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The Role of Public Participation in the Management of Hut Communities: A Case Study of the Selwyn Huts

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Applied Science (Environmental Management)

at
Lincoln University
by
O. O. M. Krielen

Lincoln University
2015
Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of M.Appl.Sci (EnvtMgt)

The Role of Public Participation in the Management of Hut Communities: A Case Study of the Selwyn Huts

By
O. O. M. Krielen

It is widely believed by both the public and governing bodies, that public participation is a vital element of decision making. However, the application of public participation theory in practice can vary due to differing planning contexts. This dissertation assesses the role of public participation in the management of hut communities. A case study of the Upper and Lower Selwyn Huts was undertaken. This allowed for a comparative analysis of different hut management structures, as the Upper Huts are under Selwyn District Council administration while the Lower Huts are under Department of Conservation management. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with hut owners and members of the governing bodies. The dissertation focuses on issues with representative bodies, the current liaison with hut owners and future directions for the management of both settlements.

Key words: Selwyn Huts, public participation, management, Lake Ellesmere
I would like to acknowledge my appreciation for the interviewees from the Upper and Lower Selwyn Huts, the Selwyn District Council and the Department of Conservation for sharing your knowledge with me. Thank you for being so friendly and willing to share your experiences. Thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Hamish Rennie, for having faith in me and giving great pep talks.

Thank you to my family who have received countless phone calls from me over the last few months. Especially Mum, for encouraging me through this last stretch at university. Lastly thank you to the wonderful friends I have made over the last four years, for the laughs and adventures we have shared.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Public participation is widely seen as a vital element of decision making by both the public and government bodies alike. At an international level, public participation has been recognised for some years now as a fundamental element for achieving sustainable development and democratic governance. Agenda 21, a significant international agreement, was developed at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. Both Agenda 21 and Principle 10 emphasised the importance of public participation in environmental decision-making to assist in achieving sustainable development (Eden, 1996). In New Zealand, the Resource Management Act 1991 is the fundamental legislation for environmental management, with a focus on sustainability. The Act reinforced New Zealand’s commitment to public participation by providing for public participation in the development of plans and policies and allowing for public submissions on notified resource consent applications.

This dissertation aims to assess whether residents of hut communities are engaged with effectively in the management of their communities. Hut and bach communities were established throughout New Zealand in 1900s as holiday homes, often located near lakes and coastal areas. However, owners of these huts often have insecure land tenure arrangements with some leaseholds not being available for renewal. This has resulted in many huts being removed in the last decades with the future of many hut settlements remaining uncertain. A number of hut settlements still remain throughout New Zealand on reserve land, either managed by Department of Conservation (DOC) or the local authority.

The Selwyn Huts of Canterbury are located where the Selwyn River flows into Lake Ellesmere/Te Waihora (henceforth “Lake Ellesmere”). The upper huts were established in the late 1800s (Plate 1) and continue to be a holiday destination with some owners living in the huts year round. The two settlements are under different management, with the lower huts on Department of Conservation land and the upper huts on Selwyn District Council land. The upper hut owners association was dissembled in 2011 due to internal conflicts, leaving the hut residents with no representation.
The central legislation for the reserves’ management are the Reserves Act 1977 and the Conservation Act 1987, as well as their subordinate statutory documents, which provide for public participation in their planning processes. A review of the framework which the huts operate under was undertaken, along with interviews with the reserves’ stakeholders. This was carried out to determine whether hut owners are satisfied with their current levels of involvement and the attitudes and capacity of governing bodies towards providing effective public participation.

Plate 1: Upper Selwyn Huts (Selwyn Huts Facebook Page)
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 What is public participation?

Public participation is a process where decision makers engage with the public and then take the public’s opinion into account when making a final decision (EPA, 2014). One of the drivers behind public participation is that it improves the outcomes of the decision making process and improves public support of the decision (Creighton, 2005). It is widely believed that those who may be potentially affected by the outcome should be included in the decision making process and have an influence on the outcome (EPA, 2014).

Public participation is a multi-step process that seeks input from the public as well as providing them with information (EPA, 2014). These processes may include methods such as surveys, public meetings, workshops, polling, and citizen’s advisory committees (IAP2, 2007).

The public stakeholders involved could be individuals, interest groups or communities. These groups will typically have differing views and concerns about the issues at hand. Decision makers should include a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that all interests are accounted for. The challenge is then to incorporate stakeholder concerns in the final decision and communicate back to the public on how they influenced the outcome (EPA, 2014).

The timing of public participation is also a factor, as it is important to seek input at certain points of the decision making process where they have the potential to shape the outcome. Asking for input on specific issues is also more effective than having a broad approach to participation (EPA, 2014).

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) prepared a list of core values to provide guidance for public participation practice.

1. “Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.

4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.

5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.

6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.”

2.2 Elements of public participation

2.2.1 Legitimacy

Cliquet, Kervarec, Bogaert, Maes and Quefflec (2010) defined legitimacy as ‘the perceptions or assumptions that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate.’ The public participation process is also seen as legitimate if it follows the governing laws and regulations (Dietz & Stern, 2008).

Public participation assists in increasing the legitimacy of the final decision reached by decision makers (Yetano, Royo, & Acerete, 2009). This is because the process is seen as fair if all participants are given the opportunity to share their views before the group, all having an equal chance to influence the outcome (Webler, Kastenholz, & Renn, 1995).

Legitimacy requires trust amongst stakeholders, which assists in securing stakeholder collaboration (Cliquet et al., 2010). Open communication with all stakeholders, regardless of their level of involvement, also increases stakeholder legitimacy (Cliquet et al., 2010).

If the concerns of interested parties are not taken into account there is a risk of losing legitimacy (Dietz & Stern, 2008). Without legitimacy there is a potential for conflicts to arise as those involved may be critical of the quality and legitimacy of the final outcomes (Dietz & Stern, 2008).
2.2.2 Representation

Representation is an important element of public participation and of democratic process (Rockloff & Moore, 2006). It has been described as everyone having an equal opportunity to be heard (P. D. Smith & McDonough, 2001). Representation is an important feature of the public participation process as inadequate representation of the population could weaken the process (Parkins & Mitchell, 2005). There are differing types of representation such as, geographic, demographic, or political (Abelson et al., 2003).

Factors involved in representation include identification of all stakeholders, numbers and types of groups involved, and the direct involvement of decision makers (Rockloff & Moore, 2006). Stakeholders are people who could potentially be affected by the outcome of the decision making process. They may be selected because their opinions are deemed relevant to local decision making, and are therefore influential in the decision making process (Parkins & Mitchell, 2005). However, there have been concerns that small groups of participants may not be statistically representative of the wider community (Parkins & Mitchell, 2005). The stakeholders involved may not provide an adequate representation of the diversity or intensity of concerns in the community (Abelson et al., 2003). Often there can be an overrepresentation of opponents compared to proponents (Chess & Purcell, 1999).

