

**THE QUINCY LIBRARY GROUP AND COLLABORATIVE PLANNING  
WITHIN U.S. NATIONAL FORESTS**

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## Introduction

On October 21, 1998, President Bill Clinton signed into law The Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act. The law authorizes a five year pilot project which calls for the U.S. Forest Service to manage national forests within the Sierra Nevada mountains of northeastern California under a plan crafted by the Quincy Library Group (QLG), a coalition of local environmentalists, civic organizations, teachers, community residents and timber industry representatives that began meeting on a regular basis during the early 1990s. QLG members attempted to create an ongoing dialogue among disparate stakeholders in national forest management debates and to seek a middle ground between the wise use and conservation of natural resources, a managerial challenge that has produced conflict, delay and decisional gridlock throughout much of the national forest system from the 1980s to the present. Negotiations among QLG participants led to a series of agreements contained within a management plan for nearby forests that included environmental benefits such as the restoration of watershed and the protection of wildlife habitat as well as allowing enough timbering activity to preserve jobs within local sawmills.<sup>1</sup>

This Act merits closer scrutiny because of its potential value as a precedent for subsequent collaborative arrangements involving federal or state natural resource agencies and communities that are directly affected by resource management decisions. It is evident that QLG has generated outside interests because of the emphasis placed upon public participation and local control. Does the Plan generate substantive improvements in land management practices as a result of negotiations involving an array of local stakeholders with diverse interests in the allocation of land use decisions? And to what extent would the implementation of the QLG approach affect other managerial values associated with decisions made by district rangers and national forest supervisors? Following a brief review of relevant public participation literature, we discuss the evolution of QLG from a series of informal community meetings conducted in 1993 to the institutionalization of its forest management plan within the 1998 federal statute. We then consider the implications of this approach for the management of national forests writ large.

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Braxton, "The Quincy Library Group," American Forests V101 (January-February, 1995), p. 22.

## Public Participation in National Forest Planning Decisions

Perhaps the earliest statutory recognition of public involvement within the realm of national forest policies occurred in 1964 with the passage of the Wilderness Act. Before a federal land manager made a formal recommendation that any acreage within her agency's jurisdiction be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System, the Act required public hearings to be held in nearby communities to provide an opportunity for citizen input.<sup>2</sup> Public participation requirements were strengthened further by the enactment of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which mandated that environmental impact statement (EIS) be prepared for any federal agency project or activity having a potentially significant impact on environmental quality. Each EIS also included an opportunity for public review and comment. An even larger role for the public was incorporated within the National Forest Management Act of 1976 which established a planning process for resource allocation decisions within national forests. Citizens were given a chance to comment upon the initial draft of multiyear forest management plans. In addition, an appeals procedure was put into place to deal with complaints raised by disgruntled participants. Once the appeals process was exhausted within the agency, the federal courts provided yet another opportunity for overturning an administrative decision.

Analyses of the national forest planning processes indicate that environmental groups have made frequent use of both the appeals process<sup>3</sup> and litigation<sup>4</sup> to delay or thwart altogether the implementation of forest plans which they regard as overly biased toward commodity production. To environmentalists, the key to better forest management plans lay in using citizen lawsuit provisions contained in NFMA to change decisional venues. Decisions made from the national forest level are viewed with suspicion since they are often located in or near

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<sup>2</sup> It is ironic that the provision for public involvement was inserted into the Wilderness Act by Congressman Wayne Aspinall, a loyal ally to grazing and mining interests, to make it less likely that proposed wilderness would survive the expected outcry from aggrieved commodity groups. See Craig Allin, The Politics of Wilderness Protection. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982.

<sup>3</sup> K.L. Gericke and J. Sullivan, "Public Participation and Appeals of Forest Service Plans - An Empirical Examination," Society & Natural Resources 7 (March-April, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> E.S. Jones and E.P. Taylor, "Litigating Agency Change: The Impact of the Courts and the Administrative Appeals Process on the Forest Service," Policy Studies Journal 23 (Summer, 1995).

communities that are economically dependent upon timber harvesting as a source of employment. On the other hand, federal judges are considered to be more likely to decide on the basis of environmental requirements imbedded within forest policies. This is a longstanding strategy that received additional impetus from the successful lawsuit initiated by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund which forced the U.S. Forest Service to protect the northern spotted owl in the national forests of the Pacific Northwest by placing parcels of old growth forests "off limits" to timber harvests. Thus, environmentalists effectively "nationalized" what had been a regional management issue.<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, they have not been supportive of newer institutional arrangements placing emphasis on local control which, in their view, gives undue political advantage to extractive user groups.

