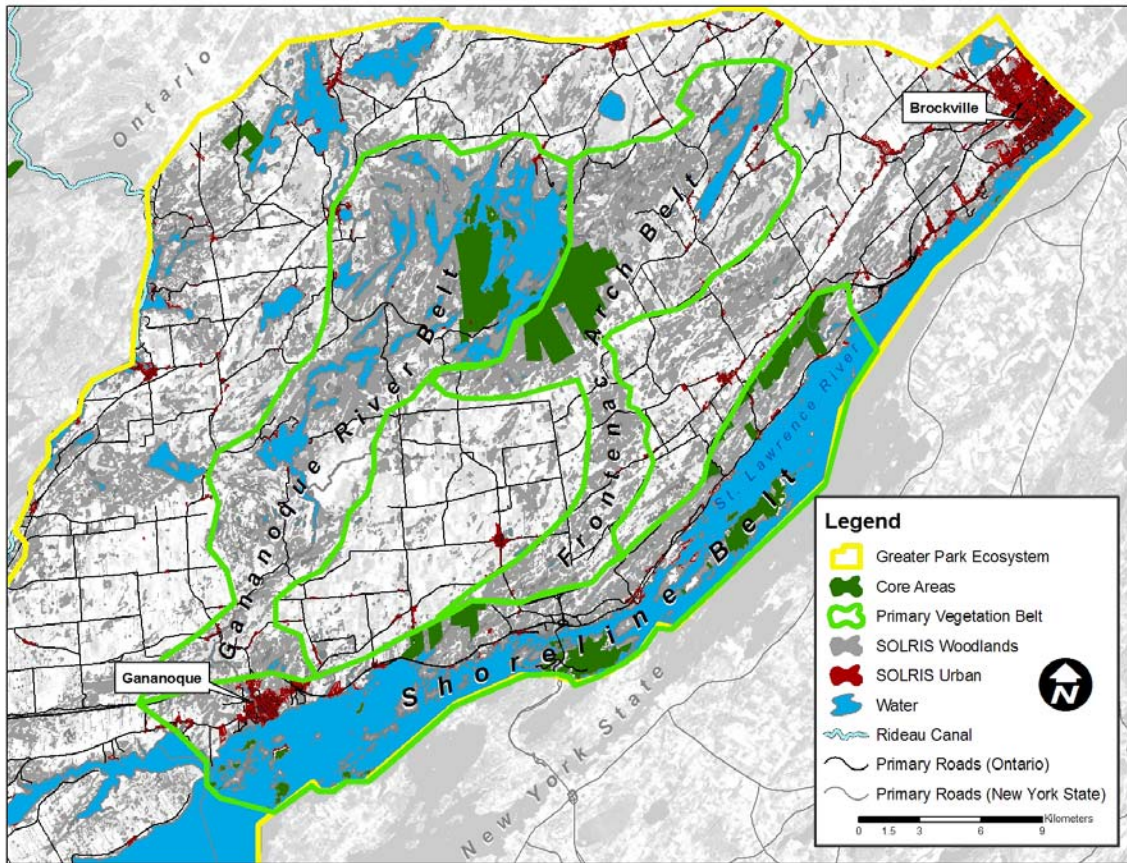
The vegetation management plan identified three primary vegetation belts within the GPE (Figure 2, below). These vegetation belts are areas that have retained a relatively high degree of forest habitat connectivity and are considered priority areas for conservation action by Parks Canada (McPherson, 2006). The vegetation belts mainly reflect geological conditions (the terrain in these areas is rugged and thus unsuited to agriculture and timber harvesting), rather than a high density of landowners who have preserved natural vegetation, which minimized potential bias in sampling within these areas. An additional filter was applied to ensure properties were of conservation interest by restricting respondents to landowners with relatively large parcels (greater than 50 acres).

3.2.3 Final Sample Selection

In order to select respondents, suggestions provided by key informants were compiled into a spreadsheet which indicated primary land use (agriculture, woodlot, recreational use, etc.); vegetation belt and property size. The final selection of respondents attempted to maximize diversity and study suitability amongst these categories of information.

The researcher made initial contact with 15 selected respondents through an introductory letter, which provided an outline of the research objectives, an overview of the type of information being sought and the means of data collection, and the researcher's credentials and contact information (see Appendix A for sample letter). The introductory letter indicated that the researcher was a student and noted that all data

would be shared with Parks Canada. During the course of the interviews, it was obvious that several respondents concluded that the researcher as an employee of Parks Canada.



Greg Saunders, 2009

Figure 2. *Primary Vegetation Belts in the GPE*¹

The introductory letter included the name of the key informant who had referred the respondent, in order to provide a local contact name and indicate how the respondent had been selected for participation in the study. The name of the key respondent was

¹ The acronym SOLRIS in the legend refers to the Southern Ontario Land Resource Information System, the methodology used by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for mapping land cover using medium resolution satellite imagery and aerial photography. Core areas include national and provincial parks.

included in the letter as the point of referral in order to provide a known local contact to the respondent and hopefully improve the possibility of the respondent agreeing to participate (Hilty & Merenlender, 2003). Introductory letters were followed by a phone call to assess the respondent's interest in participating in the study and to arrange an interview time. Twelve of the 15 respondents contacted agreed to participate in the study (one declined due to ill health and two did not respond to either the letter or the phone call). Respondent profiles are summarized in Table 1, below.

The original list of potential respondents generated by key informants was later supplemented by an additional list generated over the course of the interviews through *snowball sampling*, as following each interview, respondents were asked to suggest names of additional respondents whom they believed would provide varying perspectives on the research questions (Peterson & Horton, 1995). Ultimately, the supplemental list was not used, as the initial sample of 12 respondents, which generated approximately 18 hours of interview data, was deemed to have adequately captured the intended sample. Interestingly, in numerous instances the snowball sampling method generated names of landowners who were already part of the study sample, based on the suggestions of key informants.

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection for this study was conducted by tape recording interviews with selected respondents. Interviews were later transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriptionist. Interviews were conducted in May and June, 2007. Nine interviews were conducted with single respondents and three with multiple respondents: two with married couples, and in another instance a friend of the targeted respondent participated. The respondent in this instance was an elderly gentleman who was clearly more comfortable

having a friend present during the interview. Although the friend did not fit the sample profile, his comments were not excluded from analysis as they became part of the flow of conversation.

Table 1. *Respondent Profiles*

Respondent Characteristics	
Gender ^a	Male = 10 Female = 4
Age ^b	Range = 48-77 Mean = 64
Education ^a	High School = 5 University = 7 No data=2
Primary Land Use	Farm = 2 Residential = 6 Recreational = 4
Additional Land Use ^c	Woodlot = 10 Commercial = 2 Farm = 1 Recreational = 3 Not applicable = 2
Vegetation Belt ^d	Gananoque River = 4 Frontenac Axis = 5 Shoreline = 3
Property Size ^e	50-100 acres = 2 101-200 acres = 5 >200 acres = 5
Length of time property owned ^f	0-30 years = 4 31-50 years = 3 51-100 years = 3 >100 years = 2

^a For this characteristic, n=14, as spouses are counted separately. One respondent who participated in an interview as a friend of the target respondent is excluded from the summary as his property was not discussed. Couples were otherwise counted as one respondent (n= 12).

^b n=11, three respondents (including 2 spouses) did not provide data

^c Properties (n=12) that had multiple additional uses are counted multiple times

^d See Figure 2.

^e One respondent discussed the entire family-owned property, which consisted of large, adjacent parcels, during the interview, rather than solely his portion of the total acreage, so the total acreage is represented in the summary statistics.

^f Respondents whose families had owned the property for multiple generations gave the length of time the property had been in the family, rather than the duration of their own ownership.

Prior to beginning the interview, the researcher reviewed the study objectives with participants and obtained their permission to record the interview. Interviews lasted one and a half hours on average and were conducted in respondents' homes. Following the interview, basic information about the landowner was collected, including age, occupation and level of education (see Appendix A for a sample letter of consent and participant information sheet and Table 1 for respondent profiles).

The researcher employed a semi-structured interview approach, using an interview guide that provided a flexible protocol that did not unnecessarily limit the direction of the conversation (Peterson & Horton, 1995). In this approach, the sequence of questions may be revised or left unasked according to the flow of conversation (Patterson & Williams, 2002; Peterson & Horton, 1995). The interview guide (see Appendix A) consisted of broad questions organized around themes of interest with prompts to elicit further discussion (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995; Davenport & Anderson, 2005). Value-laden and politically-charged terms such as biodiversity, endangered, critical habitat and species at risk were avoided (Fischer & Bliss, 2006; Hilty & Merenlender, 2003) in order to minimize introducing terms that could be perceived as threatening to the respondent into the conversation.

At times during the course of an interview, a respondent would ask the researcher for clarification regarding Parks Canada's, or other land management agencies' management intentions. In these instances, the researcher responded by indicating that she was interested in learning the respondents' views, in order to avoid influencing the discussion. Probes were used to clarify ambiguous remarks and incomplete responses (Patterson & Williams, 2002).

In discussing a respondent's property and the broader landscape, the researcher introduced satellite images that showed the landowner's property (when available), in addition to a topographic map showing the region. The property-scale image was intended to facilitate discussion of attributes of the property that were most valued, including specific areas where wildlife sightings and property management actions had been focused. The map of the region was used to prompt discussion of landscape-scale values, explore how the landscape had changed over time, and investigate how those changes had affected property owners' values.

In combination, the two scales of maps were intended to encourage landowners to think beyond the scale of their own properties, thereby placing individual properties within the larger landscape context and approximating the frame of reference of a conservation biologist. Respondents were offered copies of the maps and images upon conclusion of the interview.

This method has parallels in photo-elicitation studies, which have been used to elicit information on the values and meanings associated with images in photos from research participants (Loeffler, 2004). The benefits of this approach include a shift in the relationship between the researcher and respondent, as the discussion focuses on the image, allowing the respondent to lead its interpretation, while the researcher takes on the role of listener (Loeffler, 2004). Although the maps and images proved useful for encouraging discussion, in several instances the satellite images occasioned some distrust as landowners expressed surprise and concern that images which so clearly delineated their properties and associated features (such as wetlands) were readily available.

3.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis in this study followed a hermeneutic approach, which is characterized by a circular process of analysis that moves between idiographic (individual level) and nomothetic (across individual) analyses (Patterson & Williams, 2002). This circular process allows continual re-examination of the relationship between parts and the whole; i.e. between meanings at both discrete and global levels (Patterson & Williams, 2002). Analysis begins at an idiographic level, focused on achieving understanding of individual cases, and only then moves to the nomothetic level to explore commonalities that emerge at the aggregate level (Patterson & Williams, 2002).

3.4.1 *Data Review and Organization*

Transcribed interviews were reviewed for accuracy by the researcher by simultaneously reading the text and listening to the recording. Names and phrases that might jeopardize a respondent's anonymity were removed at this time. This review stage provided the opportunity to become familiar with each interview and to recognize repeated themes that emerged as well as predominant themes within each interview. This led to an initial outline of potential themes to be used in organizing the data.

After editing and becoming familiar with the data, each interview was imported into the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 8 (QSR International, 2008), which provides a means of organizing and filing the researcher's interpretations of the data. The software allows the researcher to assign portions of text which convey meaning (Patterson & Williams, 2002) to different coding categories (themes) that are defined and organized by the researcher. The researcher can code interview text to multiple themes and cross-reference the excerpted text to other themes and excerpts, yet the software

maintains the link from the excerpts to the original interview transcript for review and retrieval in context.

NVivo 8 software (QSR International, 2008) is capable of managing coding systems that are as complex as the researcher requires (including hierarchical, free-standing and relationship coding categories) and is flexible, allowing for re-coding and re-organization of themes without losing any data. In addition, the software allows the researcher to create memos and project notes associated with the text excerpts (e.g. a journal on how the coding framework evolved). The researcher can also import notes on external data sources (e.g. scientific journal articles) and code those notes to relevant theme categories that have been created, in order to provide reference material for the reporting stage.

3.4.2 Analysis

The creation of an organizational framework for the data (i.e. identifying themes and coding meaningful units of text to those themes) constitutes the analytical process in a hermeneutic methodology, while the final system of themes is the product of the analysis (Patterson & Williams, 2002). Coding text to a theme is the researcher's means of interpreting the data. For example, the following text excerpt from an interview with a respondent discussing Parks Canada's approach to land acquisition in the 1970's was coded initially to the theme *Connection to Place*, and then ultimately moved to a sub-theme of *Roots* within the overarching theme of *Connection to Place*:

If they [Parks Canada] had only calmed down at the very beginning, you know, and not been so aggressive, people would have sold them bit by bit. Land would have come to them. But they said, "oh, we'll do it in five years with willing sellers." And people said five years -- I've had this property for 100 years, why

would I sell it in the next five years?

This excerpt was also coded to the theme of *Conflict with the Government*. In this manner, the researcher's review of successive transcripts led to an evolving understanding and interpretation of significant meanings in the respondents' responses in relation to the research questions.

Although the researcher had identified initial categories of themes during the review of transcripts, these themes were gradually refined as the researcher moved from one interview to the next, which necessitated a circular process of reviewing and re-coding previously coded interviews, consistent with the hermeneutic process of moving between idiographic and nomothetic levels of analysis (Patterson & Williams, 2002). The organization of themes was expanded and rearranged throughout this process as new meanings and relationships between themes emerged.

Once all the interviews were coded, a process of reviewing the coding framework was undertaken, by exporting each theme as a text file and ensuring consistency within each theme. This again led to further refinement in the organizational framework of the themes. For example, text originally coded to a broad (parent) theme of *Conflict and Collaboration* was later re-coded to a sub-theme of *Value Conflict* as different types of conflict emerged during subsequent interview analysis. Still later, during the coding consistency check, the hierarchical organization was further refined, as *Value Conflict* became its own parent theme, and text coded there was re-coded to sub-themes that reflected specific types of value conflicts, such as *Old-timers versus Newcomers*. This iterative process enabled the researcher to move to a deeper level analysis over time.

After the coding checks were completed, the researcher returned to an idiographic level of analysis and developed narrative summaries for each interview, condensing each

respondent's discussions into a few pages that summarized main themes and included quotes that supported the researcher's interpretation. An example of a narrative summary is provided in Appendix B. This exercise led to a more holistic understanding of each respondent, and also proved useful in confirming which themes were predominant at a nomothetic level. Ultimately, themes were revisited a final time as the organizational structure of the thesis document was finalized, and some themes were re-grouped under overarching dimensions in order to present findings more concisely.

Over the course of the analysis, relationships between themes also emerged. For example, the relationship *Connection to Place Influences Conservation Action* was identified and used as an additional coding category. Identifying relationships between themes is a key part of hermeneutic analysis (Patterson & Williams, 2002). NVivo 8 (QSR International, 2008) also allows the researcher to create graphics showing relationships between themes, which was useful in developing visual aids for the thesis document to illustrate for the reader how findings were interrelated.

3.5 Evaluating the Research

The goal of hermeneutic research is to communicate an improved understanding of human experience, the influences that shape experience, and the meanings that are produced through experience, rather than to measure various factors that may influence behaviour (Patterson & Williams, 2002). This type of research (which can be described as interpretivism or social constructivism) assumes that the meanings individuals associate with their experiences are subjective and varied, and that the researcher's own background and experience may influence interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2003). The researcher and respondent are seen to jointly negotiate and forge meanings through the interview process (Creswell, 2003; Kvale, 1996). Evaluative criteria for this research

paradigm therefore vary from those used for other scientific paradigms that reflect different normative commitments (Patterson & Williams, 2002), particularly positivist research approaches that are aimed at analyzing verifiable and measurable data in order to find generalizable laws or theories that predict the phenomena of interest. Patterson and Williams (2002) outline three criteria that are appropriate for evaluating for hermeneutic research: persuasiveness; insightfulness, and practical utility.

Persuasiveness refers to the ability of the reader to reach the conclusions posited by the researcher, and thus requires presentation of enough data for the reader to assess the researcher's reasoning and claims (Patterson & Williams, 2002). This standard of validity reflects the epistemological basis of hermeneutics discussed above, in that data analysis is seen as subjective and it is assumed that there is a "plurality of interpretations" (Kvale, 1996, p.211), rather than an absolute truth to be arrived at (Patterson & Williams, 2002). The criterion of insightfulness refers to the need for the research to improve understanding and identify patterns or insights that were not previously evident, rather than to simply summarize the phenomenon under study (e.g. respondents' statements) (Patterson & Williams, 2002). Finally, the criterion of practical utility is linked to the study's aims, and refers to the ability of the research to answer "the concern motivating the inquiry" (Packerson & Addison, as cited in Patterson & Williams, 2002, p.35). This evaluative criterion reflects the hermeneutic orientation towards functional research that reflects understanding of the nature of human experience, rather than an emphasis on arriving at universal truths through research (Patterson & Williams, 2002).

In summary, hermeneutic research provides a process for analysing subjective phenomena, while recognizing that the researcher brings their own understanding to bear on the analysis. The process of cyclical analysis (outlined in Section 3.4) represents a

systematic and scientific procedure for interpreting data, and the evaluative criteria outlined above ensure that the researcher presents evidence so that the reader can assess the validity of the conclusions reached by the researcher (Patterson & Williams, 2002). Although vastly different from positivist research foundations, hermeneutics nonetheless provides a rigorous scientific method; one that is particularly suited to the phenomena of interest in this study.

CHAPTERS 4-6: RESULTS

Overview

In keeping with the hermeneutic framework used for analysis, Chapters 4 to 8 present the researcher's interpretation of interviews with respondents, rather than simply listing what respondents said (Patterson & Williams, 2002). These chapters highlight various findings in relation to the research questions and study objectives, and explore the major dimensions of landowners' relationships with the land as well as predominant themes that were investigated or that emerged during analysis of the data. The study results indicate that landowners have a rich and complex relationship with the land, elements of which are reviewed and discussed in each of the following chapters: Chapter 4 reviews landowner values, Chapter 5 landowner understanding, and Chapter 6 landowners' sense of place.

Data Presentation

Findings are illustrated by quotes from interviews with respondents. Quotes are referenced by the respondent's name (a pseudonym assigned by the researcher), or a code that reflects the date of the interview, shown in brackets following the excerpted text along with the line number(s) from the interview transcripts. Questions or comments by the researcher that appear in the quotes are identified with the label (I). In some cases portions of respondents' comments were edited in order to ensure anonymity.

4 LANDOWNER VALUES

4.1 Overview

This chapter explores how property owners in the GPE of SLINP value their land and the broader landscape. Place-based values are important in that they relate specific aspects of why people are attached to the land, and as such influence landowners' sense of place and their willingness to take conservation actions. Values may also become either a source of conflict or a basis for collaboration in relation to place. An understanding of values is therefore important in order to ensure that policies and communications targeted at local landowners reflect their perspectives, and can effectively harness their motivations for conserving species and habitat (Fischer & Bliss, 2008).

A range of values became apparent through landowners' discussions of their land and the broader region. Similar to the results of a study of rural residents by Hunter & Brehm (2004), respondents' values conveyed an appreciation for rural life and their experiences in the biologically rich setting of the GPE. These place-based values were shaped by interaction with wildlife and nature on respondents' lands and in the region (Hunter & Brehm, 2004).

Respondents conveyed their values and connection to the land through expressions of what they enjoyed doing there, and what characteristics made the landscape special to them (Eishenhauer et al., 2000). Interviews with respondents elicited values at varying scales; landowners discussed how they valued their own properties, as well as what they valued in the greater landscape. Respondents communicated a range of values, including instrumental values that reflected how they used the land and non-

instrumental values (such as aesthetic and heritage values) related to the qualities of the land that respondents valued for their own good, rather than merely for personal benefit (Bengston & Xu, 1995). Respondents' values are presented as dimensions that include multiple aspects, referred to as themes within each value dimension (Figure 3, below). The predominant value dimensions, described in greater detail below, include setting values, wildlife and biodiversity values, intangible values, social and historical values, and use values.