Representation on committees may be skewed as they are often voluntary for citizens and may be dominated by some members. Those who take a more domineering role may be strongly partisan participants who are significantly affected by the decisions made, or by those whose lifestyles allow them to participate regularly (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Irvin and Stansbury (2004) described a study of 53 focus groups where participants noted inequality in representation and felt resentment towards an ‘unfair’ public participation process. Many participants found the process unsatisfying, with one member stating that he stopped attending meetings because the outcome was orchestrated to suit those with a more dominant role in the group (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

A case study found that the ideal characteristics of a representative include credibility, being an active participant, communicating outside the group, and the ability to function in multiple roles (Rockloff & Moore, 2006). Communication was often cited as an issue
with representatives. This includes communication both within the group and dissemination of information to those they represented and the wider community. Representatives found that there was limited guidance in the level of communication they were expected to engage in in their role (Rockloff & Moore, 2006).

### 2.2.3 Levels of participation

There are varying degrees of public participation in the decision making process. Arnstein (1969) provides a ‘ladder’ to illustrate the graduation of public involvement, from limited public involvement to strong engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees of Citizen Power</th>
<th>Full delegation of all decision-making and action</th>
<th>8. Citizen Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some power is delegated</td>
<td>7. Delegated Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People negotiate with traditional power holders, agreeing rules, roles, responsibilities and levels of control</td>
<td>6. Partnership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees of Tokenism</th>
<th>People's views have a small influence on decisions made by traditional power holders.</th>
<th>5. Placation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People have a voice, but no power</td>
<td>4. Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People are told what is about to happen, what is happening now, or what has already happened.</td>
<td>3. Informing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Participation</th>
<th>These levels assume a passive audience, which is given information that may be partial or constructed</th>
<th>2. Therapy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Manipulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969)
The lower rungs of the ladder involve passive dissemination of information, while the upper rungs show the active engagement of participants. Arnstein (1969) argues that effective public participation cannot be achieved without the redistribution of power.

There is a significant graduation of public participation. However, the range of engagement levels allows power holders to claim that both sides were considered, even when using lower rung participation, where no power was redistributed to the public (Arnstein, 1969).

The hierarchy of the ladder implies that public participation efforts should strive towards higher rungs of the ladder rather than lower ones (Reed, 2008). However, different situations will require different levels of public involvement. Factors such as the objective of the work and ability for stakeholders to influence outcomes should be taken into account when deciding on the appropriate level of public involvement (Reed, 2008).

### 2.2.4 Communication

Public participation facilitators should strive for the process to be collaborative in its approach, establishing a framework where stakeholders can interact and influence one another while also acting independently (Innes & Booher, 2010). Two way communication is an essential element of public participation, rather than one way communication between citizens and power holders.

In a case study of effective public consultation, it was ensured that open communication channels and trust was established, which likely contributed to the lack of riots and protests (Innes & Booher, 2010). Sheppard and Bowler (1997) reiterate this through their belief that through fostering open communication, credibility, and trust, you can diminish distrust of the project proponents.

Two way communication is an essential element of public participation, not consisting of one way communication between citizens and decision makers or project proponents. The hearing and public comment processes have been criticised as being formalistic, one way communication from the public to the government officials (Innes & Booher, 2010). Some governance structures do provide two-way communication to some extent, such as
the opportunity for citizen bodies to deliberate between each other before a decision is made (Innes & Booher, 2010).

Open communication channels between stakeholders allows for conflicts to be identified and addressed in a timely manner, before any decisions are made (Shepherd & Bowler, 1997).

2.2.5 Democracy

In its most simple sense, democracy can be described as ‘rule by the people’ (Catt, 1999). Democratic practice is enhanced by opening up the decision making process to public participation (Pratchett, n.d.). Public participation is seen by many as both a right and a way to create a more democratic society (Beierle & Cayford, 2010). Democracy theory involves questioning the extent of power that people have to influence decisions that affect them (Catt, 1999).

Catt outlines three models of democracy shown below; participatory, direct and representative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participatory democracy</td>
<td>All discuss every aspect of each decision and agree on a solution for the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct democracy</td>
<td>All vote for or against a set question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative or liberal</td>
<td>A few are elected to make decisions for the group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Models of democracy. Adapted from Catt (1999)

There are a wide range of mechanisms within the three models, however they are all fundamentally democratic. It is important to consider the appropriate mechanisms for the situation. For example, the composition and size of the group could influence which type of democracy is best suited to the group. Difficulty may be faced when the group is deeply divided and the appropriate mechanisms will need to be applied to ensure that a
decision can be reached. Groups all have the common need to make decisions, a democratic base strives to ensure that every participant has the opportunity to be heard in the decision making process (Catt, 1999).

Following a process of democratic deliberation could encourage participants to choose group orientated goals rather than being led by individual motives. This could foster an atmosphere of problem solving resulting in more sound decisions (Beierle & Cayford, 2010).

The level of government can also influence the model of democracy harnessed (Catt, 1999). It is argued by Fiorino (1990) that citizens should share an equal footing ground with experts and government officials in the decision making process (Beierle & Cayford, 2010). Administrative governance faces the issue of reconciling the need for expertise in decision making, as well as the need for a transparent and participative democratic process (Beierle & Cayford, 2010).

### 2.2.6 Evaluation

Previous studies have evaluated the success of public participation to assess whether claims made of the benefits of participation are founded. Research has found that there are generally two types of evaluations that are used to evaluate the success of public participation (Beierle & Konisly, 1999; Chess & Purcell, 1999). The first is focused on evaluating the success of the public participation process, not including the outcomes. The second are those judged solely outcomes of the process.

**Process Goals**

Process goals focus on the participatory mechanisms used throughout the process. According to this perspective, the means rather than the ends, determines the success of public participation. Such studies explore issues such as fairness, information exchange, group process, and procedures (Beierle & Konisly, 1999).

**Outcome Goals**

The outcome evaluation method is interest orientated, focusing on the outcomes achieved by the process. The definition of success can vary greatly for those involved due
to the range of goals of the stakeholders involved. Among other goals for outcome success are better accepted decisions, consensus, education, and improved quality of decisions (Beierle & Konisly, 1999). Finding a middle ground between these two approaches is essential, as neither assessment is sufficient on its own (Caron Chess and Kristen Purcell). An investigation of three case studies by Beierle and Konisky (1999) used three social goals as criteria to evaluate each of the case studies.

- **Incorporating public values into decision making** – It is noted that there is typically a large diversity of opinions on environmental issues within the public. Whether the diversity of views is represented in the process should be assessed.

- **Resolving conflict among competing interests** – They argued that this aspect is important because collaborative, participatory decision making is more likely to result in lasting and satisfying decisions. Public deliberation can identify shared community values that build the foundation for cooperative decision making. Even if parties cannot resolve an issue it can help them to understand the goals and perspectives of others by fostering communication and building relationships.

- **Restoring a degree of trust in public agencies** - As trust in the institutions responsible for solving complex environmental problems decreases, the ability to solve these problems is circumscribed. Greater public control can be used to increase trust (Beierle & Konisly, 1999).

### 2.2.7 Barriers and facilitators

#### Barriers

King, Feltey et al. (1998) identified three categories of barriers in their research. These were the nature of contemporary society, administrative process, and current practices and techniques of participation.

Nature of life – there are many factors in the day-to-day life of citizens which can limit their involvement. These are often tied to class position. These include factors such as like transportation, time constraints, family structure, and number of family members in the labour force, child care, and economic disadvantages. With the commitments of
everyday life it can be hard to fit citizen participation in your schedule. Some are hindered by a lack of education.