### The Quincy Library Group

For over fifteen years, the locals in Quincy, California had argued over the allocation of land uses in the Plumas National Forest, an area that simultaneously provided a refuge for plants and animals and a source of timber that stabilized a small town economy. By 1993, the economy was suffering because of cut-backs in timber production mandated under an interim Forest Service Plan designed to protect the California Spotted Owl.<sup>6</sup> Realizing that continual bickering over forest management decisions could only aggravate economic hard times, Plumas County Supervisor, Bill Coates, decided to talk to local stakeholders instead of fighting them. He contacted Michael B. Jackson, an attorney representing local environmental groups, and Tom Nelson, director of timberlands for Sierra Pacific Industries, and discovered that both men were also concerned about the future of Quincy.

The three men agreed that it was folly to leave the forest's ecological fate to Washington-based agencies and national interests groups so they attempted to "forge a compromise solution on the ground--a green version of Jeffersonian Democracy."<sup>7</sup> In 1993, Coates arranged for all interested parties to talk to each other at a neutral site - the Quincy Library. In attendance were

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<sup>5</sup> George Hoberg, "From Localism to Legalism: The Transformation of Federal Forest Policy," in Charles Davis, ed., Western Public Lands and Environmental Politics. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Mann and Mark Plummer, "New Approaches to Conservation: Grass Roots Seeds of Compromise," Washington Post (October 11, 1998), p. C3.

timber industry officials, local environmentalists, community politicians and workers. The Forest Service was involved in the preliminary discussions but eventually had to drop out because of the legal restrictions on group-federal agency meetings imposed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act.<sup>8</sup> U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Diane Feinstein (D-CA) offered their support from the beginning, a gesture which was not only encouraging to the participants but served to convey a clear message that they were doing the right thing.<sup>9</sup>

QLG members were attempting to resolve forest management problems in the surrounding Plumas, Lassen, and Tahoe National Forests at the negotiating table instead of the courtroom. They held dozens of meetings and hearings at the public library, spending "a year and a half and hundreds of hours debating on ways to protect fragile ecosystems, improve forest health and provide economic stability for their community."<sup>10</sup> The large timber industry that once controlled the small town was finally forced to address broader community concerns raised by Jackson, who had tried to block more than a dozen U.S. Forest Service timber sales in the past.<sup>11</sup> Loggers and sawmill workers were increasingly concerned that "in a frantic rush to line the pockets of stockholders, big timber firms [had] denuded forests without regard to the jobs ultimately lost."<sup>12</sup> The participants were pushing for a local management solution while arguing that their plan was actually quite representative in terms of the diversity of stakeholders taking part.

#### Congressional Action on the QLG Plan

The QLG's forest management plan was based on an earlier version of the Plumas Forest Land Management plan developed by Friends of Plumas Wilderness, a Quincy based environmental group, as a guide. When the group originally released the plan to the public in 1986, it encountered strong opposition from industry and others, including anonymous death threats.<sup>13</sup> However, by 1993, conditions had changed. When the compromise plan was finally

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. C3.

<sup>9</sup> Greg Carson, "Quincy's Trail Blazing Logging Plan Clears Hurdle," Sacramento Bee (October 23, 1997), p. A3.

<sup>10</sup> Allen Rabinowitz, "Quincy Library Group Forest Plan," Los Angeles Times (July 24, 1997), p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Mann and Plummer, p. C3.

<sup>12</sup> Rabinowitz, "Quincy Library Group Forest Plan," p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Braxton, "The Quincy Library Group," p. 24.

pieced together, QLG members turned their attention to the next political hurdle; i.e., the Forest Service, and its decided lack of enthusiasm for the Quincy Plan. Agency officials were not opposed to several QLG goals but were particularly worried about the difficulty of reconciling specific plan activities such as the design of "strategic fuel breaks" with complicated NFMA planning processes. After failing to persuade Forest Service administrators to adopt key aspects of their plan, QLG members turned to the national political arena for support.