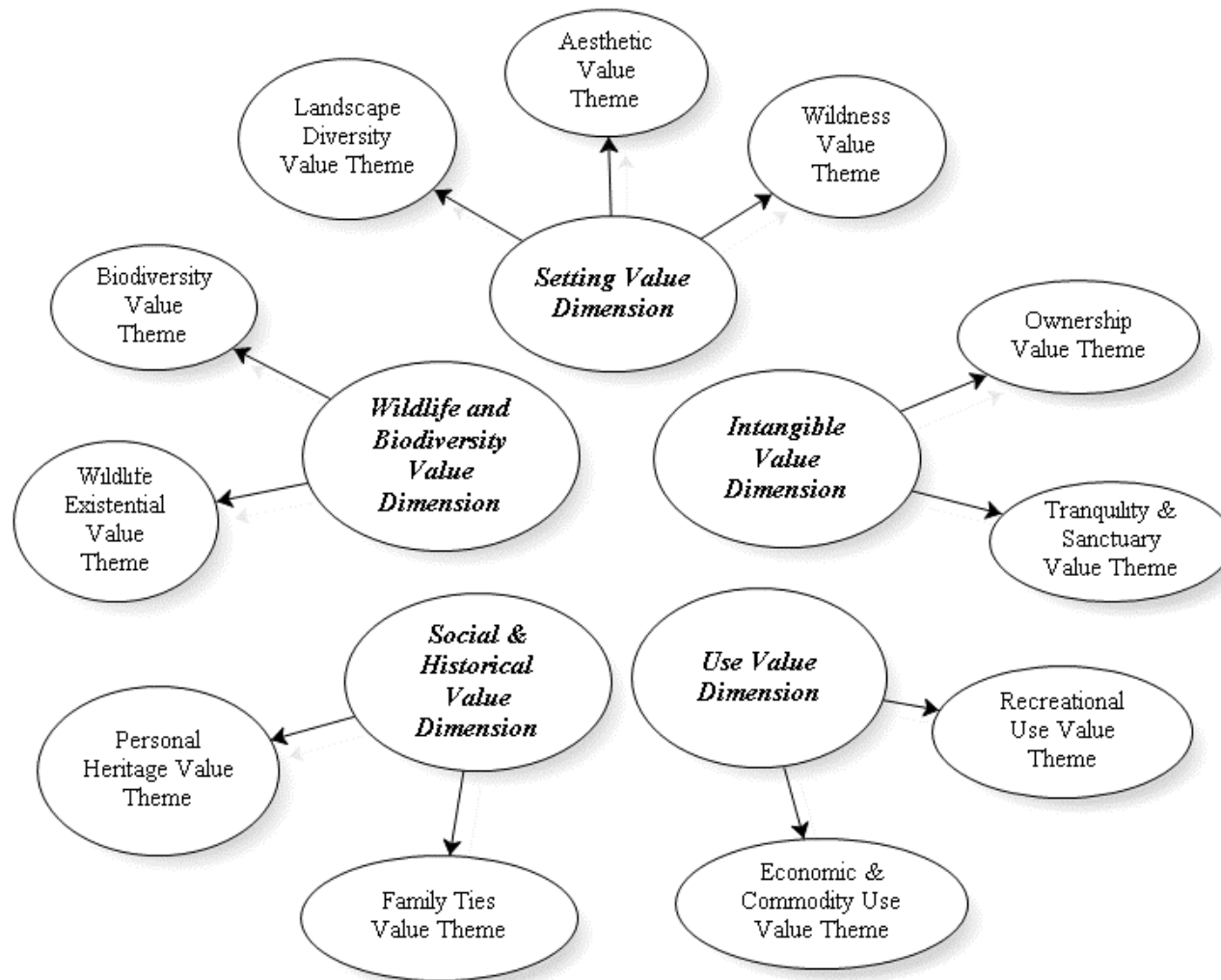
4.2 Setting Value Dimension

This value dimension reflects respondents' expressions of appreciation for the environmental setting, including scenery and particular characteristics attributed to the setting such as rural aesthetic or wilderness appeal. Respondents' perspectives that the regional setting is unique was an important aspect of this value dimension (Eishenhauer et al., 2000; Rogan, O'Connor & Horwitz, 2005).

4.2.1 Aesthetic Theme

Respondents expressed aesthetic appreciation for both their own properties and for the greater landscape. For instance, Fred described his first reaction to his property, saying "I walked in and it was just this beautiful woodland....It just was exactly what I wanted. I fell in love. When I came out, I said this is it, we'll buy it" (Fr49). Darryl described a stand of pitch pine on his land as a "magical place" (Dar105), while Lauren had a hard time choosing one particular spot that she enjoyed on her property, saying,

Figure 3. Value Dimensions and Associated Themes



“There are some steep cliffs that are really beautiful, rocky outcrops that are beautiful, and then when you come across little meadows sometimes, and I love the deep forest too” (La119).

Respondents described the region as “spectacular” (1550-246) and “exceptionally beautiful” (162-136) and mentioned particular characteristics that they appreciated. While some respondents noted their appreciation for the rivers, lakes, woods and rolling terrain, the overall aesthetic of the mixed agricultural and forested landscape was important to others. William, for instance, suggested that he appreciated the varied rural landscape, remarking “I think the attractiveness of an area like this is a mix of field and forest, and that’s good for wildlife as well” (Wi177).

4.2.2 *Wildness Theme*

Numerous respondents expressed appreciation for the region’s wildness, describing their properties and the surrounding landscape as remote, rugged, and untouched. Some landowners mentioned wildness as a defining feature of the area. For instance, one respondent described what he valued most about his property by saying:

Just the wildness of it. It’s Canadian shield - totally rugged. You can’t walk across it in a straight line, huge pine and oak trees in the valleys, and just scrubby little pitch pines and white oaks on the ridge tops and swamps in between. By most definitions it would be useless to anybody else, but it’s paradise to us, to me.

(I): So what do you mean by wildness?

It’s just wild, like it’s rugged and basically untouched. You have no idea that you’re in southern Ontario when you’re out in that area up there. (560-82-87)

Other landowners echoed this characterization of the area’s wildness as a unique feature.

One landowner reflected “You can see from looking at your map there’s very few roads

through it. So, as a consequence, it's like what I go visit when I do my wilderness canoe tripping up much further north" (1750-205), while another said "It's those wild areas...where there are no cottages, and that's the beauty of, I guess, this river². Its semi-wilderness still... Look in here, there are no roads" (161-272-274). For William, the wildness was not so much related to a lack of human influence, but rather to the intact land cover:

You Google the area, you know, a Google map, just, wow, all the forest coverage is incredible. And here we're living in the most populated part of North America....and we've still got hundreds of thousands of square kilometres of natural landscape - not natural because man has had his footprint in all of it, but it's not paved over yet. (Wi249)

4.2.3 *Landscape Diversity Theme*

The diversity of the landscape is another theme within this value dimension. In discussing their properties and the regional landscape, respondents described the diversity of the landscape and its flora and fauna as associated with the the area's geology. For instance, one landowner remarked, of his property:

... it seems that every 100 metres you're in a different small ecosystem because of the geology and the soils and, therefore, the vegetation and, therefore, wildlife habitat and that sort of thing is extremely varied back there....It's really rough, raw country. (1550-90-92)

² Referring to the Gananoque River.

The area's unique geology has also resulted in a diverse mix of cultivated and forested land, which David described as part of the area's unique appeal:

And Leeds County is very much all kinds of rocks and trees, and you've got the trees growing along the edges of the rocks and you've got rocks that jump right up. But then a few feet away, you've got all kinds of clay that can grow good grass and hay. It makes an interesting landscape, varied landscape. (Dav73-75)

Charles similarly noted of his land, "It's an amazing property. It's got hills. It's got marsh. It's got fields" (CR30). The rough terrain, which has prevented farming and timber harvesting in some parts of the study area, has thus conserved the diversity of the land and its flora and fauna, resulting in the wildness which some landowners value highly, and at the same time allowed pockets of cultivation, which added to the area's aesthetic appeal for other respondents.

4.3 Wildlife and Biodiversity Value Dimension

The wildlife and biodiversity value dimension is related to the wild and diverse values described in the setting value dimension. Landowners communicated that they valued knowing that wildlife existed on their land and enjoyed opportunities to see and interact with it. In addition, respondents related an appreciation for the richness of the species mix in the area.

4.3.1 Wildlife Existential Value Theme

Respondents often described the enjoyment of seeing wildlife on their land. Lauren explicitly mentioned it as one of her favourite things about the property, saying "We just love seeing the birds and the animals that come here, the turtles, the snakes" (La92). Other respondents described how they enjoyed watching wildlife from their windows, and feeding wildlife on their land, including birds, deer and wild turkeys. Some

property owners recorded their wildlife sightings, including birds and wildflowers. Memorable encounters with wildlife featured in discussions with some respondents; Gordon, for example, was once encircled by 12 otters while paddling on his land; Lauren and Rose both described how they had watched turtles laying eggs on their properties; Rodney described how he once had a moose on his property and Charles noted that he is certain he once saw a timber wolf (rather than a coyote) on his land.

4.3.2 *Biodiversity Value Theme*

Uniqueness was again an important characteristic in respondents' descriptions of the area's rich mix of species. One respondent, for example, said:

Since we found out about this area being part of the Biosphere and starting to understand what that really meant, you know the sort of merging of the four great forests, the Carolinian (sic) and the Atlantic and the Great Lakes Forest and Adirondack influences, yeah, it's very interesting. (1451-68)

David similarly described the region's mix of species as unique, saying "...so you have that diverse type of flora that you don't see everywhere else in eastern Ontario" (Dav77). Another respondent said, of his move to the area, "We were so lucky, we didn't realize until years later that this is a really rich interesting area" (1550-142), while another noted his appreciation for the area's richness, saying "I like the diversity. I think it's an amazing diversity here" (1850-132).

4.4 Intangible Value Dimension

This dimension includes abstract values that property owners described as providing them a sense of fulfillment (Eisenhauer et al., 2000). These intangible values include ownership, (Cheng et al., 2003) and the sense of tranquility and sanctuary provided by the land.

4.4.1 *Tranquility and Sanctuary Theme*

Several landowners described restorative benefits, such as the privacy and peacefulness that their properties and the region provide them. Respondents' remarks expressed a spiritual appreciation of the land, as it inspired feelings of sanctuary and a sense of tranquility (Eishenhauer et al., 2000). Charles, for instance, noted of his property "I think it definitely gives you peace of mind and privacy" (CR111). Lauren, likewise, remarked "...most of what I enjoy about the area are the same things I enjoy about my own land.... You know, just the beauty of the landscape, that it's generally undeveloped and it's generally peaceful" (La193). William described the area as "a sanctuary from concrete" (Wi270) and said "...what I really value is the peacefulness. We have a road that gets a dozen cars a day maybe, but other than that it's just the wind and the birds. It's very peaceful" (Wi82).

Several respondents echoed Lauren's remark that the area's relatively undeveloped nature afforded them the sense of peacefulness and escape that they value. David remarked that on his land, "...if you turn your back to the road, all you do is look down across the green fields and the trees and the other little mountain as we call it just over here" (Dav102). Rose related how the sense of solitude and remoteness the landscape provides was one of the reasons that she purchased her recreational property, saying:

But it wasn't just the terrain. I mean the terrain gives you the good feeling, but it also keeps out a lot of people, so you have this sense that it's yours and you're not having 50 million people around you. (Ros316)

4.4.2 *Ownership Theme*

Several property owners described owning their land as a value in and of itself.

For instance, Charles said, “I think our ownership is an incredible concept....You’ve got to have space. I think space is very, very key to it” (CR91-95). Darryl commented “...it’s a rare thing to have a couple hundred acres of Canadian shield, I guess, in southern Ontario, and we treasure it” (Dar143). Fred related that he felt he was meant to own his land, saying that when he found it, “It was like fate - I was supposed to have it” (Fr54).

The value of ownership was also related in comments that conveyed a sense of pride. One respondent described a visit by a naturalist to his property with pride, saying:

When he came for a walk here, he just couldn’t believe the diversity. Because of the different environments here, I have sort of high plateaus and I have large granite uprisings and I’ve got deep valleys and hollows and, you know, there’s streams and ponds, there’s different wildlife and different plants and trees growing. (1451-66)

William, likewise, was proud of his property and how he has managed it, saying, “I’m quite proud of the property and how I...I had a goal when I came here ...to leave the property in better condition than how I received it from the previous owner, and it’s working out that way” (Wi101). Jack and Mabel described with pride how successive generations have looked after the land, which has been in the family for over 200 years, saying:

All our buildings -- the barn was built from this woodlot and there’s still more timber there now than there was when -- my dad built the barn. The original barns too came off this property, so it has been well cared for. (JM54)

Several respondents also described the freedom and independence ownership provided them. Rodney alluded to personal freedom in describing how he enjoyed his family’s land, saying “We just want to be able to use it and make our own decisions on

it” (Rod539). Lauren and Charles both spoke about independence as a value associated with the use of their land. Lauren said:

I love the idea that the land gives us independence....in a way our forest is providing us with hot water, it's providing us with direct heat and it provides us with a lot of our food, so it's a great deal of independence. (La105-109)

Owning land and having the freedom to use its resources and interact with it thus contributed to a sense of personal fulfillment for some respondents.

4.5 Social and Historical Value Dimension

Respondents valued the land as a venue for social interaction and for the historical connection it provided them with past generations. This personal connection to the land and to past use was related through respondents' stories of their interaction with friends and family on the land over time. Values related to family history and historical legacy were also noted in a study of woodlot owners in Oregon by Fischer and Bliss (2008).

4.5.1 Personal Heritage Theme

The value of a personal historical connection to the land was particularly evident amongst respondents with a lengthy family history in the area. A connection to the land borne of long-term use was clear in comments by Richard, who said that family memories were part of the reason he still owned his land, and described how the family still has records of his great uncles' fishing expeditions in the early 1900's, saying “They spent every Sunday there lake trout fishing, and the logs from their visits are still at the cottage there” (Ri193). He described his personal connection to the land as a result of his interaction with the land over the years, saying:

Well, I think what I value most, from a very personal level, is I essentially grew up there. I spent a lot of time there as a young child and an older child too, and I

love the forest and the woods and the animals and I do some fishing in the lake.

(Ri102)

Gordon, whose family farmed in the region, related childhood memories of driving cattle from the farm to the recreational property discussed in the interview each summer, as well as sleigh rides to haul lumber and oats to the local mill.

Family memories were also valued by Fred, who grew up in the region and recalled travelling in the bush around Charleston Lake to collect blueberries and huckleberries. Jack, whose property has been farmed by his family since 1853, described the value of his land in relation to his family heritage, saying that the important thing about it was “Just that it has been in our family so many years that it’s home to, not only my family, but all my relatives too” (JM153). Respondents also valued historical traces of people’s interactions with the land, describing how they had discovered old wells, apple orchards and hay meadows, evidence of use by First Nations, and even an old Model T Ford in the middle of the woods.

4.5.2 *Family Ties Theme*

Several respondents noted that they valued and were attached to their properties because of the social interactions they had experienced there with friends and family (Gustafson, 2001). Even respondents who had owned their properties for shorter periods of time, and who did not use their land as a primary residence related the sense that they had roots in the area. Rose, for instance said, of her cottage property, “It’s the one place that my kids have known since they were very young. We’ve moved around a great deal, so consequently it has more meaning to them than this apartment we’re living in, so it’s very much a family place” (Ros71). Charles noted of his land “Well, one of the things is it’s a home base, and it’s a home base also for our children. They like the idea that this is

where they grew up and they feel their roots are here” (CR187).

Respondents also noted that they valued the land for the social interactions they had with others. Mabel for instance noted that she once knew all her neighbours, and described how they used to come together to celebrate community occasions. Rose summarized what she enjoyed about her land by saying “There’s such a marvellous combination of what we value and enjoy, and friends over the years” (Ros249).

4.6 Use Value Dimension

Utilitarian values expressed by respondents included appreciation of economic and commodity uses of the land, as well as various recreational activities that were important elements of respondents’ use of their properties. Utilitarian values were important to landowners because they fulfilled economic needs or allowed personal fulfillment through interaction with the land (Eisenhauer et al., 2000).

4.6.1 Economic and Commodity Use Theme

The main commodity uses of the land for respondents were related to farming and timber harvesting. David, a farmer, described part of the appeal of his land as its ability to support his cow/calf operation, saying “Oh, it had a mix of the woods and the farm fields which made it economically viable in terms of using it for a farm and raising animals, so there was enough that made it worthwhile” (Dav39). Lauren noted the value of her woodlot, remarking “But down the line hopefully, because of thinning the forest we will eventually have some saleable timber. That would be good” (La86).

Several respondents who owned woodlots described how they enjoyed working in the woods, likening their work to recreation. For instance, Jack said “It’s nice to be in the woods, and I enjoy working there in the winter cutting firewood” (JM159). Walter echoed this sentiment, saying “It’s nice to go back there and just wander around....I just

loved to cut wood in the back” (Wa137), while Richard noted that the real value of his woodlot was not economic, saying, “I spend probably a month or six weeks of my fall down there by myself harvesting this stuff, and I love that. But...for the amount of money I make, that’s probably the only reason I do it, is ’cause I love it” (Ri259).

4.6.2 *Recreational Use Theme*

Respondents described various recreational activities that they enjoyed on their properties and in the region, including hunting, fishing, canoeing, gardening, skiing, hiking, horseback riding, and appreciative activities such as star gazing and wildlife watching. In speaking about the activities they enjoyed on the land, respondents often relayed how the opportunity to interact with and enjoy the land allowed them to appreciate other values they associated with it. For instance, William described a favourite wintertime activity that allowed him to appreciate the area’s wildness:

Just looking at the stars is recreational....You can come out here and stand on the porch in January and it’s 20 below, and it’s a beautiful starlit night, and the coyotes down below start to yelp away. That’s just marvellous. That’s just a wonderful, wonderful sound. I love it, I love it. (Wi294-298)

Rodney described why he enjoys hunting by saying:

It gives you a week that you spend in the woods, like how often do you ever say that I’m going to go spend a week in the woods? If you do go hunting, it’s not so much as getting anything, it’s spending a week that you go and walk through all your woods. (Rod431)

These comments by respondents indicate a sense of belonging to the land and an emotional attachment to place realized through interaction with it (Rogan et al., 2005).

5 LANDOWNER KNOWLEDGE

5.1 Overview

Knowledge, in the context of this study, means respondents' understanding of the biophysical environment and conservation concerns for the region, as well as their perceptions of changes to flora and fauna and the landscape over time. Respondents' understandings of biodiversity and conservation issues were an important factor in determining their willingness to undertake conservation action. The implications of landowner understanding are explored in greater depth in the discussion chapters (Chapters 7 and 8).

5.2 Understanding of Biodiversity

Respondents were asked to describe rare and unique species in the area. Various species were mentioned, including pitch pine, butternut, orchids, skink, and various snake and turtle species. Pitch pine and black rat snake were the most frequently mentioned and were discussed in greater detail than most other species. Knowledge of species and of their status varied, although it should be noted that the exploration of landowner knowledge about species at risk may have been limited by the researcher's decision to avoid using terms such as endangered and at risk (the terms unique, rare and characteristic of the area were substituted). Several respondents were aware of or had participated in programs regarding species at risk, such as egg incubation boxes for black rat snakes and nesting platforms for bald eagles.

5.2.1 Understanding of Wildlife Change

Many respondents remarked that wildlife seemed to be increasing in the area, and mentioned the return of fisher, wild turkey and bald eagles, as well as the increase in

beaver and deer over time. Respondents connected the increase in wildlife to a decline in farming, describing how the area was “going back into brush and bush” (751-346) and “had gone back to the wild” (1452-727) and remarking that this was beneficial for wildlife. For instance, one respondent remarked, “Well, now that the fields are left, they’re not being worked. You know, they’re just either being left to go to hay -- I just think its creating habitat, again, for foxes and deer and whatever else” (1451-332). Another respondent stated “So I think the area generally has improved its biodiversity over the last 30, 40 years because of the shift away from farming. There are a few big farmers around now, but even they can’t clear all the bush” (1550-158). Yet another noted that the area’s mix of fields and farms was perfect for wildlife, stating:

So the wildlife actually has it better than they ever did, even whenever there was nobody here because there are pockets of cultivated land here and there, excellent food sources with this 3 or 37 or 17 acres of land, it’s a great place to live in those trees. (950-313)

However, several species were noted to have declined. Many respondents specifically noted the decline in porcupine, which they linked to the return of fisher in the area, as well as elm and ash trees. Others mentioned that they saw fewer birds (specifically evening grosbeak, brown thrasher and green herons), snakes (including black rat snakes and milk snakes), fish (pike, bass and muskie in the St. Lawrence River, lake trout in Charleston Lake), turtles, bullfrogs and freshwater clams. Several landowners were reluctant to characterize their impressions as indicative of general trends, noting that their perspectives of wildlife change may simply reflect what they happened to notice on their properties.

5.3 Understanding of Conservation Issues

Landowners were specifically asked to discuss what they perceived to be environmental issues in the region. Water quality (specifically nutrient inputs to lakes and rivers and septic and farm contamination of groundwater), and changes to riparian habitat were mentioned by several respondents as negative impacts associated with regional development. Industrial pollution was mentioned as an issue for the St. Lawrence River, and was seen to have negatively affected the fish population. Agricultural pollution related to fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide use was also mentioned as a health and environmental concern. Invasive species such as zebra mussels, and exotic pests/pathogens such as emerald ash borer and Dutch elm disease were also concerns for respondents, who associated them with negative changes to the biophysical environment.

Hyperabundant species were also mentioned by several respondents. Two shoreline vegetation belt residents mentioned cormorants as a concern, noting that they were affecting fish and vegetation along the St. Lawrence River. One respondent described their impact, saying of the bird “Well, it kills all the vegetation right off....It’s like somebody dumped a bunch of chalk or lime or something on the rocks and the land, and it ruins the island” (1452-875). Several respondents mentioned their concern with the increase in the deer population, noting an increase in wildlife-vehicle collisions, describing the population as “out of control” (752-335) and remarking that they had “denuded” Hill Island³ (1550-592).