Administrative process – if public participation is challenging the status quo it can be blocked by the very administrators who desire public participation processes. Some citizens felt that communication was only flowing one way, from administrators to the public. The timing of participation was also a factor, with citizens feeling that they were informed too late to influence the outcome.

Techniques of participation – common methods of public participation include public hearings, citizen advisory councils, citizen panels, and public surveys. Those who participated thought that most public participation techniques are inadequate. There are also problems with hearings that low attendance can be misconstrued as the public being content with the current situation. Surveys document public opinion at one point in time and do not allow for an interactive process.

King et al. (1998) identified some ways to overcome these issues. These included approaching citizens rather than the other way round. Making the process accessible to all and making an effort to include those who had historically been excluded. Overcome barriers by empowering and educating citizens, re-educating administrators, and enabling administrative systems and processes.

**Facilitators**

There are a number of strategies to enhance public participation. These include:

- To engage with and consider the public and stakeholders as early as possible in the process (Reed, 2008).
- To identify and select a representative group of stakeholders to be involved in the process (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Reed, 2008).
- Participants are given the relevant information, and are able to influence the outcomes of the decision-making process (Agger & Lofgren, 2008).
- During deliberations those involved show respect for each other (Agger & Lofgren, 2008).
- A highly skilled and unbiased group of facilitators are involved (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Reed, 2008).
- Regular meetings and a transparent process to build trust (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).
- When selecting the participation methods, take into account the objectives, the participants involved and the necessary level of engagement (Reed, 2008).
- Clear objectives for the participation process are agreed upon by stakeholders (Reed, 2008).
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This dissertation takes a qualitative approach to research. Qualitative research approaches gather the views of insiders in a social setting, providing a description and analyses of the wider situation (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2012).

The dissertation will be based around a case study of the Selwyn Huts and the Lower Selwyn Huts, which provides the examination of two management structures under the Selwyn District Council and DOC, respectively. Using a case study allows public participation to be explored in a contemporary context (Gillham, 2005). A document review will be prepared along with undertaking semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders.

The objectives to be achieved by the study include:

- To provide a review of settlement management and community involvement at the Selwyn Huts
- To investigate representation issues, previous public consultation efforts and the current communication channels between hut owners and governing bodies
- To identify options for future hut management and engagement

3.2 Qualitative Research Strategy

Qualitative research centres around two perspectives, interpretive and critical (Lapan et al., 2012). The interpretive perspective focuses on uncovering how participants interpret and give meaning to events and things (Liampunton & Ezzy, 2005). The critical perspective is how the researcher interprets the meaning of this information and examines ways in which power is imbedded in social settings (Lapan et al., 2012).

3.3 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be used, which provide flexibility balanced by structure (Gillham, 2005). The questions will be open ended and probes will be used when needed.
Similar questions were asked to those involved and questions were distinct from each other so that as the interview progressed it could take a direction.

Ethical considerations were also taken into account for the interview process. Members of the former committee and association were selected as they could be interviewed in their professional capacity as committee members. Interviewees were informed what the research entails and it was ensured they understood that the information they provided would be included in a dissertation. Identities were not specified.

A small group of interviewees were used for each settlement, however they provided a good depth of knowledge for the issues at hand. Interviewees were contacted through either phone or email to ask whether the individual would like to partake in an interview and to establish a meeting time and place.

3.4 Drawing Conclusions

Using a case study allows for public participation theory to be related to a contemporary context. The results of the interviews will be combined and ordered in a more cohesive manner. Running themes were identified and categorised. These themes were compared to the theory identified in the literature review. A summary of each category was prepared and recommendations were made.
4.1 History of the Selwyn Huts

The Selwyn Huts were established in 1895 and are located near where the Selwyn River flows into Lake Ellesmere (Plate 3). The reserve was gazetted as a public recreation ground (reserve 3048) as a result of discussions between the Commissioner and the Acclimatisation Society. 15 acres were allocated as a public domain, while the remaining 5 acres were to be a fishing settlement. The land was bought under the Public Domains Act, allowing the Commissioner to lease sections within it from 1896 (Singleton, Wright & Taylor, 2007).

In 1897 the Lake Ellesmere Dominion Board was constituted. The board comprised of members from the Selwyn County Council, the Canterbury Acclimatisation Society and the Commissioner of Crown Lands. The name was changed to the Springston South Dominion Board in 1926, as this was considered more geographically appropriate. Additional sites were pegged out at the upper huts in 1913, 1916 and 1919. The Upper Selwyn Huts was one of only a few fishing reserves to ever be designated in New Zealand. The Lower Huts were not established till the early 1920’s and are located at the mouth of the Selwyn River on Department of Conservation (DOC) land (Plate 3).
In 1927 there was a petition from 45 hut owners to have greater representation on the board. This resulted in a hut owner and a resident of the district being added to the board. 1927 also saw the first appearance of the Springston South Hut Owners’ Association in the board’s minutes. The Association played a very active role in the management of the Upper Huts and became an incorporated body 1951. In the 1940s the catchment board proposed to put in stopbanks. The location of the stopbanks resulted in friction between hut owners and the board. The Hut Owners’ Association took a very active part in discussions on the stopbanks (Singleton et al., 2007).

In 1984, the Lands and Survey Department offered the fishing reserve to the Ellesmere County Council, but the offer was not taken up. However, in 1989 local amalgamation and other events resulted in the Selwyn District Council becoming the administering authority for the control and management of the reserve. The Springston South Reserve Board was also replaced by the Springston South Reserve Management Committee in 1990. The role of the new committee was to advise, recommend and carry out the day to day administration, maintenance and improvements at the reserve. While most hut owners were happy with the new committee, some thought it was too tough due to strict
enforcement of the rules and no ability to appeal if they did not renew your licence. Meanwhile the Hut Owners’ Association carried on and worked alongside the committee with the association becoming more of a social organisation in the latter days. However, the association came to a natural end and was finally struck off the companies register in 2002 (Singleton et al., 2007).

Over the years the Upper Huts have established themselves as a holiday settlement for families while the Lower Huts retained their ‘fishing huts’ image for many years, even until recent times. Until about 1990 a prospective owner had to have a current fishing licence to obtain a hut licence. However, the degradation of water quality in the Selwyn has resulted in recreational fishing now being a minor activity in the Selwyn River. In 1999 a beautification scheme was initiated thanks to a council grant. This resulted in trees and flower gardens being planted by the council. 2001 saw traffic measures being put in place, putting to rest long standing complaints. The same year a community vegetable garden was also established. In 2004, a BMX track was completed and work began on rebuilding the playground thanks to council funds and a last gift from the dissolved Hut Owners’ Association. The reserve also includes tennis courts which were first opened in 1911 with resurfacing work carried out through the years (Singleton et al., 2007).

Currently there are 98 huts at the Upper Huts managed by the district council, and 58 at the Lower Huts, managed by DOC. DOC administers the reserve and has leased the land to Lower Hut owners since the 1920s when the settlement was established. The leases were reviewed in 2004 and conditions were put on them to prevent any adverse effects on the lake environment and ensure recreational use only. The leases are now authorised in accordance with the Te Waihora Joint Management Plan 2005. No further huts will be authorised to be built on the reserve.