Forty QLG members went to Washington and lobbied Congress in an effort to promote their proposal as a more community-centered approach to the management of national forests. Every senator and representative from California and any other members of Congress assigned to natural resource committees was approached by a group of three QLG members. Early reaction from both Congress and the Clinton Administration was positive. Later, in 1994, QLG was contacted by Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman. He suggested that the plan could be implemented administratively, and provided funding for selected projects - \$1 million in FY 1995, \$4.7 million in FY 1996 and \$4.7 million in FY 1997 - prior to Congressional approval of the proposal. QLG members were optimistic that the larger program would soon receive a go ahead from the Clinton Administration. However, to their dismay, the Forest Service was unwilling to go the extra mile to support the alteration of existing forest management plans on the Plumas, Lassen and Tahoe National Forests.

Consequently, QLG opted for a Congressional solution. Members approached their Congressman, Wally Herger (R-CA), who agreed to sponsor their plan within the 105th Congress (1997). H.R. 858, better known as the Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery and Economic Stability Act, was cosponsored by Representatives Vic Fazio (D-CA) and Robert Smith (R-OR) and assigned to the Resources Committee. Several issues of concern to environmental groups and the Clinton administration were dealt with through amendments offered by Congresswoman Helen Chenoweth (R-ID), notably provisions requiring the Forest Service to protect riparian areas within the forests, to follow existing environmental laws and to complete an environmental impact statement of the entire project.<sup>14</sup> The bill passed

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<sup>14</sup> Don Young, Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act (submitted report to Senate). 1997.

overwhelmingly in the House of Representatives (429-1), marking one of the few times a bill has united property rights advocates and the greenest of legislators.<sup>15</sup>

The bill then went to the Senate. Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) led the fight for the proposal within the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. In order to ameliorate concerns of QLG environmentalists, she offered a pair of amendments. One ensured that road building and timber harvesting would not be allowed on the lands that had been designated as off base under their plan. The other called for an annual report that would information about both beneficial and adverse environmental impacts on the pilot project.<sup>16</sup> As amended, the bill sailed through the committee on a unanimous vote.<sup>17</sup>

After the bill was reported out of committee, the leaders of several national environmental groups became more vocal in their opposition to the plan. They succeeded in enlisting Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), a former supporter of QLG, as their primary senate ally. She then initiated a blocking action which prevented senate debate on the proposal, arguing that the "coalition [did] not offer sufficient environmental protection and set a poor precedent for national forest management."<sup>18</sup> More specifically, Boxer claimed that the bill would "double the logging" and "fail to protect old growth trees."<sup>19</sup> By May of 1998, prospects for a senate vote were bleak. However, in October, 1998, Senator Feinstein attached the bill as a rider to the 1999 federal spending bill and, with the help of Representative Herger, fended off efforts to get it removed. Later that month, the bill was signed into law.<sup>20</sup>

## The QLG Plan

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<sup>15</sup> Mann and Plummer, p. C3.

<sup>16</sup> Diane Feinstein, Prepared Testimony for Senate, Federal Information Systems Corporation (July, 24 1997), p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act. Hearing before the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health, Resources Committee. Serial Number 105-10. Washington D.C. Government Printing Office (March 5, 1997).

<sup>18</sup> Jane Braxton, "Boxer Blocks Bill on Sierra Forest Project," Sacramento Bee (May 5, 1998), p. B1..

<sup>19</sup> Terhune, Pat and George Terhune. Engaging, Empowering, and Negotiating Community: Case Study Prepared for a Workshop by Members of the Quincy Library Group Steering Committee (October 8, 1998).

<sup>20</sup> Jane Braxton Little, "A Quiet Victory in Quincy," High Country News 30 (November 9, 1998), p.2.

The Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act authorizes the U.S. Forest Service to manage 2.25 million acres of land in the Plumas and Lassen National Forests and the Sierraville Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest for a five year trial period to evaluate the usefulness of an approach to community-based forest management. The Act requires that the following activities be carried out along with other NFMA-related decisions:

- allows the construction of fuel breaks on 40,000 to 60,000 acres a year within the 2.25 million acres;

- provides for group selection on a little more than half of the project area annually (this works out to be about 9,300 acres) as well as individual tree selection;