³ Hill Island is one of the largest islands in the Thousand Islands region of the St. Lawrence River. Parks Canada owns and manages part of the island.

Two respondents mentioned that clearcutting had occurred in the area, and noted their concern that this may continue due to the lack of bylaws to regulate forestry practices. Another two respondents mentioned air quality as an issue, remarking that despite the area's relatively undeveloped nature, smog alerts were possible and were indicative of the global reach of environmental issues. In contrast, one respondent stated that there weren't any real environmental concerns in the region, other than garbage along the roads, explaining "There's no big industry or anything" in the area (751-615).

The predominant complaint amongst respondents was related to ATV use. One respondent hesitated to describe it as an environmental issue, saying that although it certainly impacted specific sites, it may not be causing broad-scale impacts. Other respondents characterized ATVs as destroying habitat and affecting wildlife, as well as eliminating recreational opportunities for other users due to the destruction they caused. One respondent described their impacts by saying "They'll chew the soil right down to bare rock, they'll expose tree roots, plant roots. They tear up wet areas" (1550-574).

5.3.1 Understanding of Landscape Change and its Effects

Respondents all noted an increase in residential housing on the landscape. One respondent summarized the change, saying that since development had picked up in the area, "a lot of people who are poor can't hang on to their property, and they're forced to develop in order to pay their taxes, or subdivide" (1850-40), suggesting that development was bound to continue. The majority of respondents also noted a decline in agriculture in the area and described a decline in the number of small farms, accompanied by an increase in number of large-scale farms. Farm properties were being subdivided or bought as residences and pasture land left to re-naturalize by new owners.

Remarks voiced by respondents were informed by their values, and in turn

conveyed concerns with the effects of landscape change on their values. Respondents were particularly concerned with impacts to the setting and intangible value dimensions as they felt that development was changing the rural aesthetic, the wild and undeveloped character of the region and the tranquility and sanctuary values they associated with their properties. For instance, Charles described a new home along the waterfront by saying “It looks monstrous. It’s a scar” (CR218). Rose summarized local cottagers perspectives by saying “...everybody says no more development, it’s ruining our water quality and our peace and solitude that we love here, taking away the wildlife” (Ros671), while William remarked, “Well, I don’t like driving by all these tacky houses seeing parked cars out front that have got the engines ripped out of them - it doesn’t go well with, you know, what we’re trying to protect or preserve here” (Wi423). A recent study of rural landowners in southern Ontario reported similar findings within the GPE of SLINP, noting that landowners in the area around Brockville were particularly concerned with conflicts between farmers and new residents, the importation of urban values to the countryside, and the impacts of landscape change on the sustainability of farming and small rural communities (Milburn, 2007).

While respondents were concerned with the effects of development on the values they appreciated and related how newcomers were ruining the area, they voiced few concerns about the environmental impacts of these changes. These findings are similar to those of Kaltenborn (1998), who found that outsiders can be perceived as more of a disturbance than other kinds of environmental change, especially to residents who have a long-term commitment to place.

6 SENSE OF PLACE

6.1 Overview

Experience of a place results not only in an understanding of the biophysical features of the environment and its values, as reviewed in Chapters 4-5, but also produces a connection to the land as individuals imbue places with meanings that reflect their interaction with it (Eishenauer et al., 2000; Jorgenson & Stedman, 2001; Rogan et al., 2005). As discussed in Chapter 2 (Theoretical Framework), the term *sense of place* encompasses various aspects of the connections between people and the land and provides a holistic framework for investigating people-place connections; how individuals relate to place, understand it and become attached to it (Kaltenborn, 1998). Elements of sense of place that have been specifically studied include emotional ties and sense of belonging to a setting (the concept of place attachment), as well as people's understanding of place and related conceptions of themselves in relationship to that place (the concepts of place meanings and identity) (Eishenauer, Krannich & Blahna, 2000; Farnum, Hall & Kruger, 2005). These concepts, which are understood to be overlapping and interconnected elements of sense of place (Williams and Stewart, 1998) are explored further in this chapter.

As noted in Chapter 2, understanding landowners' sense of place is important for land managers, in order to ensure that conservation programs and communications harness motivations that reflect people's connection to the land and their understanding of the appropriate relationship with it (Fischer & Bliss, 2008). By understanding sense of place, land managers may also be able to foresee and understand sources of conflict (Cheng et al., 2003; Eisenhauer et al., 2000; Yung et al., 2003).

6.2 Place Meanings

Interaction with space leads people to endow it with values, resulting in meaning-rich locations that reflect emotions, memories and interpretations (Williams & Carr, 1993). Place meanings stem from an understanding of “place” as having a psychological as well as a physical component. The psychological component of place is derived from the notion that people’s experience in the environment leads them to view their surroundings as context-laden locations that reflect socially and personally-defined meanings and emotional ties (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995).

Place meanings may occur at varying spatial scales, for example related to an individual’s residence, the community, or the broader region (Gustafson, 2001). Community residents may hold multiple and different meanings for the same place, and those meanings may be specific and derived from one individual’s experiences, or shared amongst a family, community or culture (Galliano & Loeffler, 1999). Discussions with respondents elicited a range of place meanings, which encompass multiple values participants expressed for place presented in Chapter 4.

6.2.1 *Retreat*

The place meaning “retreat” represents landowners’ understanding of their properties and/or the surrounding landscape as offering an escape from the stresses of modern living, a chance to interact with the natural setting, and to re-visit times past. This meaning reflects various value dimensions and themes that respondents discussed, including setting, wildlife, intangible, social and historical, and use values. For example, respondents’ understanding of their land and the region as a *retreat* was related to landowner’s appreciation of the area’s wildness, the rural aesthetic and the opportunities to interact with nature and wildlife; the connection the land provided to their families and

personal heritage, and the fulfillment and sense of tranquility and sanctuary they gained through use of the land. In their remarks related to this place meaning, respondents represented the land as a restorative environment where personal needs were fulfilled, suggesting that interaction with the land has a spiritual effect (Rogan et al., 2005). The place meaning *retreat* clearly has physical characteristics (e.g. wild and undeveloped land, quiet country roads), a temporal aspect, in that it is reminiscent of the past, and psychological elements, in terms of the effects of the place on respondents (e.g. feelings of tranquility and emotional connection).

For instance, William described his appreciation for specific locations on his property by saying “There are one or two spots on the property that I go to occasionally because I really like them. They’re almost sanctuary in a way. I guess the biggest value for me is the connection with nature” (Wi86). Rose likewise described a feeling of relief in escaping to her cottage property, saying:

When you live in a big city, as we do, and work, as we used to -- we’re retired now -- it was the solitude, the just sitting around to read, to paddle, to whatever, without the pressures of the big city honing in on you. (Ros73)

Other respondents’ comments echoed this sense of fulfillment through interaction with the natural setting. Lauren related how she found a local marsh “an amazing place to just sit and watch things” (La150), while Rodney’s comments about the value of hunting as time for being in the woods (Section 4.6.2) similarly reflected an appreciation of the opportunity for immersion in the natural world.

Place meanings may also carry a temporal component, conveying attachment to social and physical dimensions of a place that reflect long-term residence or family history in an area (Gustafson, 2001; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). The connection to the

past that is evoked through the place meaning *retreat* is evident in several respondents' remarks. William said, of a route near his house:

That's a recreational walk that we do anywhere from one to five times a week, going down that road and turning around and coming back, because it's as it was 100 years ago. There's a cemetery and a house, and until you get to the other end of the road there's nothing...it is as it was 100 years ago, apart from (the neighbour) taking all these fields and making them into 100-acre fields, but it's still a very, very pleasant walk and we just feel good about walking down there.
(Wi393)

Richard likewise found comfort in the ability to relive some of the memories of his childhood, although the ability to do so is sometimes compromised. He described a recent trip to the property that captured some of the character of the place as he knew it in his childhood:

...we were down there two weeks ago and we saw one boat in the whole day... when I grew up there as a kid, if I saw a boat -- you know, when I was ten years old, so that's 45 years ago -- if I saw a boat there was a very good chance that I knew who was driving the boat. I mean that's the way it was then. (Ri109)

The ability to enjoy the retreat aspect of the landscape is associated with positive feelings, and satisfaction with place, as is evident in the quote from William above. However, respondent's remarks also suggested that this place meaning is threatened by development in the area, which led several respondents to express nostalgia, fear, disappointment, and frustration.

6.2.2 *Place for People*

Place for people is a meaning that embodies conflict, in that it is primarily

communicated via landowner's perspectives on the tension between the preservation and use mandates of land managers. The meaning *place for people* reflects respondents' understanding that residents have a rightful place in the area's natural setting, and is conveyed through comments related to government land management decisions. This meaning encompasses multiple values, including the value of ownership, social and historical values that conveyed the importance of a personal connection to the land, and utilitarian values related to an appreciation for opportunities to interact with the land.

The meaning *place for people* in part reflects historical issues between area landowners and Parks Canada, and is most prevalent amongst (although not restricted to) property owners in the shoreline belt, who are within the area in which Parks Canada undertook a failed land acquisition process in the 1970's in order to expand SLINP. The result of this history is a legacy of mistrust in park management intentions for the area and continued evidence of deeply-held concern that park managers value wildlife over people. Thus, many of the remarks that communicate this place meaning convey the perspective that Parks Canada does not want people on the landscape. For instance, one respondent described Parks Canada's management responsibilities by saying, "Well, the big problem with the park is it has never been decided whether the purpose of the parks is to let people in or keep them out" (1850-556).

Parks Canada's management decision to restore natural vegetation in an area (Mallorytown Landing) along the St. Lawrence River where there was formerly a well-used picnic area, a beach and a campground was a particular source of concern in relation to this place meaning. One respondent related that this decision was symbolic of a management attitude that valued wildlife over people, stating "They seem to like the brush and the weeds more so than they do the people coming and enjoying it, you know"

(1452-424). Another respondent remarked that this decision seemed inappropriate for public land, saying:

Well, that's land that's owned by the people, so it needs to be managed, but it should be managed in such a way that people can use it.... You look at what they've done to their little park⁴ up here... Now it's just a bunch of weeds and marsh because obviously they went back to nature with it. (752-469-481)

Yet another respondent remarked that Parks Canada's lack of attention to the deer overpopulation represented a misplaced management emphasis, stating, of park-owned land on Hill Island, "...the human footprint on it is so obvious, so evident. You have to treat it differently than you would say Kluane or Nahanni or the interior of Banff⁵. You have to treat it differently" (1550-596).

A few respondents made comments that related a positive attitude towards park management decisions seen to promote continued human use of the land. For instance, Gordon related how the Charleston Lake Provincial Park management plan has maintained the pattern of shared access he recalls from his childhood, saying:

It was quite different then because you could go anywhere on anybody's property....

(I): So there was kind of this communal use of the land?

The whole countryside, yes.... You could pick blueberries on anybody's property

⁴ Referring to Mallorytown Landing.

⁵ Kluane, Nahanni and Banff are all national parks managed by Parks Canada that could be considered to encompass large areas of untouched wilderness.

and they could go through there hunting. Yeah, you weren't restricted to your little 100-acre lot or whatever....And because of the park plan, it still retains those general accessibilities. I guess that's what I was trying to say before, that the Park has retained that openness. (Go490)

Charles' wife Ruth suggested that park managers have revised their management orientation since the 1970's, stating:

...they have changed their tune. They're very good neighbours and they realize in order to be able to preserve their small holdings they need to have people around them also looking after their land as well, because it's all one big thing" (CR352).

Another landowner related her impression that parks played an important role, not just in preserving land for species, but also for human interaction with the land, saying that people needed to use parks, since "you don't protect what you don't love, so you learn to love it and maybe you learn to love it in a park, and then you'll fight like hell for it" (162-654).

Strong emotions were associated with this place meaning. Nostalgia is clear in some comments, such as Walter's reflection of how Mallorytown Landing has changed since his childhood; "There are so many changes down there that I have seen. There used to be a beautiful dock....We used to dive off it, my God. I suppose I'd be eight, ten years old maybe or something, and be down there swimming" (Wa395). Walter went on to voice his regret that he could no longer take his grandchildren to the Landing to share his childhood experiences, relating how Parks Canada's management of the Landing had affected his ability to pass on his personal heritage. Another respondent's comments about Parks Canada's decision to block motorized use from a newly acquired parcel of land likewise reflected resentment at the loss of freedom to interact with the land as he

chose.

Respondents' comments in relation to the *place for people* meaning revealed a sense of betrayal at having lost the security in knowing they belonged on the landscape and that their personal connection to the land would be maintained. A sense of fear was particularly evident in relation to Parks Canada's continued interest in acquiring private land in the area, as illustrated in this excerpt from Jack and Mabel:

Jack: Especially this national park, they'd like to have this whole land, this whole area, but I'd hate to see that happen.

Mabel: Yeah, I would.

(I): The national park on the river, St Lawrence Islands, is trying to --

Jack: Well, yeah. I have a feeling that they'd like to have control of more of it.

They might do something that you could never sell your land, only to Parks Canada or something like that. (JM499-504)

Another landowner echoed this loss of security, saying, "Some people will be likely afraid to let Parks [Canada] on their property because you let them on your property and they find something that may change the way you can use your own land (752-521).

6.2.3 *Rural Place*

Rural place is a meaning that encompasses a sense of belonging to a community, setting values such as an aesthetic appreciation of farm fields and modest, well-spaced country homes and cottages. In addition, this meaning reflects respondents' values for peaceful, tranquil surroundings where they can appreciate nature and wildlife. As is the case with the *retreat* place meaning, *rural place* is a meaning that is threatened by development, especially the subdivision of farmland.

As noted by Gustafson, (2001) place meanings may become apparent through

comments about those perceived as not belonging to a place. The comments via which respondents conveyed this place meaning were primarily associated with reflections on the impacts of newcomers' and developers' land management choices. Respondents' remarks also related a sense of times past, in that their comments described how the area used to be, and how it has changed. For instance, Lauren described the effect of residential subdivisions on the rural character of the area, saying:

...there was no strip development when I came in 1970....now they're out in the country along the roadside--the roadside is filled with them. There's no community. There's no sense that they form any kind of a unit; they're just plunked here and plunked here, so each one, you know, an acre, half an acre, that kind of thing, one after another. (La324)

The change in the regional landscape was also mentioned by respondents who owned property in the shoreline vegetation belt, which is more densely developed than the other parts of the sampled study area. One shoreline belt respondent voiced a fear that the St. Lawrence River waterfront was becoming urbanized, noting that small cottages are no longer the norm, saying that "people are building too big, too much" (1850-211). He described the result by saying, "And then you turn the parkway⁶ into an urban street because it's strip development the whole way along. That's the sort of danger that's going on" (1850-184).

David described the rural economy that used to exist in the area, supported by

⁶ Referring to the Thousand Islands Parkway, a scenic route along the St. Lawrence River shoreline in between Brockville and Gananoque.

small-scale farming and local communities:

“...every one of these places on the road raised a family, they all milked two dozen cattle, type of thing, and all these little places on the map supported a cheese factory....So, every one of those had 16 to 24 cows, every farm, so every lot they raised a family, kept a husband and wife and four or five or six kids, some of them more, some of them less. And Lansdowne was the hub, if you will, of the area and people would go and they’d do their shopping. There was a hardware store, and there was a grocery store, or two grocery stores, and there was a feed store, or two feed stores. (Dav278-280)

David noted that the change in population would lead to the demise of these small-town hubs, where newcomers are unlikely to shop. Gordon ascribed these changes to a whole new way of life in the country, saying:

All the country schools have closed....Well, you know, the whole nature of life has changed in Canada. It has become developed, roads, accessibility and so on, the whole thing, the whole concept has changed. (Go495-497)

Comments in relation to this place meaning often reflect sadness, disappointment, and nostalgia. The conflict between respondents and newcomers to the area, who are perceived to hold different values that are manifested through property management decisions that are out of place with the area’s rural character, is discussed further in Chapter 8.

6.2.4 *Home and Family Place*

The understanding of their land and the region as *home and family place* was another common thread amongst respondents. This place meaning encompasses the social and historical value dimension described in Section 4.5, and reflects how respondents’

connections to the land are partly defined through social relationships with family and community (Gustafson, 2001). The meaning *home and family place* was not restricted to respondents with a primary residence on their properties, nor was it solely restricted to the scale of respondents' properties. In this sense, "home" is construed more as a location than a dwelling; a location that is imbued with emotion, which was often relayed through stories that described strong roots to the land and the social influence of friends and family in defining place (Eisenhauer et al., 2000).

This place meaning was often conveyed through stories and family memories of meaningful experiences on the land. For instance, Rose described how family interactions defined the importance of some islands adjacent to her cottage property, saying:

But they're very important in the family history because the good swimmers can swim over to them. The first camping experience for our youngsters was on the islands, because they would be allowed to take everything over and they're within hailing distance. (Ros258)

Gordon related a story handed down to him about how the community used to try to cross land that formerly belonged to his family but is now part of Charleston Lake Provincial Park, saying:

And my great uncle had a tollgate on the road because he owned the property and built the road. I understand one of the challenges by the young guys on a Sunday afternoon was to try to get back the road without paying at the tollgate, according to my dad. Well, this was one of the community activities, I guess.

Mabel also mourned the loss of community that accompanied the evolving landscape, noting that social interactions with neighbours were now a thing of the past:

And it used to be that things were in the community, like if there was a shower for

a young couple that got married, everybody knew them; they were in the area, so it would be in somebody's home....Same thing it used to be with the sawing, silo filling and the thrashing-- three times a year at least. Men were in everybody else's homes and you fed them all. (JM462-464)

The stories Richard and Fred related about interactions with family on the land, reported in Section 4.5, also clearly illustrate that places become meaningful through interaction with others.

Comments in relation to this place meaning conveyed a sense of belonging and an emotional attachment to the land. Other researchers have also found that connection to place is strongly influenced by familial and generational ties to the land (Galliano & Loeffler, 1999). However, since connection to the land through social and historical dimensions is related to continuity (Gustafson, 2001), management actions that threaten landowners' security in feeling at home on the land threaten this place meaning. For instance, one respondent related his sense that the continuity of landowners' connections to their land was being eroded by Parks Canada's land acquisitions in the area:

The thing too is - are they going to give them [the park's land holdings] back to the people, the humans again some day if they need it? That's what I see is going to be a problem 50 or 75 years from now. There's going to be lots of park land, but you can't live on it or you can't do anything. You can't be anywhere near it. (1452-545)

6.3 Concepts of Self in Relation to Place

Interaction with place leads to a reciprocal understanding of place in relation to personal identity, in that people imbue places with meanings that express their own identity, and define themselves in relation to their understanding of place (Cheng et al.,

2003; Rogan, et al., 2005). For instance, Greider and Garkovich (1994) describe how a hunter, farmer and developer interpret an open field in relation to their dominant modes of interaction with the land (i.e. as potential wildlife habitat, real estate, or crop land) (Stedman, 2003), and are in turn defined by their interaction with the land. Self-identities constructed around place are thus related to people's life histories, values and interactions with a place (Kaltenborn, 1998). The incorporation of place knowledge into self-concept is referred to as "place identity", and is conceived of as part of connection to, or sense of, place (Manzo, 2003). When place meanings are shared amongst a group, it can result in a group identity related to place (Cheng et al., 2003).

One respondent explicitly recognized the influence of place on his sense of self, relating in a written piece he provided the interviewer⁷, "there is something elemental about land ownership that seems to define me as a person." Self identities communicated by respondents included "land steward" "farmer", "rural person", and "cottager". These self-identities were often elicited when respondents discussed the impacts of landscape change on their lifestyles.

6.3.1 Expressions of self-identity by respondents

In discussing changes to the biophysical environment and the government approach to land management, several respondents alluded to their understanding of themselves as knowledgeable stewards of the land. This understanding was applied at a collective level, as well as at an individual scale. The cultural identity of landowners as stewards was also noted in a study by Peterson and Horton (1995) in which rural

⁷ This written piece is not referenced in order to protect the respondent's anonymity.

residents related how their role as stewards of the land was disregarded by government land managers, who privileged expert-based information over local landowners' experience with the land.