At the Upper Huts only 12 huts can be occupied year round, while other owners can occupy the huts for no more than 9 months. The huts are run using hut fees and council rates. The day-to-day operation of the settlement was managed by the Selwyn Huts Management Committee. However, tensions between hut owners and the committee resulted in the Springston South Reserve Management Committee being dismantled in 2011. Complaints included lack of consultation, allegations of favouritism, and disorganisation. Selwyn Hut owners currently have no representation, with some owners
suggesting the formation of a hut owners’ association to improve communication with the Council (Sherwood, 2014).

4.2 Statutory Context

The management of the hut communities is governed by relevant legislation and planning documents. They outline requirements for the administration of public reserves and the public consultation that should be undertaken. The relevant legislation for the management of the Upper Selwyn Huts is provided for by the Reserves Act 1977 while the management legislation for the Lower Selwyn Huts is provided for by the Conservation Act 1987.

4.3 Upper Selwyn Huts

The Upper Selwyn Huts are under the jurisdiction of the Selwyn District Council. The reserve has an area of 8 hectares and is managed under the Reserves Act 1977, as a recreation reserve.

Reserve 3048, comprising of 8.0937 was set aside as a public recreation ground on 7 March 1895. Reserve 4349 comprising 273m2 was created soon after. This land now forms Springston South Reserve sometimes referred to as Upper Selwyn Huts or Top Huts.

Figure 1: Planning framework for Selwyn Huts. (Adapted from Rakaia Huts Management Plan, 2009)
4.3.1 Reserves Act 1977

Public reserves are administered under the Reserves Act 1977. The purpose of the Reserves Act under section 3 is:

*Providing for the preservation and management for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, areas of New Zealand possessing-

(i) Recreational use or potential, whether active or passive; or
(ii) Wildlife; or
(iii) Indigenous flora and fauna; or
(iv) Environmental and landscape amenity or interest; or
(v) Natural, scenic, historic, cultural, archaeological, biological, geological, scientific, educational, community, or other special features of value.*

The Selwyn District Council is the administering body of the huts (s26). Under the Act administrative authorities are required to classify reserves for their primary purpose, prepare management plans, and to put in place formal arrangements for leases and licences.

Classification

A reserve under the jurisdiction of a local authority must be classified by the authority according to its primary or principle purpose. The current purpose of the Selwyn Huts ‘Recreation Reserve’ under section 17 of the Reserves Act. Section 17 of the Act provides guidelines for the management of recreation reserves. Under this section recreation reserves have the purpose of:

- *Freedom of entry and access to the reserves, subject to other provisions of the Act.*
- *Management and protection of scenic, historic, archaeological, biological, geological, or other scientific or indigenous flora or fauna or wildlife to the extent compatible with the principal or primary purpose.*
- *Conservation of qualities of harmony and cohesion of enjoyment of the reserve the reserve which contribute to the pleasantness, the natural environment and to the better use and*
- Maintenance of the reserve’s value as a soil, water and forest conservation area to the extent compatible with the principal or primary purpose of the reserve.

Management Plans

Under section 40B the purpose of a management plan is to provide for the management of the reserve under conservation management strategies and establish objectives for the management of the reserve, according to the purpose that the reserve is classified for.

Pursuant to section 41 of the Reserves Act every administrating body must prepare a management plan for the reserve under its control. The authority must keep the management plan under continuous review. Section 41 outlines the procedures for preparing reserve management plans. Public participation is provided for throughout this process, through giving public notice of the intention to prepare a management plan and inviting submissions to the proposed plan. The draft plan must be publicly available and the Council must invite the public to make submissions on the plan, with a minimum of two months for submissions.

Leasing

Section 54 provides for the leasing of land in a recreation reserve. The administering body has authorisation to lease the land, in exercise of its functions under section 40. The lease may allow the construction of structures or buildings relating to the reserve’s purpose, the land may be leased as a sports ground, and it may be leased for trade, business or occupation.

4.3.2 Resource Management Act 1991

The RMA is New Zealand’s primary legislation for resource management, providing for the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. The Selwyn District Council must perform its functions under the Act while working towards its purpose of sustainable management. This includes preparing a district plan and working under the regional plan.
4.3.3 Local Government Act 2002

The LGA outlines the purpose of local government, the powers of local councils, a community consultation framework, and planning and accountability requirements. Under the LGA the Council must review the long-term plan every three years, and an annual plan in each of the two years between. The long term plan sets out the Council’s priorities, planning and financial scheduling for the next 10 years.

4.4 Lower Selwyn Huts

The Lower Selwyn Huts are under the administration of the Department of Conservation. The reserve is classified as a conservation area and DOC’s fundamental requirements for the reserve’s management are stipulated under the Conservation Act 1987. The reserve has an area of 0.9531 hectares.

Figure 2: Planning Framework
4.4.1 Conservation Act 1987

Part IIIB of the Conservation Act 1987 allows the Department, under delegated authority from the Minister, to issue concessions for the occupation of land managed by the Department. Conditions, rates and bonds can be placed on leases. Public participation is provided for under part IIIB. The Minister must give public notice if a licence is to be granted on a conservation area where the licence duration exceeds 10 years. Section 49 describes how the notice should be circulated and that any person may make a submission on the proposal.

There is a hierarchy of statutory policies, strategies, and plans in DOC’s management structure. This hierarchy includes statements of general policy, conservation management strategies, conservation management plans, and management plans for national parks.

Conservation General Policy 2005

The Department is responsible for preparing statements of general policy. The purpose of statements of general policy is to provide the Department with direction and guidance for managing land. Preparing statements of general policy is not compulsory, but is provided for under the Conservation Act 1987 and the National Parks Act 1980. General Policy is the highest level of statutory policy for conservation management.

The current Conservation General Policy was approved by the Minister of Conservation in May 2005. The policies set out will guide conservation management in New Zealand for the next decade or more. Chapter 10, Accommodation and Related Facilities, sets out policies for accommodation and related facilities on public conservation lands, such as:

‘10 (h) Existing private accommodation and related facilities, including encampments, on public conservation lands and waters will be phased out, except where specifically provided for or allowed in legislation, in accordance with the conditions and timeframes set out in any relevant concession or conservation management strategy or plan. They should be removed at the end of the phase-out period, unless retained by the Department for public use.’
Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy 2002

The purpose of conservation management strategies is to carry out statements of general policy, and to set up objectives for the integrated management of natural and historic resources, and for recreation, tourism, or other conservation purposes. The Department must prepare conservation management strategies, and review them within 10 years of their approval by the New Zealand Conservation Authority. The current Canterbury CMS was published in 2002. The Strategy outlines the Department’s role in the management of natural and historic resources within the Canterbury Conservancy area of the Department of Conservation.

- Section 5.4 outlines provisions for concessions and other uses on Department land. The Strategy states that ‘appropriate rentals will be required from concessionaires, and there will be an increasing requirement to monitor and mitigate the adverse effects of their enterprises. The Department will liaise with concessionaires to determine appropriate measures of mitigation.’ The Selwyn Huts are listed as a major issue associated with the commercial use of land managed by the Department.