- limits the total acreage subject to forest management activities to 70,000 acres annually;

and

- requires the preparation of both annual reports on the status of the project as well as a more comprehensive evaluation of the overall plan at the end of the five year period.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, the legislation specifically states that all forest management activities under the plan must comply with all federal environmental laws. It prohibits logging in roadless areas and offers protection for both spotted owl habitat and riparian areas.<sup>22</sup> These requirements are especially notable since the original impetus for QLG meetings was dissatisfaction with land use restrictions associated with the Endangered Species Act. The environmentalists also included a shift from clearcutting on national forests to single-tree and group-selection logging.<sup>23</sup> This represents a significant change from the habitual clearcutting practices of the large timber industries in the area. Most of the fallen trees would be sent to local mills under Sustained Yield Unit legislation designed to protect timber-dependent jobs both directly and indirectly. The plan also places strict limits on management activities near streams and sets aside about 500,000 acres of roadless area that environmentalists have been battling to protect for the last fifteen years.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>. Diane Feinstein, Prepared Testimony for Senate, Federal Information Systems Corporation, July, 24 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Rabinowitz, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> Braxton, "The Quincy Library Group," p. 24.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

A central concern for the local community is the threat of forest fires for personal safety and the protection of jobs. The Plan requires the U.S. Forest Service to reduce the threat of forest fires during the five year pilot project by removing dead and dying timber from a maximum of 60,000 acres a year in the northern third of the Sierra Nevada forests. In place of clear-cut blocks of forty acres, which is the legal limit under forest service regulation, the coalition proposes to harvest trees singly or in small groups of only two acres.<sup>25</sup> These regulations were strongly supported by the local timber industry workers since they reduced the risk of potentially catastrophic fire damages and were pleasing to environmentalists since clearcuts were replaced with timbering practices that were more aesthetically acceptable.

In short, the Plan contains a rather diverse mix of activities that achieves some balance between the development and conservation of forest resources. While it is admittedly premature to offer a comprehensive evaluation, are there any lessons to be learned from the QLG experiment thus far that might be helpful in the design of participatory arrangements elsewhere? What are the implications of this approach for (a) policy and management practices affecting national forests and (b) administrative values associated with the allocation of public land use preferences?

### Policy and Management Implications

The QLG Plan is a policy experiment that carries public participation and collaborative decision-making a few steps further than existing public policies. Instead of input that falls within the realm of "advise and recommend," it allows participants to develop projects that the Forest Service is obliged to accept if the proposed activities can be accommodated within the existing plan without violating existing laws or regulations. It is a form of shared governance that elevates QLG members to the rank of junior partner. The QLG is one of several groups nationwide that are depicted as "grass-roots ecosystem management."<sup>26</sup>

While QLG's prospective contributions to process-related changes have received attention, there are some additional managerial features associated with the project that warrant a

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<sup>25</sup> Jane Braxton, "Risky Precedent Feared from Quincy Forest Bill," Sacramento Bee (May 5, 1997), p. B1.

<sup>26</sup> Edward P. Weber, "A New Vanguard for the Environment: Grass-Roots Ecosystem Management as a New Environmental Movement," Society & Natural Resources 13 (2000), pp. 237-259.

closer look according to scientists affiliated with the Seventh American Forest Congress' Communities Committee. One of these is stewardship which "seeks to define an enduring, reciprocal relationship between people and the natural environment; in this case, between communities and the forests that sustain them."<sup>27</sup> An important component of this is termed "stewardship contracting" which identifies concrete activities or projects designed to improve the ecological health of the land. These contracts, like several QLG projects, invest available revenues into activities that nurture or maintain natural resources as well as experimental approaches to resource management applied on land tracts for limited time periods.<sup>28</sup> Potential benefits include the retention of enough smaller scale natural resource use to sustain viable economic activities in these communities along with healthier forests.

A second feature of the QLG Plan is a greater emphasis on reinvestment in the forest resource base. Historically, forests have been exploited for the vast resources without as much consideration for renewing or replenishing affected areas and most of the economic value of the timber harvested from these forests has been transferred out of the region. In 1996, an economic assessment of northern California's Sierra Nevada ecosystem concluded that only two percent of the \$2 billion in revenue derived from commodity production was actually reinvested into the forest; most of these funds were generated from taxes and fees.<sup>29</sup> Reinvestment concentrates on the need for restoration and maintenance of natural or ecological capital on public and private lands, and community-based advocates seek greater flexibility in the use of funding options for public land. QLG efforts to secure a more secure financial and political toehold for reinvestment projects received a boost from President Clinton. A proposal for a new Forest Ecosystem Restoration and Maintenance Fund (FERM) that would address projects such as watershed restoration, thinning, and fuels reduction was included in his 1998 budget.<sup>30</sup>

Third, the QLG recognized the importance of project monitoring. This is based on the premise that there is much to learn about the operation and maintenance of forest ecosystems and, in order to learn more, projects must be observed, analyzed and evaluated at regular intervals. Gathering and analyzing information is expensive and obtaining funding for program

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<sup>27</sup> Gray, "Changing the Rules," p. 29.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 30

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

evaluation from Congress has often been difficult to achieve. However, Senator Feinstein was able to insert a last minute amendment to the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act that required both an annual progress report on project activities as well as a more general evaluation of at the end of its five year authorization period.