Similarly, commenting on Parks Canada's 1970 land acquisition attempt, Charles related that area landowners had told Parks Canada, "...you may say you're doing this⁸ because you want to preserve the area, but we know how to preserve it. We know our land. We know when the fish are spawning. We know this kind of thing" (CR273). David likewise related his understanding of rural landowners as stewards, saying:

I guess that many landowners, and again, I'll go back to the farm people, are the original stewards of the land, and I would dare say that most of them are more attuned to working cooperatively with nature than what governments would tend to give them credit for. (Dav459)

Fred's criticism of the government reflected his self-definition as a steward and a rural person:

You know, I just think they use a sledgehammer approach to dealing with these issues instead of being logical and even communicating with the landowners, the people who live in rural Ontario that understand these issues, have lived with them and care about them. (Fr448)

William similarly felt that his personal knowledge of his land made him a more qualified steward and judge of the sustainability of his management decisions than anyone else, as

⁸ Referring to Parks Canada's plan to take over land management from private property owners in order to enlarge the park.

he related in this excerpt:

I'm not a hunter, but I feel that if I provide the habitat, I'm looking after the habitat and I manage it, occasionally if I want to take something for the pot on my property, I should be able to circumvent any of the government regulations and do that because I'm a responsible person. (Wi324)

David's comment (above) reflected a self-identity that incorporated the concept of steward as part of the identity of farmer. Jack and Mabel's comments suggested a similar self-definition, as they described the care they took in looking after their cattle, saying "you just know if you don't treat your animals with kindness, they're not going to respond to you" (JM438). In the following excerpt they related how the whole family's identity was affected by the decision to sell the cattle:

But when we sold the cattle -- I mean, yes, it's a very emotional thing to the family because when we sold the cattle I said it wasn't just for Jack and I, but our two daughters and his brother and his nephew. I mean they didn't say oh, no, no, you shouldn't do it, but it was as hard for them to see them go because they had been raised with them....I guess that's just how attached we are to it. (JM98-101)

Several respondents mentioned the influence of family members in formulating their stewardship identity. Gordon, Richard and Jack, three respondents with lengthy connections to the land (i.e. their properties had been owned by their families for over 100 years), all referred to how their ancestors had managed the land as a guiding influence. Jack noted that his woodlot had been well-cared for and had sustained the family for several generations, while Richard noted that although the concept of stewardship may not have been familiar to his father, he embodied the through his management decisions, saying:

But I think that the fact that my father 45 years ago was planting trees and protecting rat snakes, and 30 years ago I was planting pine trees on a piece of pasture that never should have been cleared indicates that even though we couldn't have defined stewardship, we were acting it. (Ri649)

Similar findings were related by Rogan et al. (2005), who found that family members played a mediating role in shaping people's understanding of and interactions with the environment. Monroe (2003) likewise reported that interest in and emotional attachment to nature, related to positive experiences with family and friends, can influence individuals' willingness to undertake conservation behaviour.

Many respondents' self concepts revolved around variations in the understanding of self as a rural person, as defined by a respondent's particular use(s) of their land. For instance, Rose's self-definition as a cottager was grounded in her understanding of the surrounding "cottage country" as an idealized, wild and undeveloped place, where cottages are small, unobtrusive dwellings setback from the shoreline, and which represent a retreat from the rigour and amenities, of city life. Other respondents' comments likewise reflected how their self-understanding was grounded in their understanding of the land as a place for local residents to call home, make a living, and recreate.

6.4 Place Attachment

As illustrated in previous sections, respondents' remarks about their home and the landscape indicate a positive emotional bond to place, relayed through comments that reflected a sense of belonging and connection to the land, enjoyment or love of being on the land, pride and contentment in owning their properties, and satisfaction in the unique attributes of the region. Sharpe and Ewert (2000) suggest that social interactions and freedom of action are also factors in individuals' place attachment. Remarks by

respondents about the social and historical values of the land and the *home and family place* meaning, as well as comments reflecting the freedom and independence provided by land ownership may therefore also be interpreted as contributing to respondents' attachment to the land.

The importance of family ties in place attachment was also evident in respondents' remarks. Galliano and Loeffler (1999) note that place attachment can be passed down from one generation to the next. Respondents whose lands had been owned for successive generations all made comments that indicated a strong emotional connection to their property and the region. In addition, many respondents related how their family interactions with the land had resulted in their children's sense of being rooted in the area.

Walker and Ryan (2008) suggest that place attachment can also be communicated through respondents' commitment to the area, as seen through their involvement in community endeavours (Walker & Ryan, 2008). Many respondents described varying levels of involvement in community efforts related to land management. Rose, for example, described her involvement in a local property owners association, as well as her participation in township planning exercises. Richard was involved in land stewardship outreach programs for property owners and school children; William had recently become involved with a local land trust organization, and Fred was participating in a review of the township's land use zoning. Lauren described her participation in various programs related to helping landowners, including a local farmer's market, and she had also participated in township planning consultations. Another two respondents once served as members of the township council, while others participated in citizen science and wildlife stewardship programs on their land and public property, through groups such

as Ducks Unlimited and local organizations. All of these activities suggest a strong commitment, and thus attachment, to place.

6.5 The Influence of Landscape Change on Sense of Place

Changes to the biophysical environment, whether through environmental degradation or residential development, affects people's sense of place (Rogan et al., 2005). Since sense of place entails emotional attachment, landowners may react quite strongly to proposals or actions that they view as threatening to their connection to the land (Eishenhauer et al., 2000). For instance, one respondent described a visceral reaction to the changes to the environment that accompany strip developments, saying:

When we see beautiful land being stripped through bulldozers and stuff it makes me sick. When I think there are so many ways you can go and live on the land without hurting nature, I mean we took down zero trees to build this house, zero. (162-364)

Gordon's comments about changes to his family's former farm likewise communicated a sense of loss related to his sense of place:

I don't get any satisfaction from going back anymore because it's all changed and it's very different from a landscape perspective. It's disappointing....The buildings are gone. The trees are gone. I don't have any connection to the new way of doing things. (Go458-461)

Changes to the physical environment may thus be seen to represent threats to landowner's sense of place – to their understandings of self, their emotional attachment to the land, and the values and place meanings they have attributed to the landscape. For instance, the *rural place* meaning and the meaning *retreat* (and associated values and self-identities) were threatened by increasing levels of development in the area, as was

evident in remarks by respondents which described concern with the urbanization of the rural environment and how newcomers were “bringing the city to the country” (161-580).

The effect of landscape change on some respondents’ sense of place was particularly evident. To David, the rural landscape symbolized the heritage and personal investment of the farming community (Rogan et al., 2005). He expressed sadness over the changes he sees, saying “Yeah, you feel bad to see all the work that previous generations have done to build things up, and some of it’s just reverted back to nature” (Dav306). He followed this remark by noting that the fields will only be useful to wildlife, in contradiction of other statements he makes in support of wildlife habitat protection. This internal conflict may be related to a threat to the continuity of his self-identity, which is derived from and reflects the agricultural landscape (Rogan et al., 2005).

Rose’s sense of place was threatened by developments which contradicted her expectations of appropriate land management for her *retreat* place meaning. She spoke approvingly of one new residence which she described as “very small and modest and very well tucked in” (Ros509) but disparaged mowed lawns, paved driveways, year-round access, internet and TV. Her reaction to the changes in the area have led her to consider moving elsewhere if her sense of place is further eroded, as she related in this comment:

Sometimes I just get so frustrated....I just think, oh, I’m going to move further north, just get out of everything. But the family is not ready to move yet. They still have strong ties to the cottage, as do I. It’s still a beautiful place -- we’re lucky so far. But it’s just if any development comes in from the south end, I’ll be moving. If there are even attempts to get it developed, I’ll be out of there.

(Ros612)

Landscape change may affect multiple place meanings; as Rose's comments reveal that the loss of the values that define her *retreat* place meaning may ultimately cause her to lose her understanding of her land as *home and family* place.

6.6 Landowner Actions to Protect Sense of Place

Caring for a place may lead to opinions or concerns about appropriate behaviour and management decisions in a place (Eisenhauer et al., 2000). The development of behavioural mores in relation to a place means that sense of place can become a motivating influence for actions to protect landowners' connections to the land and the values and meanings they attribute to it (Cheng et al., 2003). Property owners' management decisions for their land or their participation in community-based activities may thus be seen as a means of maintaining their place meanings and emotional attachment to the land, or of preserving an interaction with the land that is related to their self-identity.

6.6.1 Individual Actions to Protect Sense of Place

Respondent's sense of place and understanding of appropriate behaviour for their place meanings clearly contributed to some actions they took. For instance, several respondents described actions that they take to avoid disrupting their place meanings. Rose and Richard both avoided going to their recreational properties during times of the year when the presence of others might disturb their *retreat* place meaning. William described a detour to avoid driving by an area of the road that had been developed in a manner that disagreed with his *rural place* meaning, saying "...we don't even drive down that way 'cause then we don't look at the mess...we go down the quiet church road here, just a little longer; it's not much longer, and then go out that way" (Wi431). Rose also

described measures she took to guard her cottage home from the incursions of modern life in order to protect her *retreat* place meaning, saying:

We do not allow computers in the cottage. That's a rule. Kids are not allowed to bring their electronic games over the hill - they can leave them in the car if they want to go and sit in the car, but they don't come down to the cottage. So we're trying to keep, you know, keep that different -- I mean we don't want it to be a home; we want it to be away from home so you don't have these electronics bothering you, phones ringing, et cetera. (Ros489-491)

Richard also tried to ensure others acted according to his understanding of appropriate behaviour related to his place meanings by working with the provincial government to try to establish a fish sanctuary on the lake adjacent to his family's property, as he disapproved of how the lake "gets beaten to death in terms of fishing pressure" (Ri426).

The social and historical values respondents described relating to family roots may also provide a motivating influence for protecting place. Fischer and Bliss (2008) reported, in their study of family-forest owners in Oregon, that landowners' historical connection to the land resulted in a desire to protect what they perceived as the legacy of the land. In this sense, landowners see themselves not only as stewards of the land, but also as stewards of the historical and cultural memories that the land represents to them (Fischer & Bliss, 2008). This motivation was clear in Richard's description of his forestry management practices, which he described by saying, "In fact, one of the advantages to some of the selective cutting I do is that some of the places I have done my selective cutting, we do get some regeneration of red oak" (Ri335). He related that one of his reasons for encouraging oak over sugar maple was "because that's the way I knew it" and that the species mix he preferred was "a Frontenac axis kind of thing" (Ri40-342).

The most evident examples of actions property owners took to conserve their connection to place included conservation easements and purchases of additional land. For instance, several landowners took action to protect the *retreat* place meaning by acquiring adjacent parcels of land. Lauren, for instance, explained her motivation in purchasing land, saying “There were two lots for sale right across from us and we thought we’re going to bite the bullet and buy them because we did not want to see that happen here. We wanted this area to stay peaceful” (La357). Rose, meanwhile, regretted that she didn’t buy an adjacent property that is now developed, as she values the undeveloped shoreline as part of her *retreat* place meaning. She had begun working with the local land trust to see if other parcels near her property could be protected from development.

Like Lauren, William purchased adjacent land, saying, “We bought it because the previous owner was going to divide it up and put tacky cardboard staple houses on it” (Wi18). This action was related to his desire to conserve both the *retreat* and *rural place* meanings he associates with his road. Walter took action that represented a desire to protect the *place for people* meaning by buying a property further north with the same aesthetic features that he enjoyed on his current property. He purchased this second property in the 1970’s, when he believed that Parks Canada was going to force him to sell his land to expand the national park. Like the other examples illustrated above, Walter’s land purchase also provided a means of conserving the *home and family place* meaning.

Several respondents spoke about conservation easements, not only in relation to the tax reduction benefit they afforded them, but also as a means to conserve values and place meanings that were important to them. Gordon, for example, planned to use an easement to ensure that his land stayed in the family (thereby protecting his *home and family place* meaning), as otherwise they would not be able to afford to keep it. Richard,

Darryl and Fred were all considering conservation easements, and discussed this as a means of protecting their setting values (specifically the wildness and undeveloped nature of their properties), which related to their *retreat* place meaning. Charles, likewise, was in the process of establishing a conservation easement on his property, and his comments suggested that he was motivated in part to protect the values encompassed by his *rural place* and *retreat* meanings.

6.6.2 *Collective Actions to Protect Sense of Place*

People may take part in collective action because of their connection to place, for example by organizing to protect shared place meanings and ensure associated behavioural expectations are met (Cheng et al., 2003). In this case, a group identity may form around place, resulting in collaboration around shared values.

As noted in Section 6.4 (Place Attachment), numerous respondents had participated in community-based civic action. These efforts can be interpreted as motivated by a desire to protect respondents' sense of place. For example, Fred said, of his involvement in a township zoning review:

I'm very involved with a lot of different things in the community. I was part of the committee that developed the official plan of the township. Now we're doing the new zoning bylaw, so that deals with a lot of things like wetlands, recognizing where they are and protecting them, and floodplains and natural habitat and so on and so forth, and I think that's really important...I wanted to be involved with it because I wanted to make sure that I felt that some of that stuff was being adequately protected for future generations, because I see just myself in the years that I've grown up here, differences. (Fr197)

The positive influence of place in motivating collective action was noted by Brandenburg and Carroll (1995) in their study of rural residents, as they found that shared interest in place may result in groups that are normally in opposition re-organizing around place.

Darryl described how property owners around Charleston Lake had recently worked together to prepare a lake management plan that included social and ecological goals, and he noted that a shared interest in protecting lake water quality had driven the effort. This type of collaborative exercise, Darryl commented, represented a shift from the traditional way of interacting:

Whereas, you know, years ago it would have been the farmers pointing fingers at the cottages and saying, “well, you’ve got water quality problems because of your septic systems”, and the cottagers are pointing to the farmers and saying “your damn cows are in the water.” Well, we’re trying to change that paradigm and say we’re all in this together. (Dar386)

Additional examples of residents collaborating to protect a mutual understanding of place were related to property owners’ actions to protect the meaning *place for people*. Two shoreline respondents described collective actions that were engendered in response to Parks Canada’s 1970’s land acquisition attempt. One stated “...it was necessary that we kind of get organized and stop it if we could” (1452-349), while another described the overwhelming community reaction:

We had a meeting with 700 people, and that’s the point at which Parks Canada thought they didn’t want to take us on anymore....people were informed and emotionally involved and they really got involved in the planning and said this is what -- they had long-range views too. (1850-340-342)

Another respondent described how provincial government restrictions of private

land use had inspired property owners to band together, saying, “I think there’s got to be some changes, and I think those changes will come because the landowners associations are growing, there’s a huge number of them now across Ontario and it’s becoming a single voice” (1451-451). These examples illustrate how connection to place may serve as a source of inspiration for collective action, but also suggest that governments and land management agencies need to remain cognizant of the potential effects of their management decisions on property owners’ sense of place.

DISCUSSION CHAPTERS

The following two chapters discuss how the results presented in the preceding chapters influence landowners' land ethic and relate to various barriers to conservation. Figure 4 presents the relationships between the findings discussed in the results and discussion chapters. All the links between findings illustrated in the conceptual model and outlined below are discussed in greater detail in the previous and ensuing chapters.

The study results suggest that respondents' values form a cornerstone of their relationships with the land, as is evident in the role they played in influencing respondents' sense of place, understanding of landscape change, and land ethic. Place-based values can also become either a source of conflict or a basis for collaboration in relation to place.

The directional arrows between values and place meanings in Figure 4 indicate that place meanings encompass multiple value dimensions and themes. For example, the *retreat* place meaning reflects respondents' setting values (particularly wildness and the rural aesthetic), an appreciation of interactions with wildlife in the natural setting with family and friends (represented in use, wildlife and social and historical values), and the tranquility and solitude (intangible values) the land offered them.

Respondents' sense of place (meanings, attachment and identities) and the values encompassed by their sense of place also influenced respondents' understanding of, and concern with landscape change. In turn, respondents' values and sense of place were affected by landscape change. For instance, respondents' appreciation for their connection to the land represented through their personal heritage values and associated place meanings (e.g. *home and family place*) led to concern with the changes accompanying residential development, and the developments in turn threatened these

values and place meanings. The reciprocal relationship between these elements of the study findings is shown with an alternating dashed and dotted line in Figure 4.

Ultimately, respondents' desire to maintain their attachment to the land and the self-identities associated with it as well as their place meanings and related values, may motivate them to take action to protect their sense of place. In some instances, the actions landowners undertook were of conservation benefit, and thus represented the enactment of their land ethic. The relationship between respondents' sense of place (including the composite of values sense of place represents) and land ethic, as influenced by landscape change, is shown in Figure 4 through the circular exterior line connecting these findings. Rather than linking specific values that influenced property management decisions (such as ownership, personal heritage, wildlife existential and aesthetic values) to land ethic, these connections are considered to be represented through the mediating influence of sense of place, as in many instances it was the interaction of multiple values and considerations that led respondents to take conservation action.

The study results indicate that respondents' need to balance multiple considerations, including specific values such as ownership and economic and commodity use, may result in a barrier to conservation. The connections between these values and barriers to conservation are indicated by directional arrows in Figure 4. In addition, conflict related to specific values and place meanings also resulted in a barrier to conservation. This connection is again shown in a composite fashion, through the circular dotted exterior line connecting the aspects of sense of place shown on the left side of the figure, which are considered to encompass respondents' values, and barriers to conservation on the right side of the figure. The link between the meaning *place for people* and barriers to conservation reflects the finding that this place meaning is a

particular source of conflict that may prevent collaboration between residents and Parks Canada. Respondents' understanding of landscape change and its effects, which differed from that of conservation biologists, also acted as a barrier to conservation.

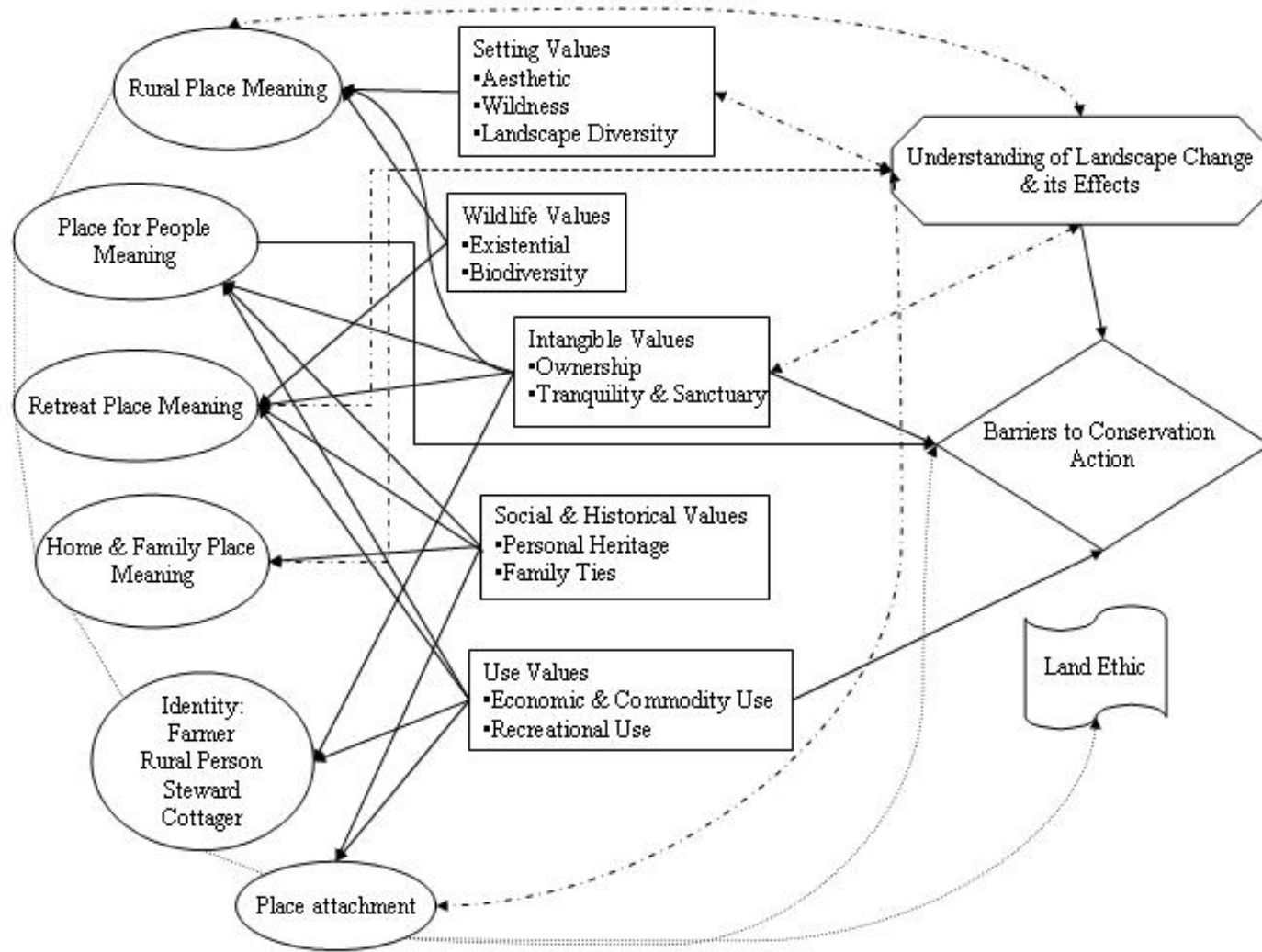


Figure 4. Conceptual Model of Key Findings

7 LAND ETHIC

7.1 Overview

Land ethic is a term that communicates a commitment on the part of the property owners to consider the impacts of their choices on wildlife, habitat, and more generally, on the environment. In attempting to elicit respondents' land ethic, the researcher asked a series of questions regarding what kinds of management actions respondents undertook on their own land, and what factors they considered in making decisions about their properties. In addition to these explicit questions, by exploring property owners' values and understanding, the study investigated how various dimensions of respondents' relationships with the land might influence the decisions they made regarding their properties.