- Section 5.4.2.6, ‘Private Dwellings and Structures’, describes the current situation for managing concessions for private accommodation on Department land. This section includes objectives, implementation methods, and priorities. Some objectives include, preventing the establishment of new huts, removing unauthorised huts, and to grant concessions for private huts where the activity cannot reasonably be sited elsewhere and where adverse effects on natural, landscape or historic resources and recreational values can be avoided, remedied or mitigated. A priority action for DOC is that ‘The Department will investigate the future status and tenure of the Lower Selwyn hut settlement. This will involve liaison with hut owners, North Canterbury Fish and Game Council, Selwyn District Council, Canterbury Regional Council, Ngai Tahu and other interested groups.’

Draft Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy 2015-2025

The Draft CMS has a section for ‘private accommodation and related facilities’.
‘Existing structures on public conservation lands and waters include some private accommodation and related facilities that are not available for use by the general public. Some of these structures have been authorised, but many have been erected and used unlawfully. Under the Conservation General Policy 2005, the use of private accommodation and related facilities, including encampments solely for private purposes, is to be phased out, except where specifically provided for or allowed in legislation.’

The CMS then lists both unauthorised and authorised private accommodation and related facilities on public conservation land in Canterbury. The Lower Selwyn Huts Conservation area is recorded as having 58 authorised huts. This authorisation is due to expire in 2019. However, the concession holders have a right of renewal till 2024. They are authorised in accordance with the Te Waihora Joint Management Plan.

4.4.2 Te Waihora Joint Management Plan

The Department and Ngai Tahu have jointly prepared the Te Waihora Management Plan (2004) to give effect to the Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. The Plan is a statutory document containing long term objectives and detailed policies and methods for effective integrated management of the Joint Management Plan Area and natural and historic resources within the area. While the upper Selwyn Huts is on Selwyn District Council land, the Lower Huts are within the Joint Management Plan Area. The Plan acknowledges that recreational huts provide bases for people mainly involved with fishing and gamebird shooting. A review of leases in 2004 resulted in conditions put in place to avoid any adverse effects from the settlement on the Joint Management Plan Area and the Te Waihora environment. Methods put in place include “The Lower Selwyn Huts lease agreement should be maintained with building standards that ensure that any adverse effects on the landscape of Te Waihora by the settlement are avoided, remedied or mitigated.” Policy 7.2.2 states that the Minister should not permit any buildings for exclusive use administered by the Department, except as provided for at the Lower
Selwyn Huts. A further policy (7.2.3) regarding the Lower Huts states “To ensure that allowing the Lower Selwyn Huts settlement to remain on site does not constrict or restrain Te Waihora lake levels or management for “mahinga kai, conservation and other purposes” within the JMP Area.”
Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Upper Selwyn Huts

The views of three interviewees were sought for the management of the Selwyn Huts. This consisted of two former committee members and a respondent from the Selwyn District Council.

The interviewees were part of the Springston South Reserve Management Committee, which was a delegated authority under the Selwyn District Council. The Committee was responsible for the management of the hut community, however it was dismantled in 2011 and the hut owners currently have no representation.

Interviewee two explained that the community members were not alternative, but the way of living is alternative. The Council respondent supported this, saying that he found hut owners ‘pretty normal’ and didn’t think they were any different to other communities he had managed.

5.1.1 Former Springston South Reserve Management Committee

5.1.1.1 Responsibilities

The Committee consisted of 13 people who were elected at an AGM every year. They had monthly meetings regarding the reserve’s management. Responsibilities of the Committee included administration of licence to occupy, collection of rental, ensuring council bylaws were met, and the day-to-day management, such as the sewage scheme which the community owns.

5.1.1.2 Issues

In 2011 the Committee was dismantled by the Council due to a number of ongoing issues. The issues reported were: ‘Lack of consultation; allegations of favouritism; disorganisation; allowing illegal structures to be built on the reserve; failure to prepare and provide up to date financial accounts; lack of progress on the preparation of Activity Management Plans; the failure to oversee completion of reserve designation issues; and the failure to address and resolve ongoing Building Act compliance issues’ (Scoop, 2011).

Some of these issues were expanded on by the interviewees. Respondent one said, ‘13 people on committee felt like too many. There were a lot of arguments.’ Respondent two
supported this, saying there had been some difficulties in the community over the last 10 years. Some Committee members were not talking to each other and there was a ‘sense of injustice’ in the community. This was due to divergent opinions on how the huts should be used. Some people had grown up with the huts as a weekend retreat, while others had made the huts their permanent home. People on the committee tended to fall into either group. There were also mixed views on enforcing bylaws and the need for building permits. ‘Because of the way the committee was divided it became a rallying point around which people stated their opinion. A group in the committee thought that it was none of the Council’s business and it was none of the Committee’s business and they should just stay out of it.’ Respondent two also felt that there was a ‘Problem that people on the Committee didn’t have a good understanding of governorship and their responsibilities as the Council delegated authority.’

In the lead up to the Committee’s disestablishment, the Council met with the Committee to remind them of their obligations. As respondent two explained ‘They told us that the Council was in a compromised position because they had issued notice of compliance orders on some people at the huts and the Committee had not taken any action on that and as things stood the Council had delegated that authority to the reserve management committee... Under statute once they had issued that notice of compliance order they were obliged to have that settled or take legal action within a certain period of time.’ After this meeting the Committee established a sub-committee to address compliance issues, which respondent one was a member of. They wrote letters and phoned the hut owners who were not compliant to explain the importance of the issue. However, compliance was not achieved, resulting in the Committee being disestablished because it was not performing its functions.

5.1.2 Council communication and consultation with hut owners

5.1.2.1 Communication

The Council respondent said that contact methods include email, letters and phone calls. He also get some people coming into the Council office to speak to him. ‘Some people are in regular contact if there are issues to be solved.’ He also says that a newsletter is issued
three or four times a year. A newsletter was prepared before Christmas outlining holiday activities and addressing housekeeping issues. He would like to include more positive aspects of the community in the next newsletter (Appendix 1). Respondent two said, ‘One of the council people was putting out a newsletter which was a good thing but it wasn’t very consistent.’

Both Committee respondents said there was a large community turn out at the last AGM, which lasted about 8 hours. ‘Everybody turned up. Council people turned up to the meeting and had their say.’ Interviewee one said that the Committee meetings were often attended by a Council member. However, ‘the last one didn’t put in much input, but the one before was good.’

5.1.2.2 Consultation

Lease renewal

The previous lease expired in 2010. The Council respondent said ‘drawing up a new lease was a lengthy process and there were public meetings to sort it out.’ A draft copy was made available to hut owners and submissions were requested. The Council respondent said there were ‘around 21 submissions, which is a low response considering it will affect them all. There were some strong comments and cases put forward.’ They found that ‘about 40% of responses weren’t related to what was at hand’. The responses were varied and ‘ideas were quite scattered.’ Both interviewee one and two said they wrote in submissions for the licence. However, ‘this was about two years ago and they haven’t got back to us.’