### Theoretical Implications of the QLG Approach

The QLG approach is another chapter in the ongoing debate about the role of public participation in the management of natural resource programs. It is a complex topic. While it represents an effort to institutionalize a collaborative decision-making process aimed at achieving balance between the development and conservation of natural resources on a practical level, it also involves judgments about the relative weight to be assigned to differing values such as representativeness, agency autonomy, efficiency and local control.

#### Representativeness

A frequently cited virtue of public participation in agency decisions is that it adds greater legitimacy to the process by including "bottom up" or grassroots perspectives. Under this perspective, a planning process is more representative if Forest Service officials have made an effort to solicit and incorporate the views of multiple constituencies. A couple of studies have examined the substantive land use interests of participants. Not surprisingly, most participants live in reasonably close proximity to the national forest and, in general, there are more comments favoring less extractive uses such as protecting wildlife or recreation while fewer responses are received for more intensive management activities such as road building or timber clearcuts.<sup>31</sup>

The QLG process is different in the sense that the planning efforts undertaken by a single group of stakeholders is viewed by lawmakers as broadly representative of the communities in and around the national forests of the Sierra Nevadas. On one level, this is an elitist perspective that subordinates the concerns offered by non-QLG citizens.<sup>32</sup> While the project itself requires public input, it does nevertheless exemplify a process that "directly bind[s] policymaking by

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<sup>31</sup> D.J. Blahna and S. Yonts-Shepard, "Public Involvement in Resource Planning: Toward Bridging the Gap between Policy and Implementation," Society & Natural Resources 2 (1989), pp. 209-227; and T.A. Steelman, "The Public Comment Process," Journal of Forestry 97 (1999), pp. 22-26.

<sup>32</sup> J.D. Piscoi, "Implementing Public Involvement Programs in Federal Agencies," in Stuart Langton, ed., Citizen Participation in America. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1978, p. 98.

nongovernmental representatives"<sup>33</sup> by incorporating QLG projects within existing forest management plans. Thus, the QLG is accorded special status as a private group that has been delegated a form of public authority.<sup>34</sup>

### Agency Autonomy

A different perspective is the degree of autonomy to be granted public agencies by Congress. The U.S. Forest Service has historically enjoyed a great deal of latitude in crafting and implementing forest management decisions because of its reputation for expertise and professionalism.<sup>35</sup> However, an analysis of policies carried out by the Forest Service prior to the public participation era suggests that it was part of a tightly controlled subsystem along with timber industries and Congressional appropriations subcommittees that enshrined timber harvesting as the dominant use within national forests.<sup>36</sup> The emergence and subsequent use of citizen participation procedures (including litigation) by environmental groups was instrumental in forcing the Forest Service to adopt a more expansive interpretation of multiple use decision-making. Or, as Rosenbaum has suggested, such procedural requirements had the effect of reducing agency discretion to make decisions from an overly narrow bureaucratic self interest perspective.<sup>37</sup>

It would appear that a natural tension exists between citizen participation and autonomy since agency administrators have few incentives to invite members of the public to openly challenge their planning efforts and professional judgment. But this depends upon the degree of collaboration between the Forest Service and the public. As long as participatory efforts are confined to "fishbowl planning" which allows citizens to advise, recommend, and express their views with the explicit understanding that the agency has the final say, then agency

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<sup>33</sup> T.A. Steelman and W. Ascher, "Public Involvement Methods in Natural Resource Policy Making: Advantages, Disadvantages and Trade-offs," *Policy Sciences* 30 (1997), pp. 84-85.

<sup>34</sup> Grant McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966.

<sup>35</sup> Jeanne Clarke and Daniel McCool, *Staking Out the Terrain*, 2nd ed. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996.