Aldo Leopold coined the term land ethic to describe his vision of an appropriate relationship with the land, one that was based on an understanding of the moral duty to look after the health of the land at an individual and societal level (Lutz Newton, 2006). Leopold's land ethic can be seen to comprise several facets; firstly, a sense of moral responsibility for the health of the land; secondly an appreciation for and consideration of a broad suite of values that ecosystems offer, rather than a solely utilitarian focus on the benefits of land (Lutz Newton, 2006); thirdly, an understanding of ecology (Leopold, 1966; Lutz Newton, 2006); and finally, a sense of belonging to the "biotic community" (Leopold, 1966, p.239).

This chapter summarizes respondents' remarks as they relate to these four interlinked components of Leopold's land ethic. Comments by respondents expressed a sense of connection to and responsibility for the land, value for its habitat and species

diversity; a willingness to protect it, and an understanding that their actions may impact not only the biophysical environment but also the values (and meanings) that they hold in relation to their properties.

7.2 The Moral Duty of Land Management

Aldo Leopold understood land ethic to embody a conflict between property owner's personal interests and the interests of society, saying "The crux of the conservation problem is that every landowner is the custodian of two interests, not always identical: the public interest and his own" (as cited in Lutz Newton, 2006, p.150). Several respondents supported the view that landowners have an obligation to society in general to conserve natural habitat on their lands. One respondent echoed Leopold's characterization of land management as a moralistic undertaking, but incorporated consideration of the needs of future generations into the two interests Leopold defined, saying, "We're only passing through and we have a moral responsibility to ensure that what we have here is looked after for the next generation and the next generation and the next generation" (1550-650). Overall, the study's findings suggest that respondents have a moralistic perspective of the responsibility of land ownership (Hunter & Brehm, 2004), as reflected in comments which presented land ownership as including obligations to society and to future generations.

7.2.1 *The Obligation to Society*

As noted by Leopold (1966), "an ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action" (p.238). Several respondents recognized the need for limits in order to protect the health of the land. For instance, Richard characterized the role of government in crafting restrictions as "a balance act between what's good for society and what rights the landowner has" (Ri593), while Darryl described land ownership as a "balance of rights

and responsibilities” (Dar581). However, respondents who recognized the greater obligation of property owners to society struggled with the notion of a limitation to their freedom and suggested that a balance had to be found between rights and restrictions. For instance, Gordon described the conflicting values that Leopold noted, saying:

You would hope that people would see the natural value of their properties and maintain it, but not everybody feels that way. You’re caught between private ownership and freedom to live our life the way we want to compared to government regulation. (Go718)

Respondents felt that there was a limit to how far restrictions on private land could extend and under what circumstances they may be appropriate. For example, Darryl remarked “I mean, you need to be told what you can and cannot do, but also, there’s also a limit to what society will take in terms of that” (Dar550), while Gordon noted “there is a role for government to introduce restraints when development is too extensive” (Go730).

Aldo Leopold noted “what we need is a positive inducement or reward for the landowner who respects both [public and personal] interests in his actual land practice” (as cited in Lutz Newton, 2006, p.150), although he also noted that ethical actions could not be driven by an expectation for financial reward (Leopold, 1966), and believed that a land ethic must emerge voluntarily from property owners, rather than somehow being imposed upon them (Peterson & Horton, 1995). Several respondents mentioned the need for compensation, as a matter of moral and economic fairness. David, for instance, simply stated:

I guess there are certain areas that need to be identified and protected that, I guess, if that happens somehow society has to be able to compensate those people

who own those areas because the society at large will benefit from the protection of it. (Dav371)

David further suggested that financial compensation for stewardship actions could be seen to represent the recognition of a societal obligation to assist private property owners in their stewardship endeavours, saying:

So I guess maybe if there was some help, some incentives, so generally society as a whole is helping to preserve some of these areas or to enhance some of these areas it would make it more attractive and it would become more part of their plans. (Dav470)

Fischer and Bliss (2008) similarly found that property owner's views of conservation on private land embodied numerous contradictions, as their understanding of the moral duty to look after the land was counteracted by desires for compensation and incentives as well as autonomy and independence. Although the imposition of restrictions on property owners by governments is sensitive, comments by respondents suggest that government(s) can make restrictions more palatable by providing recognition, compensation and incentives for responsible land care, and that these types of initiatives may serve to awaken property owners' latent stewardship instinct, or land ethic.

7.2.2 The Obligation to Future Generations

For some respondents, the obligation to responsibly manage the land reflected a moral obligation to consider the needs of future generations, which was represented as part of their understanding of the concept of stewardship (see Appendix C for respondents' definitions of stewardship). David, for example, explained his reasoning in keeping cattle out of a forested and wetland section of his land by saying:

Well, I guess we base our decisions on what we think is important. And we think

in our little piece of land, this 116 acres, we think that it's worthwhile to protect this area. And I know that by putting the cattle in there it's hard on it and they can be destructive, so we keep them out of it and we'll preserve it for...somebody else in some point in time. (Dav401)

Respondents who were woodlot owners also presented a forest management philosophy that reflected a desire to maintain the health of the land for future generations. For instance, Fred explained his decision not to harvest the timber from his woodlot by saying:

It would be a short-term gain, but it would be a long-term loss because the natural habitat, the natural beauty of what is here will be lost and lost forever. If you cut down those 12 foot-round maple trees that took 600 years to grow, they're not going to come back. (Fr434)

Two other respondents noted that the trees they had planted would be of benefit to future generations, one remarking:

I won't see a commercial crop in my lifetime, but I'm setting it up for the next generation and generation afterwards. So, my philosophy of managing the property is very much in line with the Eastern Ontario Model Forest of seven generations and, you know, that sort of thing. (1550-109)

Another respondent reflected, "I see myself as holding this land in trust. I hold it in trust for the species that live here and for other human beings..." (162-657). Still another stated:

You can't be short-sighted and think only of your own use; you have to think of future generations, and that's probably things like maintaining the proper environment for wildlife and harvesting your forest on a sustainable basis, and all

those things (1750-636)

Ryan et al. (2003) similarly found that the desire to preserve land for future generations was a motivating influence in farmers' desire to practice conservation on their lands.

7.3 Consideration of Values in Managing Land

As noted in Chapter 4, respondents related a range of values for their properties and the greater region. For many respondents, a primary goal in managing their land was to maintain the values (and associated place meanings) they enjoyed, such as the biodiversity, wildness and aesthetic beauty of the land. For instance, Charles stated "I think my main concern is not to spoil anything and to let things grow up in a natural way" (CR513), and Gordon stated of his land, "...it has been a conscious effort to leave it as kind of a wilderness area" (Go601). Rose, likewise followed a policy of leaving the property alone, as she stated:

Trees that fall down, we leave them. The big elm tree that started to die, we've left it because it becomes homes for woodpeckers or food for woodpeckers, et cetera. I think that's the key, is just to leave it as natural as you can. (Ros732)

She summarized that in general "We have tried to keep it in its natural state as much as possible because we enjoy that aspect of it" (Ros69). Lauren related her decisions to a broader suite of values, describing her main considerations by saying:

I mean when you think about how we take out trees, we're thinking about wildlife, maintaining our independence, maintaining the peacefulness of the land. I'll probably plant more of a barrier between us and the road as roads get busier just to keep it quiet back here. So, wildlife and just trying to keep the ecology as natural as possible. (La571-574)

Although these broad management objectives generally correlated with the idea of a land ethic, in practice, respondents sought to maximize a variety of values in managing their land, and did not frame their decisions solely around the question of whether it would “preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community” (Leopold, 1966, p.262). However, Leopold did not idealize that citizens would place ecological considerations over all others, but rather envisioned that they would “examine each [land-related] question in terms of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient” (as cited in Lutz Newton, 2006, p. 346). This perspective was also reflected in one respondent’s comments, who stated “you’re trying to strike a balance between the economic and your stewardship responsibilities and, [as you said], the aesthetics of it” (560-406).

Overall, respondents related a broader suite of considerations in relation to specific management actions than that conveyed in their general descriptions of their management objectives, which may simply represent the difficulty in moving from intention to action – when philosophy is confronted with reality. Alternatively, it may represent a desire to balance multiple factors or maximize specific benefits, and to illustrate the conflict between the two interests Leopold described (Section 7.2 above).

In describing their management actions, landowners presented a variety of considerations that influenced their decisions, reflecting a mix of utilitarian and setting values as well as practical considerations. For example, actions such as building trails, installing nesting boxes for duck hunting, and constructing and stocking fish ponds not only provided opportunities for outdoor recreation, but also to enjoy the wildlife and aesthetic values of their properties. For farmers, leaving marginal land untilled as forage areas for wildlife was a practical decision, as was removing fencerows and widening

fields, which was related to the needs of modern machinery. Planting or removing trees was also related to practical considerations such as the need for more or less shade, privacy, or a windbreak. In explaining his decision to allow the vegetation to grow into his farm fields, William noted that the expanding fencerows were good for wildlife and also served his aesthetic appreciation for a mix of fields and forests. David's decision to keep cattle out of certain areas on his property (Section 7.2.1, above) was partly fuelled by his enjoyment of the wildflowers that bloomed in the untouched areas, as he described:

Out on this island right here behind me which is this area right here⁹, that one there, there's all kinds of little, what they call, dogtooth violets and whatnot and little jump-ups at this time of the year and lots of trilliums, so I keep the cattle out of there until later on and let them do their thing. (Dav193)

Economic considerations came in to play for several property owners who took specific actions to reduce their tax burden, such as developing and implementing a sustainable forestry management plan or a conservation easement on their property in order to obtain a tax reduction. However, these decisions also reflected other factors, such a desire to retain land in the family and an interest in conserving the aesthetic and biodiversity values of the land and protecting sense of place (as discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.6).

Controlling wildlife was an economic, practical and aesthetic consideration for respondents. Several respondents noted that they had controlled beaver and porcupine on

⁹ Referring to the location of interest on the satellite image.

their land. Beaver were removed due to damage to waterways and valued trees. For instance, one respondent complained “One of them cut down about 29 trees in a month (CR451), while a farmer explained of a problem area, “It’s an outlet for water off our farm here...The beavers get in there and build dams and flood it. They’ll flood a lot of my land and the neighbour’s land” (751-144). Porcupines were likewise removed from properties for practical and economic considerations, either in relation to the damage they did to woodlots or because they posed a danger to respondents’ pets.

7.4 Understanding Ecological Connections

Leopold (1966) noted that an understanding of ecological connections was a necessary component of land ethic. His concept of responsible land care was built around the concept that the land was healthy when the integrity and stability of “the biotic community” (Leopold, 1966 p.239) were conserved, meaning the ecosystem maintained its resilience, and that its structure and function of were intact (i.e. the flora, fauna and ecological processes characteristic of the ecosystem were retained) (Leopold, 1966; Lutz Newton, 1996). In enacting a land ethic, land owners must therefore understand how their decisions might affect the land’s capacity for “self-renewal” (Leopold, 1966, p.258).

As noted above, respondents generally framed their management objectives around a desire to keep the land unchanged, in order to maintain the values (and place meanings) they cherished. They also related a basic understanding that their actions had an ecological effect. For instance, Richard described his harvesting management objective simply by saying “...every time I take a tree out, I’m trying to think about what’s there to replace it and make sure that my cutting is making things at least no worse and maybe better” (Ri503). Another respondent, who had built an extensive trail network, described his decision-making process, saying:

The main factors I consider are minimal cutting of trees, of live trees, and I look for the best route to make a trail go so I'm on good hard packed soil so I'm not going through soft land that you're going to dig up or tear up....you've got to build bridges that don't interfere with the water flow, doesn't (sic) cause any additional erosion, so a lot of work and thought goes into it. (1451-521-25)

Another respondent drew attention to his understanding of ecological principles in relating how his decision not to harvest large "wolf" trees on his property represented a deviation from his forestry training, saying:

Now my philosophy is 'leave it alone,' because it's probably just a haven for a wide variety of wildlife and other plants. It is functioning - it has a function in the ecosystem. So, after many years, I'm getting away from the commercial forester's philosophy and looking at natural systems more for value of themselves. (1550-517)

Other conscious decisions to protect or enhance the structure, function and resilience of "the biotic community" (Leopold, 1966 p.239) included Lauren's plan to thin the planted forest on her land in order to diversify the habitat, and Charles' decision to plant vegetation along his waterfront, as noted in his reflection that, "the ribbon of life right along the edge of the water they say is the most important place for fish to spawn and breed and frogs and so on" (CR528).

Several respondents' management decisions reflected more of a desire to avoid harming wildlife, rather than any depth of ecological understanding, which may be related to their appreciation of biodiversity values, the sense of pride and fulfillment they felt in observing wildlife, particularly unique species, on their land, and their self-identity as stewards. For instance, Walter said he followed a policy of "live and let live" (Wa934)

on his property, and Rose related how she had created only a rough trail down to the waterfront on her property in order to ensure that turtles could continue to lay eggs there. Another respondent described a dilemma he was facing, saying, “Part of the reason that I haven’t pushed ahead to fix that cottage up is I know that you’d kill an awful lot of black rat snakes, so I’m not quite sure what to do ‘cause they’re in the walls” (1750-279). In addition, several respondents described specific actions to assist wildlife, such as installing nesting boxes/platforms for squirrels, birds and snakes due to their enjoyment of wildlife on their properties.

While property owners evidently considered wildlife in making decisions, they were unable to explain how their management actions might negatively affect wildlife (other than removal of unwanted species, such as beaver, porcupine, and poison ivy). Generally, respondents instead describing ways that wildlife had benefited. For example, wildlife were seen to use trails across a property in the winter time, deer to enjoy forest openings created by cutting, birds to nest in the rafters of a house, and osprey and otter to benefit from fish stocked into a pond. Specific actions taken by respondents to benefit wildlife included feeding birds, leaving brush piles and snags, installing nesting boxes, planting trees, and fencing cattle out of specific areas. Harvesting timber was also seen to be beneficial, if done selectively, as it allowed for regeneration of shade intolerant species.

Although they mentioned ecological considerations, few respondents suggested an understanding of how landowner choices at a small scale may cumulatively contribute to environmental degradation (Thompson, 2004). When questioned about the effects of their actions, a few respondents noted that it was difficult to discern the impacts of their management actions due to the difference in scale between their actions and the potential

ecological response, or suggested that what they were seeing may not represent a real ecological response. For instance, one respondent remarked that he couldn't tell if wildlife was affected by his actions, but he could see changes in habitat, noting:

Although I've noticed that since having planted a lot of vegetation here and as it matures over the years the bird life -- the birds that you're hearing now, it just increases year by year -- at least that's my feeling. Maybe I'm just becoming a little more in tune to the birds, I don't know, as I get older. (1550-302)

Respondents provided a few examples of impacts at the scale of a landowner's property that resulted in ecosystem-scale effects, including modern farming techniques, particularly reliance on chemicals, and practices such as clearing woodlots and allowing cattle in waterways.

Perhaps the most surprising gap in respondents' remarks was that, despite the common concern with the changes to the rural landscape caused by ongoing development, few related this to a source of environmental degradation or conveyed concern for the impacts to biodiversity (discussed further in Chapter 8, Barriers to Conservation Action). Leopold noted the importance of understanding the cumulative nature of human impacts, saying "man-made changes are of a different order than evolutionary changes, and have effects more comprehensive than is intended or foreseen" (Leopold 1966, p. 255).

7.5 The Importance of Connection to the Land

Leopold posited that in order for individuals and society to develop a land ethic, there must be a recognition of the connection between humans and the environment; a sense that people are part of a broader community which he described as including "soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land" (Leopold, 1966, p.239). If

individuals and society viewed themselves as part of this community, he reasoned, they would see the interdependence of the community members; leading to actions that were sometimes competitive, to maximize benefits to themselves, as well as cooperative actions (Leopold, 1966). Leopold further noted that in order to develop an ethical relationship that reflected a sense of belonging to a community, we must have “love, respect and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value” (Leopold, 1966, p.261). Many of these concepts are reflected in the exploration of sense of place presented in Chapter 6.

7.5.1 Sense of Place and Land Ethic

Comments by respondents suggested that the land ethic of property owners could be conceived of as a complex and multi-layered reflection of landowner’s connection to place, understanding of the land, and values, all borne of interaction with the land over time. Although respondent’s sense of place did not necessarily reflect the full depth of understanding of people as part of a community of living beings reliant on the land, the connections respondents felt to their own land and the surrounding region, related via their emotional attachment, the influence of place in defining their self-concepts, and their understanding of certain behaviours as appropriate to place, all suggest that sense of place may predispose landowners to develop a land ethic. This holistic sense of connection to and value for the land was perhaps best described by Mabel, who summarized how stewardship was inherent in land ownership, saying “It’s your way of life. It’s the land, the trees, it’s the house, your home, whatever. It’s just a way of life, stewardship” (JM947-949).

Some landowner actions to protect place were reviewed in Chapter 6 (Section 6.6). However, not all of these actions can be viewed as representing land ethic; for

instance Rose's restrictions of certain activities on her property may help conserve her place meaning, and perhaps her sense of self, but do not contribute to conserving the integrity of the biotic community. Other actions, such as protecting adjacent parcels from development, are very much in line with the concept of a land ethic.

Aldo Leopold noted that a sense of connection to the "biotic community" (1966, p.239) should produce an ecological conscience and an ethical sense of right and wrong, as manifested through "social approbation for right actions [and] social disapprobation for wrong actions" (Leopold, 1966, p. 263). As noted in Chapter 6 (Section 6.6), sense of place leads to the development of desires and expectations for a location (Cheng et al., 2003; Yung et al., 2003). These behavioural expectations may include an understanding of the appropriate way to care for and interact with the land, and can be interpreted as reflecting an individual, or community-level land ethic.

Several respondents' remarks indicated disapprobation for what they perceived as irresponsible land management. For example, William reflected, of strip developments near his home, that they didn't "go well with, you know, what we're trying to protect or preserve here" (Wi423), while Richard remarked "you don't try to make a city house on the edge of the shore and mow your grass right up to the edge and all those sorts of things" (Ri416). Maintaining or reinforcing landowners' connection to place is therefore critical to land managers and government agencies interested in fostering land ethic.

8 BARRIERS TO CONSERVATION ACTION

8.1 Overview

In Chapter 2, the existence of a gap between conceptual and actual support for conservation was discussed, in that landowners' management actions may be contrary to their professed interest in conservation. One of this study's research objectives was to evaluate whether such a gap exists amongst landowners in the GPE of SLINP, and if so, what factors may contribute to this gap. During the interviews, barriers to conservation action that may contribute to this gap were evaluated by exploring issues respondents raised that might affect their stewardship intentions, as well as differences in understanding between conservationists and private landowners. This study also aimed to identify sources of conflict preventing collaboration between area landowners, conservation groups and land management agencies (particularly Parks Canada).

As noted by Patterson and Williams (2002), in order to resolve resource management conflicts, it is necessary to understand "barriers to communication, sources of conflict, and possible areas of common ground that represent a useful starting point for constructive dialog" (p.87). This chapter reviews findings related to these barriers and conflicts, and also identifies how sense of place, as a framework for understanding landowner relationships to the land, offers an important means to identify sources of conflict as well as shared values which may be of benefit in building common ground and facilitating collaboration. Barriers to conservation have been categorized into three themes, each discussed in a separate section: internal and external barriers to taking action, and barriers to recognizing environmental problems (Thompson, 2004). Respondents' comments regarding conflicts related to their sense of place and

management expectations for the region are reviewed and discussed in a separate section below. Findings are then summarized in the context of how they may contribute to a gap between conceptual and actual support for conservation amongst landowners in the GPE of SLINP.

8.2 External Barriers to Taking Action

External barriers to conservation identified by respondents included the necessity of balancing multiple interests. This barrier to conservation was noted by Thompson (2004), who remarked that people's ability to rationalize their choices despite knowing that they may be harmful may prevent them from making land management decisions that support conservation. This rationalization process may be related to what Fischer and Bliss (2008) describe as "the multitude of forces that drive [property owners'] management decisions" (p.280). As discussed in Chapter 7 (Land Ethic), landowners' stewardship intentions may not be enacted when consideration of multiple interests, such as financial and practical considerations, or concern over private property rights, outweigh the understanding of a moral duty to look after the land. Respondents' remarks suggested that economic issues such as high taxes, potential profit from development, and the sense that stewardship actions represent additional costs to landowners, were a primary competing interest that led landowners to make decisions that were sometimes contrary to their conservation intentions.

Conflict with the government was also identified as barrier. Respondents complained that the government did not engage them in land management decisions nor value their place-based expertise as land managers. This resulted in respondents' perception that government decisions did not incorporate an understanding of local context, and ultimately led to mistrust in government intentions on private land.

8.2.1 *Competing Interests*

Myriad influences come into play in the decision-making process, and when balanced against each other, consideration of property rights, convenience and practicality, finances, workload, lack of understanding of environmental effects may cumulatively act to counterbalance landowners' conservation values and stewardship intentions. For instance, one respondent noted that although people may be concerned with what happens with their land once it is sold, they can easily rationalize the decision, describing this thinking process by saying:

If I'm going to make \$1 million, I'm just going to sell a bit of my land here. And I know this guy's not going to look after it, but I can use that million dollars for a lot of things. I might do some good things on my land to offset it a little bit.