Management Plan

In 2013 ‘they had a consultant come in to do the reserves management plan.’ Public consultation and discussion groups were held, along with a couple of other facilitators. ‘Around 20-30 people turned up. All found it to be a good evening, everyone felt they were heard... She explained that she would be writing something up and that would come out for submissions around February. Still haven’t heard anything.’

After Committee was dismantled

Respondent two explained that the huts were unsettled after the Committee was dismantled. The Council held a number of meetings with the hut owners and a
community facilitator was involved to try build community spirit. They brainstormed ways to bring the community together, such as a market day and getting the tennis club running. The respondent thought that at a wider community level the process may not have been as effective for those who were not involved in the community tension.

5.1.3 Current situation

5.1.3.1 Current issues

One of the issues is finding the right composition of community members to represent the hut owners on a representative body. Respondent two said that one of the biggest problems is finding non-partisan leadership for the representative body. The Council respondent said that the ‘minority voice is not heard’ and ‘they need to speak up’. This was supported by interviewee two who said ‘the silent majority are never the ones who volunteer.’ The Council respondent also indicated that getting people involved can be an issue as there is sometimes a poor response, such as when new a new lease was being drafted. It was pointed out by respondent one that a day-to-day issue is ‘The sewage pipes are aging but there has been no progress made by the Council’, for their replacement.

5.1.3.2 What would people like to see?

All three respondents agree that the huts need some form of representation. Respondent one says, ‘I don’t want to see the return of a management committee as I don’t want things to go back to the way they were.’ He believes that the committee had too much responsibility for a voluntary body, however they do need some type of representative committee. Respondent two agreed stating that ‘As soon as possible we need some democratic representation for the top huts.’ She also suggested that a community board could be more suitable for the top huts as they are given a bit more support. She recommended that the representative body should also receive training for governance. The Council respondent agreed that the huts need some type of representative committee with Council staff more involved.
5.2 Lower Huts

There were four interviews conducted for the management of the Lower Selwyn Huts. These consisted of three respondents from the Lower Selwyn Huts Hut Owners Association and one from the Department of Conservation.

The hut owners appear to appreciate that they can live at the settlement with respondent two saying it was ‘so nice to own something’. Respondent three supported this sentiment saying ‘We are very lucky to have places like this with lakes and rivers and we need to keep them clean and maintained.’

DOC’s overall view of hut settlements in New Zealand was outlined in their general policy which said that no further hut communities were to be established and existing ones will be phased out. The Canterbury Conservancy put forward a case for the Lower Selwyn Huts at this time, requesting that the huts be exempt. The DOC interviewee said they put forward points such as how they had had tacit approval from the Crown till that point so they should be allowed to continue and that the cultural value of the Huts should be acknowledged as it is widely recognised as a historical bach community. Despite these efforts, the case was not accepted.

The current leases were issued in 2004. These are 5 year leases with three rights of renewal which will expire in 2024. The DOC respondent also spoke of how hut values have increased over the last decade. This could be attributed to the change from a licence to occupy to a lease, as the licence did not provide much security as it was for a five year period. The 20 year leases have made the huts a lot more tradable as a result the value of the huts have at least doubled in the last decade. The limited supply of huts around the country could have also contributed to this increase as hut settlements can no longer be established. The lease amount paid to DOC by hut owners is based on factors such as land values and rates at other hut settlements.
5.2.1 Lower Selwyn Hut Owners’ Association

5.2.1.1 Responsibilities

The Lower Selwyn Hut Owners Association is a representative body consisting of 9 members. Hut owners pay a $120 fee for the Association to manage the day-to-day running of the huts. The interviewees described responsibilities such as running the sewage system, supplying artesian water, maintaining internal roading and the general maintenance of the reserve. Interviewee three expressed that ‘The committee plays a far greater role in maintaining this than DOC do.’ The committee has bimonthly meetings and consults with both DOC and Ngai Tahu.

5.2.1.2 Issues

All three Association members said that people were not enthusiastic about being on the committee. Interviewee two found this ‘a bit frustrating’ as did interviewee three who spoke of the declining interest of younger generations to be on committees in general. He said this is also due to the committee being voluntary so you only get people who have the time, which is often an older generation. Interviewee three said that ‘the committee is good at sorting out domestic problems amongst ourselves. But some people think that the committee has no right to tell them what to do.’ The DOC respondent also recognised this as an issue as the Association ‘doesn’t have any teeth’. This means they have to go back to DOC for enforcement. As a possible solution to this, when DOC created the current lease, they asked the Association if they would like to lease the block of land and then sub-lease to hut owners. This would give the Association a lot more power. However, the Association declined the offer as they did not want to be hut owners and enforcers at the same time.

5.2.2 DOC communication and consultation with hut owners

The DOC respondent said that there was generally a hands off approach unless there are issues to be dealt with. He said from time to time the Association will come to him about issues with hut owners. This will result in someone coming out to the huts and letters being sent saying that if they continue to breach the conditions in their lease, the lease may be cancelled. This appears to be the general approach as respondent one spoke of how contact is usually initiated by the huts owners. Communication between the DOC
respondent and the Association is usually through emails and phone calls. The Association has recently contacted DOC as they have identified half a dozen huts that they are concerned about.

Interviewee two said that periodically a DOC ranger would come out. In the past a DOC ranger would attend Association meetings and discuss issues with the chair. Interviewee three said that the ranger would ‘check things and ensure that DOC standards were being met at the huts.’

**Leases**

Respondent one said that they have close contact with DOC when it comes to lease transfers and changes. The DOC interviewee said that the requirements for public participation at the huts is limited to public involvement when the leases are renewed. When the leases are renewed there is a public notice calling for submissions on the lease. However, he said the last time he could not recall that any comments were made. Tangata whenua are also consulted on the renewal of the lease.

The conditions on the leases cover areas such as changes to the buildings and plants they can grow. There are restrictions on the size of baches and materials that can be used which ensures that the huts retain their traditional bach image. To make changes to the buildings, hut owners need consent from both DOC and the Council. However, the DOC respondent said that hut owners often ignore this requirement.

### 5.2.3 Current Situation

#### 5.2.3.1 Current challenges

A current challenge at the huts is the policy that hut owners are not allowed to live at the huts full time. There are 3 or 4 owners who have permission to live at the huts full time for security reasons and to act as a caretaker. Despite this, the DOC respondent said there are at least a dozen hut owners living there full time. Periodically DOC sends out a letter reminding hut owners that they are not allowed to live there permanently, however the DOC respondent said that this is difficult to police and ‘it’s not enforced unless there is a specific problem.’

The DOC respondent said that there are social and environmental issues associated with too many people living at the huts full time. These include issues with dogs, drugs and
neighbourly disputes. Environmental issues include the sewage system and rising sea levels. There are concerns with how the sewage system could have downstream effects on the lake and flooding at the huts is a very real reality. Interviewee two spoke of how climate change could be a future issue at the huts and it appears all hut owners should be aware of this as the DOC respondent said a lease condition outlined that ‘if the lake level rises and the area becomes uninhabitable then they will be given 12 months’ notice to move out.’ Interviewee three echoed the concerns of DOC, such as dog control, keeping huts tidy and disposing of rubbish. She said this can be a problem as sometimes ‘DOC is dealing with people who are not interested in being environmentally responsible.’