(1850-608)

Another respondent was concerned that this kind of rationalization could have a regional effect given the right market conditions, noting that there were currently plans to build an ethanol plant in a neighbouring town, and saying "...so all of a sudden it's going to be very attractive in this area to grow corn. Is that going to mean the woodlots are going to be felled in order to grow corn?" (560-463).

While for some respondents economic pressure provided impetus to turn to conservation measures such as a conservation easement or tax reductions related to sustainably managed forests¹⁰, the potential to profit from their land was also observed to represent a strain on a landowner's stewardship commitment. Two respondents described

¹⁰ Respondents mentioned the Ontario Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program.

how they weighed different factors in considering whether to harvest some timber from his land, remarking that their values were strained by economic considerations. One remarked:

First of all, it's a lot of work. And, secondly, logging operations usually leave a bit of a mess even if you're logging with horses. And, thirdly, I just value looking at those big trees. I had to struggle with myself over the past couple of years. I need some pine and some hemlock, and I've got lots of pine and hemlock back there. I had to really struggle with myself - well, should I go and cut it and log it and have it sawed up? (1550-345-347)

The other noted that he had made a conscious choice not to profit from his woodlot, but reflected on the cost of this decision, saying:

I mean, I could have taken a much different view of this property and looked at the land and the trees that are on here and said, you know, there's \$30,000 worth of wood there and had -- because I can look in the paper any night and there's advertising for standing white pine and standing hardwoods and I could sell that. (1451-432)

Several respondents noted that increased development in the area had led to an increase in property taxes. While not necessarily characterized as an environmental issue, there was a general understanding that the cumulative impact of the economic pressures led to subdivision and further development of properties, as some residents could no longer afford to hold on to their land. Charles, for example, noted that vacant land was "taxed to the point where it had to be developed" (CR619). Furthermore, some respondents noted that stewardship actions might entail additional costs or result in a meagre return through tax reductions. For instance, one respondent noted "I mean if I put

this environmental easement on here, the property values drop significantly. My taxes go down a little bit, but basically you're losing a lot of money by doing it" (1850-501).

Economic considerations were characterized as a barrier to conservation specifically for area farmers, who were seen by respondents to be constrained in their land management decisions by their low level of income. David, speaking as a farmer, noted that although farmers may be aware of and wish to enact their stewardship obligations, "...the everyday economics of it dictate that they can't do it on their own" (Dav468). This echoes findings by other studies (Brook et al, 2003; Rogan et al., 2005; Milburn, 2007) which also identified economic considerations as an issue of particular significance for farmers.

Economic incentives for development were represented as affecting not only private property owners, but also township planning decisions. David, for instance, noted that strip developments represent income to rural townships, saying "Whenever you drive out around through the country you see that type of development, I think basically everywhere. No municipality is really going to discourage it. They're all looking for more tax revenues" (Dav249). Another respondent noted of ongoing development in the area "its increasing revenue for the Township, but it's hurting the fellows that are on fixed incomes" (1452-810). While most respondents focused their concern regarding the effects of development on their values, sense of place, and the impacts to area residents, a few respondents noted that planning decisions conflicted with conservation objectives. William, for instance noted that in rural areas "they [township councils] want development, they put all their money into the roads, they want to clear all the vegetation from the roads -- they're not interested in biodiversity protection" (Wi443).

8.2.2 *Government Engagement with Landowners*

Conflict with the government was a common thread in discussions with respondents. One aspect of this conflict was a perceived disinterest on the part of government to consult with property owners on land management decisions. Lack of consultation resulted in respondents' perspective that the government bore little regard for their expertise related to land management. This conflict may become a barrier to conservation when it leads to unwillingness to collaborate with the government on land management.

Mistrust and adversarial positions often follow from a lack of consultation and consideration (Peterson & Horton, 1995). Resentment towards the government regarding land management decisions was clear in comments by Fred, who noted that landowners wanted to be "...part of that solution and not be regulated or mandated by somebody sitting in Toronto here, some bureaucrat who has no real understanding" (Fr442). This may also be an issue at SLINP, as noted by one respondent who felt that park managers were not really interested in engaging residents in discussions about land management decisions, remarking "the federal park has a tendency not to work with people. They have their own agenda. When they set out to do something, it's their plan and that's the way it is" (752-110). Another respondent reflected that he didn't seem to be the right type for a park manager to talk to, saying "He was more inclined to talk to the environmentalists" (1452-854).

Several landowners reflected that government land management decisions did not reflect an understanding of local ecological and social conditions. For instance, one

landowner remarked “The MNR¹¹, the bureaucrats again, they just don’t understand. They’re not farmers, they’re not rural people. How they can sit up there and make these decisions is beyond me” (1451-486), while another remarked that all too often decisions are made by “people who sit behind a desk pushing a pen” (1550-617).

These comments reflect landowners’ perspective that knowledge is gained through experience (Peterson & Horton, 1995). Thus, government land management decisions made without input from landowners may be interpreted as lacking validity and common sense (Peterson & Horton, 1995). A perceived lack of respect for local knowledge by park managers has been noted in other national parks, as participants in recent survey of residents around Riding Mountain, Grasslands and Prince Albert National Parks related their belief that Parks Canada placed a higher value on conceptual expertise unrelated to experience on the land, and was seen as not caring about or understanding local communities (Reed & Martz, 2007). This perspective may lead to landowner opposition to government-imposed programs and regulations related to conservation, particularly those seen as crafted without relevant input from property owners.

8.3 Internal Barriers to Taking Action

The primary internal barrier to taking conservation action was property owners’ interest in maintaining the freedom and independence to make decisions on their own property. Several respondents made remarks that communicated the desire to make land management decisions on their own, without government restrictions. This suggests that

¹¹ Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

self-determination, or the desire for autonomy on private land, is a barrier to conservation in the GPE of SLINP. Although some respondents felt that there is a balance between property owners' rights and the obligations to society to protect land (see Chapter 7, Section 7.2.1), others felt that any restriction on landowners' self-determination was unwarranted or a cause for concern. Expressions of interest by the government into private land management, especially for conservation, are liable to engender fears regarding property rights, as noted by Senecah (1996):

Wherever public values are extended to private property or wherever the cumulative public consequences of private actions are considered, some owners can be expected to fear that their land will be taken...or that they will be unfairly pressed to sacrifice for the benefit of others. (p.105)

In regions around national parks, landowners may be particularly sensitive to the reach of government as a land manager. A study of residents of the GPE of Yellowstone National Park by Reading et al. (1994), for instance, indicated that discussion of landscape-scale conservation efforts raised concerns of increased government control of private land. Concerns related to property rights may also be heightened in the GPE of SLINP due to collective memories of previous government actions to acquire private land (Senecah, 1996).

8.3.1 Self-Determination

Fear of government intentions on private lands became evident during interviews with respondents, as the maps of respondents' properties and of the landscape used by the researcher led to inquiries as to how property lines had been determined, why wetlands were shown on respondents' properties, and what was the meaning of a line on the map that demarcated the study area. One respondent misunderstood the study area boundary as

representing the Biosphere Reserve, and stated “You draw this circle around this land, and a lot of it’s privately owned, but eventually you’ll take away the control of the owners of their own property” (752-533). He broadly characterized conservation efforts in the region as threatening to landowners’ property rights, saying “I guess that’s another thing that you worry about in the future is, as you have your Biosphere and you have your parks around you, you as a landowner, what restrictions are they going to put on you?” (752-507). Comments by landowners relating these kinds of concerns suggest that government decisions to restrict use on public lands may foster fears of restrictions on private lands. As noted in the previous section, the manner in which decisions are made may also be significant, as a lack of engagement may result in mistrust of land managers’ vision for the region. This was clearly illustrated in a respondents’ comment about Parks Canada’s management, as he stated: “... it comes down to the way they’ve handled it - that makes people nervous about the Biosphere, or anything else to do with the park” (752-600).

Concerns were not solely directed at Parks Canada as a government land manager with interest in private properties. One respondent described waterfront property owners’ reaction to a proposed zoning change designed to protect lake trout in the Charleston Lake area, saying that there was a huge uproar as landowners “...thought they couldn’t even do anything with their property” (161-635). Another respondent, who had been very involved in the fight to keep Parks Canada from expanding its land holdings in the 1970’s, related ways in which various levels of government had deprived him of his property rights, including expropriating land along the St. Lawrence River for road construction and then requiring him to pay fees to put in a dock on what was formerly his land, and prohibiting him from clearing fallen trees along the highway frontage strip

where he pays taxes. When the researcher inquired what stewardship meant to him, the respondent conveyed his belief that the obligation to look after land was laden with government-imposed restrictions, saying “They regulate it to death, that’s the sad part of it all, eh. It don’t matter what you go to do, somebody else is going to tell you whether you can do it or not. That really bothers me” (1452-1124).

The barrier to conservation represented by the desire for self-determination was very apparent in one landowner’s remarks, and evidently counteracted his interest in conservation, as he negatively described a proposed greenbelt shortly after noting the potential benefits of restricting clear-cutting through a local by-law in order to protect the local forest landscape. He remarked, of the greenbelt proposal, “But in there [the proposed greenbelt], there were restrictions that you couldn’t even cut a tree on your land” (1451-461). In response to a question about this apparent conflict in his stewardship values, the respondent noted that landowners’ perspectives needed to be considered, saying:

...I think the issue here has got to be that it’s got to make sense. You don’t do something just for the sake of doing it. It’s got to make some sense....So I just think there is definitely room, but it just needs to be taken out of the hands of bureaucrats and put into the hands of people who know what they’re doing.
(1451-468-478)

This relates to landowners’ desire to be acknowledged as a valid source of knowledge about land management, as related in Section 8.2.2, above.

The imposition of constraints on private land in the GPE may be problematic in that it heightens landowner concerns related to property rights, and communicates to landowners that the government does not value their experiential knowledge base nor

recognize them as adequate stewards of the land (Peterson & Horton, 1995). Incentives and voluntary, collaborative programs may offer more promise in that they maintain landowners' autonomy, recognize their knowledge and experience while improving capacity, and build on landowners' existing stewardship ethic (Fischer & Bliss, 2008).

8.4 Barriers to Recognizing Environmental Problems

Landscape change in the form of residential subdivisions was a predominant concern for respondents, yet was not broadly understood as an ecological issue (as described in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1). In addition, landowners did not perceive their own management actions as harmful, rather characterizing their actions as beneficial and casting others (often newcomers) as responsible for ecological harm, for example criticizing management actions on waterfront properties such as mowed lawns and destruction of riparian wetlands.

Thompson (2004) notes that landowners may not recognize that their own impacts have broader negative effects, as the harm they cause goes undetected and they are unaware of the aggregated consequences. This difference in perspective and understanding between conservation biologists and landowners represents a barrier to conservation.

8.4.1 Differences in Perception of Conservation Needs

Connectivity and habitat fragmentation are predominant concerns for Parks Canada, yet development of land was not characterized as an environmental issue by the majority of respondents. The lack of recognition of connectivity as an issue may be related to the general understanding of the local environment as healthy and the perspective that biodiversity is improving in the area, or at least being maintained. Comments by respondents indicated a general perception that wildlife habitat is

divider across something like that 'cause it has definitely got to be hard for any kind of wildlife to move much. You can see that you'd almost end up with a possibly different population of animals on one side than the other eventually. (752-584)

In addition, one respondent noted that strip development may be affecting wildlife at a landscape scale, stating:

I guess with the environment, every time there is another house goes up on one of these roads and there's one of these little streams in there, and somebody's tempted to fill a little bit of it in, you know, change those natural patterns, it makes it a little harder for the frogs and the orchids and that type of thing. (950-369)

The perspective that biodiversity was not in trouble in the area was evident even in the two respondents with an educational background related to environmental science, one of whom remarked, "But in all of these trends in terms of the landscape, you know the landscape is still intact. It's not like we're putting in 1,000-acre subdivisions left, right and centre as is happening up here¹³" (560-334). Similarly, the other stated, "The biggest change I think of the landscape has been the strip development of all the roads....And there's millions of acres in behind that are still never going to get touched, so you shouldn't feel so bad about that" (1550-399). The implications of this difference in perspectives between landowners and conservation biologists for Parks Canada's communication and conservation efforts are discussed in Chapter 9.

¹³ Referring to the Ottawa area.

8.4.2 *Knowledge Gap*

As noted in Chapter 2, lack of knowledge has been described as a barrier to conservation in the literature; particularly lack of understanding about the consequences of behaviour (Thompson, 2004). Respondents in this study may lack knowledge about actions that are specifically harmful (or particularly beneficial) to species at risk. Surveys of rural landowners in Canada conducted in 2000 and 2003 indicated that although rural landowners consider stewardship in making decisions about their properties, they are largely unaware of how to increase benefits of their practices and believe that they are already doing everything possible to enhance their property for wildlife (Environics Research Group, 2000; 2003). As discussed above, a perception of wildlife in the area as healthy and increasing, and a lack of awareness amongst respondents of how cumulative actions at a small scale can contribute to a regional decline in biodiversity may also contribute to this knowledge gap.

A lack of recognition of the limitations of personal knowledge may also result in a reluctance to change traditional ways of managing the land. One respondent characterized farmers as particularly tied to their traditional way of managing the land and reliant on their own understanding, saying, “You can’t tell a farmer anything, really. He knows it all” (1550-370). Furthermore, most respondents suggested that they were not limited by a lack of information and resources regarding wildlife and habitat. The 2003 Environics Research Group survey of rural landowners similarly found that landowners believed themselves to be knowledgeable about wildlife habitat requirements.

Two respondents in this study suggested mistrust may play a role in limiting landowner requests for technical assistance on their land, one stating, “in some cases people maybe are more receptive to some neighbour who lives in the area to give them

advice” (1750-515). This may relate to landowners’ desire for self-determination, in that landowners may be reluctant to engage with the government in managing their land. This finding is supported by research by Fischer and Bliss (2008), who found that the desire for self-determination resulted in property owner’s preference for landowner-driven education programs, and that landowners perceived risks in engaging government assistance for land management.

Respondents’ perspective that the landscape and biodiversity is in fair condition may also reflect the purposive sampling strategy of this study, which resulted in a sample of property owners who held large tracts of land (>50 acres) situated in vegetation belts that had retained greater amounts of natural cover than much of the surrounding landscape. These landowners may have been less likely to attribute environmental degradation to their own actions, or to voice concern over the impacts of landscape change, as their properties and adjacent lands are fairly intact. However, discussions with respondents suggested that for the most part, aggregate impacts were not in their frame of reference when they made decisions about their properties. In contrast, the predominant concern for conservation biologists is cumulative regional impacts in the GPE. Thompson (2004) uses the term “the tyranny of small decisions” (p. 142) to describe how landowner choices at a small scale cumulatively contribute to environmental degradation. The different frames of reference and the difficulty in bridging them may be a barrier to conservation, as noted by one respondent who worked with landowner outreach programs:

An individual landowner, it’s very difficult for them to do more than just manage their own property. But to get people up on the fence looking outside of their property when they’re making management decisions inside it is pretty key...

(560-548)

8.5 Conflict Related to Place

The influence of place may be largely positive for Parks Canada when it results in actions that conserve biodiversity, such as purchases to prevent land from being developed or conservation easements, or creation of a “friends of” organization that undertakes collective action on behalf of a national park (Cheng et al., 2003). Moreover, an understanding of sense of place can provide land managers insight into common ground based on shared meanings and values regarding a location, thereby assisting them in facilitating productive dialogue about future management policies and actions (Yung et al., 2003). However, people-place relationships can also result in conflict, as may arise when place meanings are contested between different groups or are threatened by land management decisions. As noted by Yung et al. (2003), an understanding of sources of conflict is as important as understanding common ground, in order to assist land managers in understanding potential impacts of their decisions and avoiding points of particular contention.

As noted in previous chapters, meanings that people attribute to place not only express values and attachment, they also represent an understandings of how individuals should behave in a place, and how places should be managed (Cheng et al., 2003; Yung et al., 2003). For example, the *rural place* and *retreat* place meanings entail an understanding of an appropriate way to construct dwellings in the area: discrete, modest homes that are in keeping with the predominant aesthetic. The meaning *place for people* reflects an understanding that people have a role on the landscape, and that appropriate management for public lands entails preserving that role; for example by maintaining opportunities for recreation and access.

When behavioural expectations for a place are not met, disagreement may take the form of an *ingroup-outgroup conflict*. In this form of place conflict, residents identify themselves and others as belonging to an *ingroup* or an *outgroup*; categories which are associated with specific behavioural expectations (Cheng et al., 2003; Peterson & Horton, 1995). Two key ingroup-outgroup conflicts were identified in respondents' comments; one between newcomers to the area and longer-term residents, and a second between local residents and the government (specifically, Parks Canada).

8.5.1 *Ingroup-Outgroup Conflict: Newcomers Versus Oldtimers*

Disagreement between newcomers and long-time residents is a common form of place conflict in rural areas, where individuals from away are seen to import different norms, ideas and practices than those traditionally found in the community (Cheng et al., 2003; Yung et al., 2003). Evidence of an ingroup-outgroup conflict related to newcomers is found in comments by respondents that criticized newcomers for their land management decisions and characterized them as not belonging to the area. These criticisms reflected respondents' understanding of the area's salient characteristics (their sense of place), and imparted an understanding of what behaviours and management actions respondents deemed were appropriate to the place. Criticism of newcomers also provided respondents a means of expressing their concerns with the changes to the area, such as the affordability of land, loss of community, increased traffic, and loss of tranquility and rural character.

For instance, a variety of disparaging terms were used to describe the type of housing that is cropping up on the landscape, including "pop-up-houses", "bungalows that appear on the landscape almost overnight like mushrooms" (162-317-320), "tacky houses" (1550-393) and, more generically, strip development. Negative stereotypes

applied to newcomers also suggest the existence of an ingroup-outgroup conflict related to place. For instance, one respondent described newcomers by saying “they don’t do anything outside of their house. They have an acre and they sit on their riding lawnmower all Saturday morning cutting the grass and then they go to work Monday morning” (1550-418). Another respondent stated:

...in a very general sense when you get the bungalow, you also get the four-wheelers; you also get the people shooting the guns off for fun. People may hunt on your land without asking you. Maybe they drink a little too much. Some of these things, they seem like constellations, and it’s never fair to generalize it to everybody, but in a general, general sense these things tends to go together. (162-353-355)

Stereotypes reflect a conflict in values and goals for the area (Yung et al., 2003), as newcomers were perceived by respondents to be importing values that were out of place in the rural setting, and enacting behaviours (and a land ethic) that were seen to be inappropriate according to respondents’ place meanings.

Behavioural expectations that reflect respondents’ sense of place are clear in some respondents’ comments. One respondent characterized cottages around Charleston Lake as “... backyard after backyard mowed right down to the water’s edge, you know, no protection of species or anything like that” (1750-382), while another described strip development as houses, “All with mowed grass. They destroy whatever. You know, the trees that were there are always removed, bulldozed down and then there’s just grass. (162-326)”. David described the values that newcomers represent by saying:

But somebody coming from an urban environment and they say all of a sudden we want to move to a rural environment and we want to enjoy the “rural

lifestyle”, what they’re doing is they’re transplanting themselves, but they’re transplanting their urban values into the rural landscape. ... many of them represent, for example, no trespassing, which is their right. They don’t want to allow hunting and they want to encourage wildlife, so you keep creating more little sanctuaries for wildlife everywhere. (Dav309-311)

David went on to describe how there were now more wildlife-vehicle accidents, conflicts about farm machinery on the roads, and complaints about working in the fields outside of regular working hours, suggesting that he perceives widespread effects at a community level.

Identity exerts a behavioural influence, and how individuals evaluate management actions for a location may reflect how these actions relate to and influence their sense of self (Cheng et al., 2003; Rogan et al., 2005). Comments by respondents suggest that not only are place meanings affected by newcomers and the changes to the landscape they represent, but that the cultural changes associated with landscape change may also affect respondents’ self-identity. For instance, David’s self-identity as a farmer (and a rural person) may be undermined by newcomers’ impacts on his traditional mode of interaction with the land. Jack and Mabel likewise made comments that suggested new ways of farming the land may affect their place meaning and self-identity, describing how new large-scale farms didn’t represent their understanding of appropriate farming values:

(Jack): On the big dairy farms with hundreds of cattle -- they’re just an animal, they’re not a cow. We used to keep them and we kept them clean and, you know, they were comfortable. They say they’re comfortable now, but they run the barns loose and all dirt.

Mabel): Yeah. It's just not the same feeling about them at all....Pride of ownership is gone, that feeling that, you know, we keep them the best we can, we keep them looking nice and you treat them well. (JM430-436)

Other respondents' self-identities as rural people may similarly be affected. For instance, William's disgust with strip development residents as people who pollute his rural aesthetic with their "tacky houses [with] parked cars out front that have got the engines ripped out of them" (Wi423) may reflect a threat to his self-identity. Another respondent whose *retreat* place meaning was threatened by newcomers remarked, of newcomers:

My concerns are that they come in to be with nature, but they don't respect it. They put in lawns and pave the driveways. They're bringing the city to the country, that's my biggest concern, and then they bitch to the council, because the roads are in bad shape, they want them paved and taxes go up. (161-580)

This comment similarly imparts a disapproval of newcomers' management decisions (and land ethic), and communicates the respondent's perceived threat to the cottage country culture and associated self-identity.

It should be noted that it is not only newcomers whose place meanings are in conflict; place meanings amongst respondents may also reflect conflicting values and management goals for the region. Overall, comments by respondents suggest that different groups within the rural population hold different place meanings, and associate various behavioural expectations with these place meanings. These disagreements may result in difficulty building a common vision for the area. However, understanding this source of conflict may assist Parks Canada managers in understanding positions and responses to land management policies and proposals in the GPE.

8.5.2 *Ingroup-Outgroup Conflict: Locals Versus Parks Canada*

Various respondents made remarks that suggested the existence of an in-group outgroup conflict between locals and Parks Canada. As noted by Greider & Garkovich (1994), different bases of knowledge result in different self-identities and different views of what is appropriate in terms of management practice. Parks Canada managers take a scientific perspective, and look at the landscape in terms of patterns of biodiversity, whereas locals' knowledge and understanding of the landscape is based on their experience with the land. Furthermore, several respondents suggested that they felt Parks Canada did not value local perspectives. These differing perspectives result in different understandings of what is appropriate in terms of land management, and combined with the perceived lack of respect for residents' opinions, may contribute to the formation of a group identity related to opposing Parks Canada.

The different knowledge bases between Parks Canada and local residents may also result in different perspectives on the implications of landscape change, and potential conflict around the appropriate response to this change. As noted by Yung et al. (2003), if residents' sense of place is tied to their connection to the human community, they may focus as much on the cultural impacts of change as they do on biophysical impacts. Although there may be an overlap with concern towards the changes in the landscape, Parks Canada's primary concern is centred around impacts to the parks' ecological integrity, and their response has been to focus on land acquisition and biodiversity protection in the GPE. However, this response may only serve to exacerbate concerns of residents who are feeling a loss of control related to the cultural changes affecting them (Yung et al., 2003). Concern and disapproval of Parks Canada's management actions may then reflect this sense of disempowerment, rather than simply representing a negative

reaction to the idea of extending conservation in the GPE.

Respondents' comments about park managers' emphasis on biodiversity protection, even when species are hyperabundant and causing damage to the land, conveyed the sense that they perceive Parks Canada's decisions as representing outsider knowledge that doesn't reflect local values or context, or respect their history of interaction with the land. The park and its managers may then be viewed as a separate from, rather than part of the local community. This perspective was clear in one respondent's comments, who characterized the park as belonging to outsiders when he remarked of park managers, "They have what they picture their park to be" (752-345).

Some respondents evidently perceived a value for dehumanized nature in management actions such as the re-naturalization of Mallorytown Landing, as well as decisions to prohibit historical (motorized) recreational use on newly-acquired land. The perception of a preference for dehumanized nature may be related to a cultural understanding of the meaning of parks. For instance, researchers have suggested that visitors to parks may view human presence on the landscape as degradation, whereas people living in proximity to natural areas view human development as compatible with the natural landscape (Hull, Robertson & Kendra, 2001; Senecah, 1996). While statements by respondents indicated acceptance or appreciation of the human imprint on the land, such as the in the area's mix of field and forests, Parks Canada's actions may be interpreted as indicating the opposite. Thus, rather than seen as simply wishing to expand its land holdings, Parks Canada's land acquisitions may be seen as an attempt to transform the landscape by erasing the human presence from the landscape. For instance, a map of the region accompanying the social science survey distributed in 2007 by Parks Canada (see outline of research projects described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3) engendered

rumours of a “super park” covering the study area delineated in the map (Craig, 2007).

Clearly, some of the negativity towards park management is grounded in recollections of the 1970’s failed park expansion. As noted by Senecah in her study of landowners in Adirondack State Park, “Experiences and events may indeed have occurred in the past, but the memories and attitudes regarding them are very much a part of the present” (1996, p.111). Although more than one respondent remarked that Parks Canada had improved in its communications with and outreach to local landowners, a history of failing to consult with the local community may remain a liability and colour perspectives of current interactions. Management actions that could be interpreted as representing outsider interests, such as those that perceived to pit human access against biodiversity protection, may be particularly prone to re-awakening old fears, fuelling resentment and mistrust, and polarizing landowners.

8.6 The Gap Between Conceptual and Actual Support for Conservation

As related in the preceding sections and chapters, the study’s findings suggest that respondents do support conservation conceptually, are taking actions to conserve nature on their own properties, and see themselves as stewards of the land. However, their stewardship intentions are not always enacted. This gap between conceptual and actual support for conservation reflects landowners’ rich and complex relationship with the land, the interaction of multiple (sometimes competing) interests, and the influence of various conflicts and barriers to conservation.

The desire for self-determination and economic considerations may constrain respondents’ actions. Reliance on their own knowledge may limit their stewardship capacity, and conflict with the government may also result in reluctance to ask for technical support (Fischer & Bliss, 2008). Adversarial relationships with Parks Canada

and the government, a sense of disempowerment related to the changes in their communities, and the perception that local interests are not represented in conservation plans may further limit landowner's willingness to take conservation actions or to support government-based plans for landscape conservation.

Additional factors, such as the commonly held perception that regional biodiversity is increasing, rather than being under threat, may be of particular, local significance in minimizing support for conservation. Despite respondent's recognition of the widespread changes to the landscape, the focus of respondents' concern was directed at the implications of this change to their sense of place, rather than on potential impacts to wildlife. Although this focus is not necessarily contrary to conservation interests, the perception that local biodiversity is not under imminent threat may lead to less regard for Parks Canada's communications regarding species at risk. Similarly, while the general understanding of an obligation to care for the land is promising, there may be a lack of understanding of what actions are specifically harmful or beneficial, particularly for species at risk. Moreover, the fact that negative impacts are perceived as occurring on other property owners' lands and the impacts of cumulative decisions are not evident at the scale of the landowners' management may result in a lack of empowerment for landowners, as conservation, or conversely biodiversity loss, may then be perceived as an issue to be addressed by others.

The fact that respondents feel connected to and responsible for their land may serve as a useful point of departure for Parks Canada's efforts to work with landowners on conservation issues. As noted by Peterson & Horton (1995), the concept of stewardship is complementary to conservation, and governments should seek to validate, rather than discredit this perspective in communicating with landowners. In sum, the

study findings suggest that landowner relationships with the land support the development and enactment of a land ethic, and that despite conflicts and competing interests, Parks Canada and area residents share values that could provide common ground for working towards landscape-scale conservation.

9 CONCLUSION AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Overview

Parks Canada managers have embarked on research to improve scientific understanding of the distribution of species and habitats within the GPE of SLINP, and are working to expand the park through acquisition of private property. However, improved scientific understanding and expanded land holdings will not translate into conservation benefits unless Parks Canada managers are also able to work effectively with private property owners in the GPE, who are the primary land managers and planners in the region. Understanding support for conservation measures, motivations and barriers to taking conservation action, and potential sources of conflict with landowners are therefore critical to Parks Canada's efforts to conserve biodiversity beyond park boundaries. The information on the various dimensions of property owners' relationships with the land that emerged through interviews with respondents in this study should help managers of SLINP improve their ability to collaborate with residents on conservation goals for the region.

Respondents in this study understood themselves to be stewards of their properties, felt strongly connected to their land and the region, and were willing to take action to protect place meanings and associated values of importance. However, their management actions are constrained by competing interests and needs, and potentially by limited understanding of how to enhance the benefits of their management practices for wildlife. This suggests a latent land ethic, one that is enacted by landowners as circumstances fit and that may be encouraged by appropriate policies and capacity building (Fischer & Bliss, 2008).

This study's findings suggest that framing discussions about future land use planning around concerns related to connectivity, species at risk, and biodiversity decline may not be the most effective approach to engaging landowners support and interest in conservation. Study results suggest areas of mutual interest upon which coalitions for conservation can be built, and areas of conflict that Parks Canada should be aware of and if possible develop strategies to mitigate or avoid. A review of what Parks Canada's management actions may communicate to property owners in the region, as well as recommendations for programs, communication strategies and future research are presented below.

9.2 Management Implications: Understanding What Management Actions

Communicate to Area Residents

Parks Canada's actions as a land manager communicate inherent messages about values and place meanings to area residents. It became apparent, in speaking with respondents, that one of the messages perceived from Parks Canada's management actions is that the park is not a place for people; or perhaps more specifically, that nature and wildlife are more highly valued by Parks Canada than are people. Not only is the park then perceived as existing primarily for wildlife rather than for users, but locals may also interpret that a human presence on the landscape is not desirable to park managers.

Management actions and communications that are seen to solely benefit wildlife may devalue landowners' connection to the land and exacerbate pre-existing conflicts with the government, particularly in light of sensitivities over property rights related to the legacy of the 1970's land acquisition attempt. Communications that indicate concern with landowner degradation of the land may also inadvertently communicate a preference for dehumanized nature, especially in combination with the general perception that

biodiversity in the area is improving and the landscape is intact. Ultimately, management actions and policies that are seen to devalue landowners' connection to the land and threaten their attachment may be counterproductive to the goal of encouraging a land ethic, as respondents' connection to place motivated their stewardship actions.

Although the perspective of and concerns related to Parks Canada's perceived higher regard for biodiversity were not shared across the sample, statements that conveyed this understanding were made by several respondents, including landowners whose property was farther from Parks Canada's land holdings (i.e. outside of the shoreline vegetation belt). This conflict has the potential to significantly impair Parks Canada's progress in working with landowners towards conservation goals. Since the public acceptability of management actions and policies may be influenced by the messages that they are perceived to communicate, Parks Canada should be particularly cognizant of policies, management actions and communications that could be seen to convey disregard for property owners' place on the land.

9.3 Communication Recommendations: Moving from a Conservation Focus to a Focus on Place

Place can be a nexus for collaboration, as the values and meanings individuals attribute to place may be shared amongst disparate groups (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995; Cheng et al., 2003). A focus on these shared values and meanings offers Parks Canada the means to identify with landowners in a constructive way (Peterson & Horton, 1995). For instance, using the shared sense of caring for the land as the basis for communications, rather than particular issues and outcomes such as biodiversity protection (which may be more significant to Parks Canada than to landowners or may even trigger negative reactions), may be a useful avenue to explore. Discussions that are

focused around commonly held values and concerns should provide a framework for conservation in the GPE within which residents can situate their interests.

Ultimately, a communications strategy built on place may result in the development of a common place-based group identity (Cheng et al., 2003) which can serve multiple interests, including conservation of biodiversity. As Cheng and Daniels (2005) suggest, Parks Canada should seek to forge alliances “where a place and the meanings it holds are the organizing principles for a cohesive social group that will fight to defend the place” (p.32). By re-focusing on place, Parks Canada may be able to avoid returning to adversarial relationships based on past problems and avoid positions related to in-group/out-group dynamics. In-group-outgroup identities forged around opposing Parks Canada could be dissolved and re-formulated around a shared interest in protecting the landscape and ensuring appropriate use of the land (Cheng & Daniels, 2005).

9.3.1 Building on Common Ground

Parks Canada must not only be cognizant of the place meanings and values that its actions convey and affect, but should also work to identify values that are shared with area residents, including those who may have traditionally taken an adversarial position to park management decisions (e.g. property owners who identify themselves as part of an ingroup/outgroup conflict with the park). Although there may be disparate place meanings amongst different landowners, for example those who value wildness over rural setting, there may be common ground in concern about development, and potential for affiliation with Parks Canada in responding to these concerns.

This study’s findings indicated that low-density development threatened multiple place meanings, continuity of self-identity, and place attachment, as well as setting and intangible values respondents held for the region. Parks Canada may be able to form

coalitions with landowners on planning efforts by focusing on conserving local landscape values (rather than biodiversity values), which could be a cross-cutting issue that builds on residents' sense of place and values. Moving away from a focus on Parks Canada's priority interest (biodiversity conservation) to landscape values may therefore improve collaboration by centering attention on an issue of mutual concern and outcomes that are of mutual benefit. In order to inspire collective action and build a common group identity, Parks Canada should also evaluate whether communication materials build on values that may form the basis of a relevant framework for conservation for area residents (Fischer & Bliss, 2008; Hunter & Brehm, 2003), and ensure that information is not transmitted in a manner that might reinvigorate long-standing disputes.

Ryan et al. (2003) suggest that programs that relate to a range of conservation motivations may be most effective in encouraging landowners to adopt conservation practices. Ultimately, the debate should not be over whose landscape should be protected (Greider & Garkovich, 1994) – i.e. the landscape represented by Parks Canada's values, or that reflecting local interests – but rather about how Parks Canada and the community can work together to care for the landscape that is valued by everyone.

9.3.2 Capitalizing on Sense of Place and Land Ethic

Communications that build on the shared sense of responsibility for the land, communicate an interest in locals' connections to the land, and recognize how property owners in the area have cared for the land may assist Parks Canada in building positive relationships with landowners. One means of doing this may be to develop a display at Mallorytown Landing with the input of local residents, that has a narrative focused on how to live well with nature and incorporates examples of how local residents have cared for the land over time. In addition, Parks Canada may build relationships with landowners

through communications that treat landowners as partners in caring for the land. Reed and Martz (2007), in their study of landowners around three national parks in western Canada, suggested that Parks Canada should present itself as one of a community of stakeholders in the landscape, and avoid presenting themselves as the resident experts on conservation and land management. This may be achieved through workshop opportunities or field trips in which Parks Canada staff participates as learners along with residents (Reed & Martz, 2007).

The study findings indicated that many respondents are proud of their roots in the area, and value the cultural landscape represented in the mix of farmland and forest. Programs that celebrate local identity and heritage may therefore be useful in communicating appreciation for residents' connection to the land, as residents may value the regional setting in part because it is seen to communicate local identity, telling a story of local life and community heritage (Hull et al., 2001). The meanings and values landowners associate with the landscape could be promoted through interpretation activities that talk about the stories of people in the area, not only island dwellers and island ways of life, which have been a focus in the past, and which celebrate the mix of natural land and human dwellings, rather than communicating only concerns for the area's biodiversity loss and the continued pace of development. This type of programming might counteract the conflict around the *place for people* place meaning, and reaffirm people's pride in actions that care for the land and its natural qualities. Celebrating landowners' connection to the land and sense of responsibility for the land may also foster opportunities for constructive dialogue based on common values (Peterson & Horton, 1995; Ryan et al., 2003).

Several respondents related how they had formerly used the park as a destination

for family outings, but that now picnic tables by the river have been removed, activities such as gun boat weekend cancelled, and Mallorytown Landing was no longer seen as welcoming. Reinvigorating locals' connection to park facilities, either through events aimed at local residents, or by re-evaluating gathering places to ensure that they are seen as welcoming, may help counteract negative feelings about what park management decisions (e.g. renaturalizing the Landing) have communicated.

9.3.3 *Addressing Information Needs*

Although respondents did not generally acknowledge that their stewardship actions were limited by knowledge, and were able to indicate multiple resources for information on wildlife and habitat, Parks Canada need not abandon communications about biodiversity concerns in the region. However, sensitivities about private property rights and the most effective way to deliver these messages should be considered.

Information about the impacts of land management choices on local biodiversity may be useful, although communications may need to acknowledge that while biodiversity in the area is improving in some ways, other species are not benefiting from changes to the landscape. This kind of information may also be useful in conveying why Parks Canada is concerned about biodiversity and management actions on private property.

Communicating concerns related to habitat loss and fragmentation at a landscape-scale may be more effective if associated with information aimed at improving landowners' understanding of ecological connections (see Chapter 7, Land Ethic). Specifically, connecting the consequences of actions at the individual and aggregate scales may be important, such as through communications that provide examples of

harmful or beneficial actions at different scales, and review the different scales of an action's effects.

Parks Canada may even wish to develop education materials that are targeted at two different scales: landowner-scale and regional scale. For instance, information scaled towards private landowners could communicate the value and benefits of native species and wildlife habitat on private lands, provide further information on habitat preferences for specific species, and offer suggestions, contacts, or resources for improving habitat for those species¹⁴ (Rosenzweig, 2003, p.21). Information targeted for a broad, regional audience could be built around shared values and concerns at the landscape-scale and targeted towards building a shared sense of concern and interest in regional planning processes.

The manner of delivering communications to private landowners may also be significant in ensuring the information is well received. Hilty and Merenlender (2003) suggest using other landowners to gauge interest in participating in outreach programs, and to provide letters of introduction. Referring landowners to peers (members of the trusted ingroup) who have undertaken similar actions may also be helpful (Fischer & Bliss, 2008). A recent survey of southern Ontario landowners suggested that local stewardship councils are a trusted source of information for private landowners (Milburn, 2007). Parks Canada may therefore wish to consider supporting landowner outreach

¹⁴ The Eastern Ontario Model Forest (EOMF) handbook *Enhancing Species at Risk Habitat in Your Eastern Ontario Woodlot* (EOMF, 2009) may be of interest to park managers as an example of this kind of targeted communication.

through organizations such as the local stewardship council, rather than undertaking outreach itself, in order to avoid conflict related to federal government intervention on private land.

9.4 Recommendations Regarding Engaging Residents in Regional Planning

SLINP managers are involved in regional planning efforts in order to ensure that landscape-scale conservation needs are considered in future development of the area. In advance of planning efforts, planners and park managers should evaluate if they understand what area residents believe should be the primary considerations in planning development on the landscape. Visual aids that show potential development densities along roads and changes to natural features such as woodlands and farm fields may be useful in exploring reactions and engaging residents in discussions about impacts (Norwood & Cumming, 2006). The benefits and costs of different strategies, such as different zoning approaches and protecting specific areas should also be presented, in order to enable residents to fully comprehend the impacts of different options and to respond in a proactive manner (Walker & Ryan, 2008). These methods could provide an engaging and inclusive approach to building a vision for the region and help gauge and build support for conservation measures.

Cheng and Daniels (2005) contend that geographic scale is important in enabling the formation of common group identities and finding resolution to problems affecting place. Parks Canada may therefore need to work with planners to design engagement processes that maintain the benefits of a place-based approach when working at a regional planning scale. Cheng and Daniels (2005) suggest framing issues and groups at smaller scales nested within the larger planning area, in order to facilitate the emergence of a coherent ingroup that will work effectively towards resolution of place-based

interests.

9.5 Recommendations for Future Research

As noted by Evely et al. (2008), conservation is concerned with human choices and actions. Interdisciplinary research is particularly important in conservation efforts that extend onto private land, as an understanding of biodiversity on the landscape will not help ensure its protection without an accompanying understanding of why people may wish to be involved in conservation programs. Further research may improve Parks Canada's understanding of regional residents' values and interests, and help park managers understand messages conveyed in communication materials.

Using survey research to identify particular features of the area that residents believe are worthy of protection as well as acceptable strategies for their protection may be beneficial, particularly in advance of regional planning processes. A knowledge of locations on the landscape that are highly valued by residents and characteristics that are of specific importance in the maintenance of place meanings will allow planning processes to protect these valued aspects of place, or evaluate impacts to them (Galliano & Loeffler, 1999). Walker and Ryan (2008) used a survey methodology to investigate how residents were affected by landscape change. Their research, which included the use of photos to enable resident to identify valued characteristics of the landscape, found that preservation of rural character was very important to residents who perceived a change in the landscape as the result of development. Residents indicated that they felt the rural character of the landscape could be preserved by protecting farmland, open fields, and woodlands (Walker & Ryan, 2008). Residents also indicated their support for specific planning strategies for public and private lands, including use of land trusts and zoning to regulate development (Walker & Ryan, 2008).

Research to identify the predominant themes in Parks Canada's outreach communication materials and resource materials for landowners may also be of interest, as Parks Canada must consider whether communications contribute to the "us" versus "them" mentality typical of an ingroup-outgroup conflict (Cheng & Daniels, 2005). Thompson (2004) used qualitative data analysis techniques to identify themes and predominant messages in educational materials and interviews with local residents. Findings suggested that communication materials were contrary to or failed to encourage the development of a land ethic. In particular, messages that idealized nature as wild and untouched were not perceived to be relevant to landowners, as they did not provide information on how to live in, with, and use nature appropriately (Thompson, 2004). This type of research may be relevant at SLINP, as similar messages conveyed by Parks Canada may threaten people's sense of place (in relation to the meaning *place for people*) and reinvigorate fears about Parks Canada's management intentions.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Sample Letter of Introduction

Mr. John Smith
Address & Postal Code

April 16, 2007

Dear Mr. Smith,

I would like to invite you to be part of a study to improve understanding of how property owners value their land and the broader landscape, particularly in terms of the conservation needs of the region. The objective of this study is to examine how landowners' values and understanding influence decision-making about their properties.