Respondent two said that in recent times DOC have been more lenient on the requirement to not live permanently at the huts due to the 2011 earthquake. This was supported by interviewee three who said ‘Some people down here lost their homes and have come down at a stretch at a time because their homes are being repaired. I think DOC have been very good’.

5.2.3.1 What do people want to see?

Two of the Association members spoke of how they would like to see DOC ‘take the reins a little bit’ and provide more assistance in the management of the reserve. Respondent three said the Association wants a ‘huge clean up’ as there are things they do not want to see anymore, such as untidy huts and caravans and vans used for extra accommodation. The same respondent also stated that the Association hopes that a ranger will be appointed for the huts who can periodically visit and ‘keep an eye on it and say these are the issues that need dealing with’. As mentioned earlier, there was previously a ranger who would visit the huts and consult with the association chair on issues the huts were dealing with. The DOC respondent expressed that ‘we don’t have the resources to police the huts as much as we’d like’, this was due to a lack of resources and DOC restructuring. However, the interviewee did note that he had spoken to a field worker in the area about visiting the huts but this was likely to be on a needs basis.
Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Representative Bodies

Representative groups play an important role in public participation, as they allow groups to make decisions on behalf of their community, often resulting in more suitable and accepted outcomes. Two different types of representative bodies are used at the Selwyn Huts, with the Lower Huts having a hut owners’ association and the Upper Huts currently having no representation, but previously having a committee. These two representative groups have different levels of power and responsibility afforded to them. However, they both face issues associated with group dynamics. Some of the main issues with representative groups include lack of democracy, understanding, representation, organisation and domination and conflict. The main issues at the Lower Huts include an inability to enforce the Association’s directives and environmental concerns, while at the Upper Huts the former committee’s issues were associated with the committee not carrying out its functions or following democratic practice. There is a need to establish a representative body for the Upper Huts so that they have some form of representation for their community.

Democratic practice

Democracy was a major issue at the Top Huts. Particularly that there was a reluctance to follow democratic processes (Voxy, 2011). This can be an issue in committees as private interests can influence public decisions. As mentioned in the literature review, if group members adhere to a more democratic approach, participants could strive more group orientated goals, rather than being driven by individual motives (Beierle & Cayford, 2010). The decision making process could be greatly improved if a more democratic approach is taken. Members are also likely to feel as though their opinion is being heard by the group and will be more likely to speak up.

Lack of understanding and knowledge

For the Upper Huts there was an issue of committee members not understanding their responsibilities or taking them seriously. Although they were given the opportunity for direct self-governance, this does not imply that members will possess the skills necessary to utilise them (Fung, Abers & Wright, 2003). The fact that some committee members
thought the management of the community was none of the Council’s business shows that they had forgotten where their powers had come from as a delegated committee of the Selwyn District Council. Members may also not have the knowledge or skills of how to enforce their responsibilities.

**Representation**

Both the Association and former Committee consisted of members of their communities who were elected through an AGM. As discussed in the literature review, this has been a concern in other communities where small groups of representatives may not be representative of the wider community (Parkins & Mitchell, 2005). Although, everyone has the opportunity to put themselves forward to be on the Association or Committee, some people are reluctant to be involved to this extent. A number of issues could contribute to this, particularly circumstantial factors. The voluntary aspect of these groups also means that representation may be skewed as often only those with the time to contribute put themselves forward to be members. It was commented that there is a lack of interest in being on the Association at the Lower Huts. It was also said that at the Upper Huts there are many people in the community who do not participate, which can sometimes be interpreted as satisfaction with the status quo or disinterest in the management of the huts.

**Domination and Conflict**

Disagreements within groups are inevitable due to varying opinions and personalities. Sometimes conflicts are encouraged because they ensure contentious issues are brought to the table. However, this is not the case if conflicts are hindering the decision making process and interrupting group meetings. Those who take a more domineering role may be strongly partisan participants who have a strong personal interest in the decisions made (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). This could be prevented through having a democratic leadership to ensure the group functions smoothly.

Domination was an issue at both committees, with the response that having too many members in the group can result in conflicts. Fung, Abers and Wright (2003) state that groups need to be small enough so that its members all have the opportunity to partake in discussion, and yet large enough to offer diverse perspectives and energies. In general
it can be harder to reach a consensus in larger groups which can prevent progress being made. This may discourage people from contributing or attending meetings at all.

*Organisation*

The administration tasks expected of a secretary generally involve duties such as organising meetings, ensuring meeting minutes are taken and circulated, correspondence within and outside of the committee, and upholding legal requirements (Ministry for Women, n.d.). The treasurer’s role involves keeping up to date with the financial position of the committee and conveying this to other committee members. It is important that these tasks are carried out to ensure that meetings are run smoothly and all committee members are well informed. This was an issue at the Upper Huts as records were not kept and information was not handed over to the Council when the Committee was disestablished. The secretary’s role involves numerous tasks which may be very time consuming for one person to carry out. It may be beneficial to have the tasks spread between members to ensure the tasks are performed, as they are essential to ensuring that the group runs smoothly.

6.2 Level of Participation – Community and Authority Involvement

Giving the community power typically results in the empowering of community members and leads to higher satisfaction. The Council respondent said that empowering communities was the Selwyn District Council’s general approach to community management. However, in the case of the Selwyn Huts this has not had the intended effect, as despite the community having the opportunity to self-manage they may not have the required skills or support.

Although higher rungs of the participation are typically striven for, they may not be suitable for some communities. Governing bodies need to take into account the situation at hand and what would be the most appropriate level of power for the community. It is clear that neither of the communities are pushing for more power, as they would rather the Council and DOC had a more active role in the management of the communities.

The Upper Huts members do not want to see the return of a management committee as they felt that the Committee had too much responsibility considering they were volunteers. While the Lower Huts are having issues with enforcing rules on the
community. They find this frustrating as they have to go back to DOC for enforcement and they want DOC to take more action. It may also be difficult to be enforcers in the community where you live, especially due to the size of the huts. Issues such as favouritism may arise, which means the Council may be more effective as they would have a more objective perspective. It may be necessary for the Council to permanently take over administering legal requirements, as they are a cause for concern and tension at the huts.

6.3 Communication and consultation

The Upper Huts appear to have more provision for public consultation. This is provided for through the Local Government Act 2002 and the Reserves Act 1977. Provisions for the Lower Huts are outlined in the Conservation Act 1987, as requirements through the preparation of a new lease.

Consultation and Feedback

It was relayed that the consultation process undertaken for the proposed Reserve Management Plan was very satisfactory for the community members involved. Everyone felt as though they had the opportunity to contribute. However, it was also said that how their contributions influenced the plan was not relayed back to them. Feedback ensures that participants see consultation as worthwhile and improves transparency and accountability. Giving feedback allows members of the community to see how their opinions were taken on board and how they influenced the outcome (European Commission, n.d.). Cave (2013) also suggests that feedback should be placed regardless if it is negative or positive. This allows the community to see what action is possible and the achievable timeframe.