Your name was suggested by (**name of key informant**) because of your perspective as a landowner in the Thousand Islands region. The study will be conducted through face-to-face interviews between April and June 2007. Interview questions will ask about your concerns for the area, what you value about your property and the region, and the changes you may have witnessed to the landscape over time. Interviews will last approximately 60-90 minutes and will be arranged at a time that is convenient for your participation.

This study is part of the requirement for a Master's Degree in Environment and Management, at Royal Roads University in Victoria, B.C. In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University, I will also be sharing my research findings with Parks Canada. With permission, interviews will be recorded using a digital recorder, transcribed, and where appropriate summarized in an anonymous way in the body of the final report. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential. Should you require

information about my credentials with Royal Roads University, please contact Ms. Diane Van der Gucht, Program Associate, School of Environment and Sustainability at Royal Roads University at (250) 391-2557 or by email at diane.vandergucht@royalroads.ca

I am hoping that you will be willing to participate with the goal of helping me understand landowner relationships with their land and the regional landscape. I will follow-up with you via telephone in the coming weeks to discuss your interest in participating in this study; however in the interim please contact me if you have questions regarding the project and its outcomes.

Sincerely,

Claire McNeil
Master's candidate, Environment and Management
Royal Roads University
Telephone: (***) Fax: (***)
Email address (***)

Letter of Consent

Participant: _____

Project Title: Land Ethic of Property Owners in the Greater Park Ecosystem of St. Lawrence Islands National Park

Researcher: Claire McNeil, MA candidate, Royal Roads University

The purpose of this form is to request your consent to participate in an interview about how you value and understand your property and the regional landscape, in order to explore the main considerations of landowners in making decisions about their properties. This study is intended to provide a basis for improving communications with property owners regarding conservation initiatives in the region.

With permission, interviews will be recorded using a digital recorder to ensure all information is considered in the interpretation and analysis of the research. At any time during the interview, recording can be terminated at your request. Recordings will be transcribed and, where appropriate summarized in an anonymous way in the body of the final report. Recordings will not be distributed or shared with other parties. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

This project is part of the requirement for a Master's Degree in Environment and Management at Royal Roads University, in Victoria, B.C. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by contacting Ms. Diane Van der Gucht, Program Associate, School of Environment and Sustainability at Royal Roads University: (250) 391-2557 diane.vandergucht@royalroads.ca.

In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts, I will also be sharing my research findings with Parks Canada. The research is primarily for my Master's degree, with the potential of the work

being published in a journal or presented at conferences or workshops. Although no formal debriefing session with the participants is planned, please contact me at any time if you have questions regarding the project and its outcomes: phone: (***) ; fax: (***) ; email address (***) . A copy of the final report will be housed at Royal Roads University and will be publicly accessible. In addition, an electronic copy will be provided to St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

This document constitutes an agreement to participate in my research project. You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. If this is the case, please let me know by telephone, letter, fax or email prior to September 1, 2007. After that time I will have undertaken my analysis and begun developing my thesis for review. If you do choose to withdraw, the information you supplied will not be included in the thesis document.

By signing this letter, you give free and informed consent to participate in this project.

Name (Please Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Interview Guide

Introductory questions

First, I am going to ask some general questions about your property.

1. How long have you lived here? (on this property/in the region)
2. Do you live on your property year-round/seasonally/not at all?
3. How much land do you own?
4. What is your primary use of your property/ies (i.e. agriculture, recreation, residence)?
5. Do you plan on staying in the area/on this property in the future?

Now, I 'd like to ask you some questions about...

Values (*use images of property/area; prompts shown as bullets*)

6. What do you value about your property?
 - What is the most important thing to you about your property? Can you show me on the map?
 - What do you like/dislike about it?
 - What do you enjoy most about your property?
7. What do you value about the area?
 - What do you enjoy doing here?
 - What do you like about it/dislike about it?
 - What are the most important features of the area to you?
 - Why are you living here? What keeps you here?

Conservation Knowledge/Awareness

8. What wildlife do you see on your property? (animals and plants)
 - How often do you see them?

- Has the frequency of when you see them changed over time? Why do you think that is?

9. Are there any species of wildlife that you feel are unique to this area?

Landscape connections (*use map of landscape*)

10. Have you noticed any changes over time, in the landscape?

- Since you started living here, what has changed about the area? Can you show me where these changes have occurred?
- What is causing these changes? (e.g regional growth and development)?

11. Do you have any concerns about these changes?

- Do the changes make you feel differently about your property, or the region?
- Do these changes affect the things you value here? (e.g. The things mentioned earlier that you enjoy, what keeps you here)
- Have you done anything to address these concerns?

12. What do you see as local environmental issues?

Actions

13. What have you done to change your property over the past few years?

14. When you do work on your property, what do you consider in making decisions?

- Do you consider impacts to your neighbour, wildlife, aesthetics, property value, etc.
- Have you noticed any changes in wildlife as a result of work you have done on your property – e.g. more or less of some species?

Stewardship

15. Are you interested in learning more about how to help wildlife on your property?

- Are there any specific wildlife species you are interested in helping? Why?
- Are there any species that you are not interested in helping? Why?
- Are there any individuals or organizations that you turn to for information about wildlife/your property? Who would you be interested in working with/trust information from?

16. What are the responsibilities of different groups in managing the land?

- What is the role of the government, in managing public land?
- What are your responsibilities as an individual in managing your property?
e.g. Do you think there are considerations every property owner should think about when making decisions about their property?
- Are there other groups that play a role in the region in managing land?

17. What does the term “stewardship” mean to you?

Wrap-up

- * Do you have anything else to discuss before we end the interview?
- * Is there anyone you would like to suggest who has either a similar or very different perspective from you, who you think I would be interested in speaking with?
 - Can I use your name as a reference if I contact them?
- * Would you like a copy of either map as a thank you for participating?

Ask participant(s) to fill out information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Date	
Participant's first name(s)	
Age(s)	
Occupation	
Level of education	

APPENDIX B: NARRATIVE SUMMARY EXAMPLE**Narrative Summary: Richard**

Richard is a “semi-retired” 53 year old with a university education. He has had various occupations over the course of his life, including farming, logging, and running a sugar shack and sawmill. He owns a parcel adjacent to family holdings which total over 500 acres. The interview discussion focused on the entire property rather than just the land he owns, which he purchased from other family members. The land has been in the family for many years. The property includes water frontage along the Gananoque River system, an old but derelict family cottage, and is used primarily for recreation purposes (camping, hiking and skiing) and also as a woodlot, for personal and commercial use. The commercial cuts that Richard has done have been very small scale and he hasn’t done one for over 20 years (line 67).

Richard did not grow up in the immediate area, but spent many summers on the property as a child and is very attached to the property, stating that he “essentially grew up there” and loves the fishing, the forests, woods and animals (line 102). He feels that he knows the property best out of all the family members, as he spends the most time there (line 145), generally around 6 weeks a year harvesting wood (line 259). He says that it is the family memories that keep him hanging on to the property, as he doesn’t get much money out of harvesting timber, although he loves to do it (line 259). However, the family is now struggling with the future of the property, as the younger generation has expanded with some 20 offspring. Apart from the difficulty in finding a way to share the property, the family is facing an increasing tax burden and hassles such as ATV use and people camping and starting fires on their land (line 209). They are also using it less and less, primarily for day use rather than overnight stays (lines 157-160). Richard is

promoting the idea of donating a portion of the property to the Nature Conservancy, but feels that they family could not afford to donate it all, and would have to sell some off for development (lines 93-95).

Richard often refers to how the area was as he was growing up. He describes how, when he was younger, they saw fairly little boat traffic over the course of a day and likely knew whoever was in the boat (line 109), although now he says, “it’s sure not like that” (line 207). He proudly showed a local history book with pictures of his great uncles fishing on the lake, and notes that the old family cottage still contains the logs of their fishing catches. His family has deep roots in the area, as his grandfather had a farm nearby and on Sundays the family would row seven miles down to the cottage.

Richard values the unspoiled nature of the property, and landscape (line 207), which he compares to the remote parts of Algonquin park, where he has spent a lot of time canoe tripping. He notes that even on a map, the area stands out, as a “little piece of wilderness that was too rough to develop”, without any roads through it (lines 182, 205). He is concerned with the level of development in the area, noting that Charleston Lake is now lined with cottages, although he is thankful that the area where his family’s land is located is still largely undeveloped (line 185). From his land, the only direct visual affect is the increase in boat traffic, but he is shocked when he travels along the river system and sees wall-to-wall cottages. He feels that in some sense the area is ruined, since it has changed so much from how he remembers it (line 207).

Richard’s memories inform his idea of what the lake should be like; for example he values red oak over sugar maple since that is how the forest was when he was a kid (line 342) and is disappointed in the way new property owners manage their properties. He describes one of these new developments as “backyard after backyard mowed right

down to the water's edge, you know, no protection of species or anything like that (line 382)", summarizing it by saying that it "looks like a city street" (line 379). Apart from the aesthetic impacts, he is concerned about the decline in water quality and consequential impacts to the native lake trout (lines 185-188). Richard also disapproves of the fishing tourists who fish bass out of season (line 432), which he feels is diminishing the productivity of the bass population (line 460).

Although Richard doesn't think that the development should be stopped, he thinks that the area is being overdeveloped, and that there should be greater setbacks and other planning tools put in place (line 414). In essence, he suggests that although he knows things can't remain unchanged, he would like the natural (wild) values that he cherishes maintained (lines 413-416). He also feels that some work to communicate appropriate land management is necessary, saying "...we need to continue to promote the idea that you don't try to make a city house on the edge of the shore and mow your grass right up to the edge and all those sorts of things (line 416). Although he isn't familiar with Charleston Lake Provincial Park's mandate, he is pleased that the park at least prevents "wall-to-wall cottages" along the lakeshore (line 624).

The property management decisions by new cottage owners contrast strongly with those made by Richard's family, who have made very few changes to the property over time. Richard has done some cutting, and helped his father plant 15-20,000 pine trees around 40 years ago (lines 142, 539-544). His son and nephews made a mountain bike trail but mostly followed existing logging trails Richard had made (line 494). Although Richard had intended to fix up the old family cottage, he hasn't done so as he knows that he would kill the black rat snakes that live in the walls. He notes that the Black Rat Snakes are part of his family memories of the place, and his Dad taught him that they

were rare, and to respect them (line 277). Richard notes as well that when he is logging, he uses sustainability techniques that he learned from working with technicians with the Ministry of Natural Resources. He describes his harvesting ethic by saying “every time I take a tree out, I’m trying to think about what’s there to replace it and make sure that my cutting is making things at least no worse and maybe better”(lines 497-503). He also notes that tree planting is part of building a legacy, for a generation or two down the road, as the timeframes for harvesting are quite lengthy. Economic considerations aren’t really a driving factor (lines 542-550).

Richard values the red oak forest, which he finds is characteristic of the Frontenac Axis region and tied to his childhood memories of the property (line 342), and says that a benefit of his selective cutting practices is that he can encourage the regeneration of the red oak, rather than the sugar maple, as the oak need more light (lines 335-340). Other activities which indicate his land ethic include his intention to install a bald eagle platform up on his property, in cooperation with the Leeds County Stewardship Council (line 451) and his interest in setting up a fish sanctuary set up in one of the bays that his family owns frontage along (lines 433-437).

Richard finds it difficult to identify specific spots on the property that he values, although he notes several interesting features such as deep ravines and duck ponds, (lines 145-152). Richard speaks of the historical traces of former land use on the property as a particularly interesting aspect of the land. He describes old abandoned farms, dug wells and foundations, orchards and roads, much of which was more visible when he was younger, as the forest has now grown in (lines 124-131, 140). He finds these discoveries amazing, as it seems such a remote area to find traces of activity from 100 years ago. He had recently come across an old Model T which he had never noticed before, far away

from any modern roads. He also mentions traces of First Nations use that have been found nearby.

Richard describes several “hassles” in managing the property, including use by ATVers, which deters him from going down in the winter anymore, as he finds when he does go he is “likely to be almost run over...by four-wheelers and snowmobiles” (line 262). There doesn’t seem to be much point in trying to stop them, he says, as they just take down gates, smash fences, and continue to “get in there and rip around...no matter what you do” (lines 266, 271). They even bring chainsaws and cut trees to make trails (line 664). Another hassle he notes is that people often mistake the family property for crown land and use it for camping, which is a concern primarily because they may be careless about fires they have set, as one such campfire did lead to a burn on the property (lines 209, 668). In general, he doesn’t mind people using the property, and hasn’t got it posted as he feels that all the signs would be intrusive (lines 215, 666).

In terms of wildlife, Richard has seen porcupine, white-tailed deer, otter, beavers, fishers, turkey and rough-tailed grouse on the property (line 218), as well as martens, muskrat, weasels, coyotes (line 294) and bears (line 321). He thinks he may have seen moose tracks on the property as well. Richard has seen Black Rat Snakes on the property, occasionally in trees (line 289), and also coming out of the cottage walls and sunning on the roof (lines 56, 277). He notes other unique species in the area and on the property include pitch pine, wild ginseng and orchids (lines 301-307). The forest he describes as mixed, with sections that are predominantly white pine, as well as red oak, white oak, shagbark and bitternut hickory, and sugar maple.

Richard describes some change in wildlife over time that he has noted, including the introduction of turkey (line 218), and an increase in coyote and deer (line 321). He

hasn't seen bear in 25 or 30 years, but suspects they are still there, and notes that beavers are now very common, although 45 years ago they were unusual (line 323). Although he saw bald eagles in the area as a kid, they then disappeared as a result of DDT, and are returning to the area (lines 455-456). He sees fisher, but didn't before, and is glad that they are keeping the porcupine population depressed, as they were "out of control" 25-30 years ago and caused a fair amount of damage to the red oak forest (line 327). At the time, he took to shooting them when he saw them (line 568), but feels that the population balance has been restored again now by the fishers (line 570). The forest has changed over the years, with more sugar maple than previously, although it is still dominated by red and white oak and white pine (lines 166, 333). Other changes to the area include the decline in the lake trout population, which was a wonderful native fishery "for the first 30 years of my life" but is now mostly stocked fish, and rare to catch at that (line 188).

Richard is very interested in learning about wildlife (lines 552-556) and is learning more about local species through the Leeds County Stewardship Council (line 449). He describes various programs run by the stewardship council, including one in which neighbours act as information sources on private property stewardship, which he feels is beneficial as people may be more receptive to advice from a neighbour than they would be if it came from the government (line 515). Richard has heard of the Algonquin to Adirondack corridor, but isn't sure how it could be realized (lines 604-608). He also mentions the Biosphere Reserve, and says that he hopes that the reserve will improve regional land use planning, which he believes is needed in the area (lines 598-600).

Richard only briefly mentions environmental issues in the area, such as the decline in water quality and lake trout, and clear cutting (line 486). Although he dislikes the trespassing by ATVs, he feels they are not causing more than spot-specific damage,

and doesn't characterize their use as an environmental issue (lines 468-475). Richard feels that the government is not helping these issues by failing to enforce their own restrictions and downsizing their environmental regulatory agencies (lines 439, 583). Richard feels that the lack of enforcement is even publicized as budgetary restrictions are announced, resulting in a window of opportunity for illegal activity that is well known (line 470). The lack of enforcement of ATV use has affected not only his property, but community recreation opportunities, as he notes that the trail to Blue Mountain is heavily damaged, and he wonders if the abuse will lead the local property owner whose land the trail crosses to deny further access (lines 481-483).

Richard believes there is a role for regulations on private lands, and that the public has the right to expect a certain minimum level of land stewardship on private land (lines 586, 638). However, he thinks that education has an important role to play as well and that landowners should have some say (line 586). Richard feels that if broad-reaching restrictions are imposed on property owners, then they should be compensated for their loss of ownership rights (line 591). He feels that there is a balancing act between landowners' rights and what is good for society, giving as an example the difference between the government restricting clear-cutting versus prohibiting all tree-cutting on private land.

This perspective of the obligation to take care of the land is tied to Richard's view that being a steward of the land is an obligation to future generations. Although his understanding of the word stewardship is in part related to his involvement with the Stewardship Council, Richard notes that the family has acted as stewards for a long time, citing again the examples of how they have planted the clearings on the property and protected the Black Rat Snakes that use the family cottage. He summarizes his

perspective by saying that he doesn't consider that people really own land, they are just holding on to it and must take care of it.

(Edited to ensure anonymity)

APPENDIX C: RESPONDENTS’ DEFINITIONS OF STEWARDSHIP

Table C1: *Respondents’ Definitions of the Term “Stewardship”*

Respondent	Question: What does the term stewardship mean to you?
161	<p>It’s looking after what you’ve got to make sure it remains. I mean the reason you got that particular piece of property has to be maintained. Well, no, that’s not true – some people buy it with all the grass in there. Sustainability I guess is another word that I’d put in there. That’s a good question, stewardship.</p> <p>I guess the other question is the Indian adage that says you are only borrowers of the land until the seventh generation or something. I have forgotten how that goes exactly, but you have to maintain the land for the next seven generations or more. It’s not just the next generation, it’s much beyond that. I guess we think of it as being an environmental sustainability, but I suppose some people could say, well, I’m looking after it, I’ve paved my driveway, it looks really good, I’ve got my grass. I mean the grass grows well ’cause I’ve got lots of fertilizer on it. Is that stewardship? (lines 810-814)</p>
162	<p>(I): Do you think that landowners have a responsibility in managing their properties and how would you describe that?</p> <p>It’s like a trust. We don’t really own the land. We’re just lucky enough to have it for some time in our lives. I see myself as holding this land in trust. I hold it in trust for the species that live here and for other human beings in that I imagine that when I die it will be passed on to some kind of -- it will become part of a Park or become part of a nature preserve or something like there. That will probably be what happens to it.</p> <p>And therefore, I would want people to always be able to come and walk here or experience it. Certainly when people want to walk on our land, we always make them welcome. We want them to know it.</p> <p>(I): Last question: what does the term Stewardship mean to you?</p> <p>Pretty well what I just said, holding it in trust and looking after the land in a way that maintains its natural heritage. (lines 657-662)</p>
560	<p>Looking after the land, responsible land care. (line 585)</p>
751	<p>Husband: I guess take good care of what we got, I guess.</p> <p>Wife: Yeah. It’s your way of life. It’s the land, the trees, it’s the house, your home, whatever. It’s just a way of life, stewardship. (lines 947-949)</p>
752	<p>Well, I guess you only own a piece of land for the period of time that you’re here. Then it’s given to somebody else. You’re just a holder of it until it’s time to -- it goes to somebody else eventually. You’re just looking after this for the short period of time you’re here. Then somebody else has to look after it. (lines 542-543)</p>
950	<p>Oh, stewardship I think means taking responsibility for your actions. It means taking a proactive approach to maintaining and preserving the resource that we have to work with, that being the soil, the water and the air and their natural environment. Preserving that and if need be enhancing it so that it’s available for future generations to enjoy such as we’ve been able to enjoy it. Hopefully they will be able to do likewise.</p>

	(line 475)
1451	The term stewardship means that you have a responsibility to basically hand down the land to the next generation as good if not better than it was when you got it, not to take everything out of it and hand out something that has been beaten and broken. It's to respect the land and live in harmony with it. Use and enjoy it, but don't destroy it....You can enjoy it, but don't destroy it. (lines 641-644)
1452	1452: I suppose you got to have somebody looking after it. (Companion): That's about it, looking after your land. Landowner's rights. (I): Any other thoughts on that? 1452: They regulate it to death, that's the sad part of it all, eh. It don't matter what you go to do, somebody else is going to tell you whether you can do it or not. That really bothers me. (I): So it's stopping you from how you want to look after the land? (Companion) Governments are top heavy, that's it, top heavy, too much management and not enough workers. 1452: That's about it.
1550	Looking after. I am the steward of this property. My responsibility is to ensure good stewardship on this property and the maintenance of it. It all comes down to whether you can have a commercial logging operation, you can trap, you can hunt, but it has all got to be done on a sustainable basis. Stewardship on private land is basically sustainable resource management. (line 657)
1650	It's an awkward term because ... the native people said we do not want anything to do with stewardship...Stewardship to them meant the white guy would come in and ask them to sort of manage the property. It had very, very, very bad connotations to them, so ever since I've heard the word stewardship I've been reminded of that discussion. However, I think it's a good word. And if you are fortunate enough to own some property, then you have a responsibility to try to pass that property on in more or less the way you found it or improved if possible. (lines 733-737)
1750	It's meaning that you're a caretaker of the land. You don't own it. You maybe pay taxes on it, but you're just holding it and trying to pass it on in at least as good shape as you got it. That's how I think of it. (line 657)
1850	Stewardship, I think, just means that somebody is in charge of -- we're talking about the stewardship of land here. That can mean a lot of different things including how much taxes you can raise from it. But there is sort of residue of meaning that you should be looking after it so it doesn't get spoiled. But my idea of stewardship goes beyond that. I think it goes far beyond not spoiling something. It goes into the area of improving it. That's really what is difficult to get going with politicians, local politicians because they think so much of the taxes and expenses. If something's not going to be spoiled, then they don't mind raising the taxes even if it doesn't redound to the future prosperity and it tends to be

	very short-term. But I think stewardship has to be long-term. (lines 596-600)
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