Options for increasing participation of outside members include using community events for them to communicate their views. Inviting comments in this atmosphere may encourage people who do not normally attend public meetings to participate (Cave, 2013). It is important to establish two-way communication so that information can be shared effectively. It is also vital to have a point of contact within the Council who can effectively explain the part they play in the planning process to hut owners.
6.4 Effective assistance from governing bodies

It must be remembered that members of these groups are volunteers who usually have no experience in governance. Both hut communities would benefit from training in governance, and clear outlines of their responsibilities and functions. Setting a clear purpose for the groups would also be beneficial as well as yearly goals being established through deliberation with the governing authority and the representative body. Skilled facilitators are needed to assist in the development of plans and priorities identified for the community (Auckland Council, 2014). This would assist the groups in providing a measurement of their success.

The ‘bottom up’ approach to governance that has been popular with community-led planning requires a strong commitment from the community itself. Increased input from DOC and the Council are also limited by resource constraints, such as finance and personnel. In the past communities have said that they would like opportunities to participate in learning and development opportunities with the Council, which would help build the capacity of both parties (Auckland Council, 2014).

The governing bodies could also assist in the organisation and leadership of the groups. Non-partisan and democratic leadership are an important aspect of a community orientated leader. The governing bodies could select members of the community who they believe show leadership potential and train them in democratic governance.

Another possibility is to have a Council or DOC member chair the meetings. This would provide an effective channel of communication between the two parties. The findings of a case study concluded that it is not necessarily undesirable to have a Council member chair a group, provided they have the skills and enthusiasm to assist in the effective operation of the group (Smith, 2008).
Chapter 7: Conclusion

The Selwyn Huts provide an interesting case study of how community governance works at grass-roots level. Several challenges exist in the management of these communities particularly because they reside on public land. My first objective was to provide a review of settlement management and community involvement at the Selwyn Huts. The review of statutory literature allowed for the management of the reserves to be put in a planning framework. This illustrated which planning documents influence the management of the huts and how public participation is provided for. The interviews demonstrated how the community members view the consultation process and how they view their role in the management of the huts.

The second research question was to investigate representation issues, previous public consultation efforts and the current communication channels between hut owners and governing bodies. There were several issues highlighted in the group dynamics of the representative groups. These included personality clashes and domination of the group by strongly opinionated members. The efforts of previous public consultation methods, highlighted some good and bad points. Good points were that the community facilitators ensured that everyone was heard at a public consultation meeting, however a weakness would be that feedback on how the community influenced the process was not prepared.

There are a number of issues that will need to be addressed in the management of the huts, such as democracy, representation, conflict and organisation of representative bodies. The level of community and authority involvement needs to be reassessed at the two huts communities. They would both like to see more involvement of DOC and the Council in the management of the communities, however this may be limited by resources available at both authorities. The importance of feedback and assistance are highlighted to show how more involvement could improve the management of the huts. Overall, the Selwyn Huts are a unique environment that a small group of people are privileged to enjoy. This dissertation illustrates the different management structures of two communities separated by a gravel road. There have been similarities and differences between the challenges the huts face, and their future management will be interesting to follow.
References


Springston South Reserve
Community Newsletter

A Merry Xmas and Happy Happy New Year to all. If your staying at home then its time to sit back, relax and enjoy yourself for the next few weeks. If your going away there will be a lot of traffic on the roads, please drive carefully and have a safe and enjoyable time.

### Selwyn Huts 2015 New Year Gala

**SELWYN HUTS 2015 NEW YEAR GALA**

**29th Dec**: Movie Night under the stars, movies to start about 7pm sponsored by Signopsys (Bruce)

**31st Dec**: New Year's Eve Party under the big top with Treasure Hut and music start time 7:30pm. BYO nibbles and drinks!!!

**1st Jan**: New Year's Day Gala

Registration start at 10am at the Domain, races commence at 10:30, bases from 1:30 to 3, **NEW** 3pm map for keys available to all, 5pm BBQ, prize giving, fancy dress contest for kids.

**2nd Jan**: 10am Car Boot Sale at the village green, afternoon activity TBA
3rd Jan: 2pm raft race with eel wrangling to follow. 5pm BBQ @ hut 12 with prize giving for the Raft Race and Eel wrangling

4th Jan: Annual Cricket Match with BBQ at the Domain

Also, be sure to register for Tennis (names in by NYE) and Fishing comp (midnight Dec 23 to 7pm NYE) See notice board for details.

Contact Jill Benner with any queries jbenner@xtra.co.nz 0276713363

Renting out of Dwellings

An on going issue is that some dwelling owners are renting out their premises. This is permissible providing that they seek and receive Council approval and the period the dwellings are rented out does not exceed 6 weeks. If approval is not sought, then a breach of the Deed of Licence has occurred. It is suggested that dwelling owners who are currently renting out their dwellings without approval, seek retrospective approval from Council immediately. When Council follows up on complaints and finds that a breach of the Deed of Licence is occurring, it will deal with the situation under the terms and conditions of the Licence.

Garden Plots.

Some of the garden plots are in need of attention, they are a valuable asset to those wanting to grow their own vegetables. If you do not want to care for the plot anymore then transfer them to another hut owner to benefit from.

Waste Collection

A reminder that the waste collection system has a number of rules for efficiency reason. Please refer to the Selwyn District Council website for appropriate use of the waste bins including the type of waste that is not acceptable. Self management of the bins will prevent further action and inconvenience to hut owners.

Vehicles on Reserves

A regular complaint and issue causing concern in the Community is the number of vehicles being parked on the Reserve in breach of the Deed of Licence and Reserves Act. It is disappointing that some members of the Community continue to breach this rule and inconvene other hut owners. Selwyn District Council staff will be actively policing this matter shortly with the view to achieve quick removal by the owner, failure to do so will result removal of the vehicle and recovery of the cost involved. A better way of course would be for those owners of the vehicles to do the right thing by their fellow hut owners and remove them before action needs to be taken.
Burn Piles

Fire restrictions are in place at the moment, however prior to this at a recent burn pile on the Reserve, a number of people took the opportunity to place hazardous materials into the pile. This places the future of being able to have burn piles at risk, when the Fire Restriction are lifted. If the Community want to be able to make use of future burn piles the practice of adding hazardous material need to cease.

Good News Stories

Unfortunately this newsletter seems to be mainly negative items. I am sure that there are plenty of good things happening in the Community as well, that could go in future Newsletters. Please share them as it would be great to include these stories in the Newsletter.

Neighbourhood Support/Community Response

Selwyn Huts (Upper) Civil Defence /Community Response / Neighbourhood Support

Your Local Team is:
Alf & Faith Hill, Rod & Kit Power, Carolyn & Robin Wilde, Susan Rogers & Dave Neil.

Contact: Rod & Kit Power, Hut 11, Spackman Ave. ph 03 3295031 027 8780462
email: rdnpower11@gmail.com

If you are not a full time resident i.e. a temporary 6 week visitors, it is very important the Local Team have your contact details in case you need to be contacted in an emergency or event that affects your property.
All information is securely stored in a purpose built neighbourhood support website
www.selwyn.getsready.net
Check it out!

Any questions feel free to contact me.
Sue Jenkins
Phone: (03) 347 2800
Email: sue.jenkins@selwyn.govt.nz
Usual Hours of Work: Mon, Tues & Thurs, plus Wednesday afternoons

dnesday afternoon