<sup>36</sup> Hoberg, "From Localism to Legalism," pp. 48-50.

administrators are more sanguine about its value.<sup>38</sup> A recent survey of employees representing all 155 national forests by Selin, Schuett and Carr indicates considerable support for public input as a valuable management tool.<sup>39</sup>

However, a movement up the ladder from the rung of collaborative planning to the rung of shared decision-making authority is viewed with disdain by Forest Service officials since it represents a direct threat to their organizational persona; i.e., expertise and professionalism. This is particularly evident with the QLG Plan which has been folded in with existing plans for the Plumas, Lassen, and Tahoe National Forests. In this case, a reduction in discretionary authority is troublesome in two ways. First, it complicates the NFMA planning process. According to Daniel Press, "Project-specific questions are harder to integrate, especially if they come at a late stage in a harvest plan decision [since] reviews of timber harvest plans are usually run on a very tight schedule."<sup>40</sup>

Second, the managerial tenet that calls for a symmetrical relationship between authority and accountability for public agencies is altered by the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act. This change was approved by Congress for an experimental program that may well result in improved forest management practices. On the other hand, Forest Service officials will be held accountable for the attainment of broad national goals as well as more localized policy objectives; hence, their ability to use professional judgment in achieving this balance has been compromised by statutorily mandated power sharing arrangements that unite public agencies with nongovernmental organizations.<sup>41</sup>

#### Local Control

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<sup>37</sup> Walter Rosenbaum, "Public Involvement as Reform and Ritual: The Development of Federal Participation Programs," in Stuart Langton, ed., Citizen Participation in America. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1978.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Mazmanian and Jeanne Nienaber, Can Organizations Change? Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1979, p. 188.

<sup>39</sup> S. Selin, M. Schuett, and D.S. Carr, "Has Collaborative Planning Taken Root in the National Forests?" Journal of Forestry 95 (May, 1997), pp. 25-28.

<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that Press was interviewing a state forestry official from California; however, the insertion of projects affects planning processes in a similar fashion. Consult Daniel Press, Democratic Dilemmas in the Age of Scarcity. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994, p. 131.

<sup>41</sup> H.F. Gortner, J. Mahler, and J.B. Nicholson, Organization Theory. Chicago, IL: Dorsey Press, 1987, pp. 60-62.

Local control has long been used as a primary justification for the adoption of public participation requirements within policies. On one level, it offers a reality check for people directly affected by a program; i.e., their input helps to shape the program in ways that better reflect the real world problem-wise that the program is supposed to correct.<sup>42</sup> It is also used to legitimize planning processes within the Forest Service that are otherwise fairly centralized in terms of timber harvesting quotas and reporting requirements. To advocates of the QLG Plan, local control is seen as the primary benefit to be derived from the implementation of the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act. Or, as Weber has suggested, "citizens experience 'ownership' and are more likely to invest in the work of governance, whether in terms of program design, voluntary compliance with rules or program implementation, instead of fighting and attempting to overturn governance decisions."<sup>43</sup>

An alternative perspective is that a localist management orientation is not sufficiently inclusive of constituents residing elsewhere. Jim Jontz, the director of the Western Ancient Forest Campaign, claims that the plan is a "disastrous piece of legislation [that] excludes 99 percent of the Americans who have an equal stake in national forests."<sup>44</sup> Ultimately, group and individual preferences for local versus national control are inexorably intertwined with one's vision of how the forest should be managed. Hence, timber workers and motorized recreation groups will often be inclined to favor local control because it is strategically useful to do so while national environmental organizations will prefer to take action in the national political arena for the same reason.<sup>45</sup>

## Conclusions

Time will tell whether the experiment in collaborative land use planning within the national forests known as the Quincy Library Group Plan will be adopted on a larger scale. Its implementation has already been complicated somewhat by recent developments. One is a

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<sup>42</sup> Many of the older grazing advisory boards consisting largely of stockmen with permits on Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands were set up to compensate in part for administrators' lack of knowledge about local rangeland conditions. However, these were not broadly constituted public participation programs aimed at multiple constituencies. Consult Paul Culhane, Public Lands Politics, especially Chapter 8.

<sup>43</sup> Weber, "A New Vanguard for the Environment," pp. 237-259.

<sup>44</sup> Braxton, "A Risky Precedent," p. B1.

<sup>45</sup> Press, Democratic Dilemmas in the Age of Scarcity, pp. 84-90.

controversy over a decision by the QLG in 1999 to bar outside groups from its regular meetings, a move that was justified by the belief that deliberations would become susceptible to disruption from outside forces.<sup>46</sup> Concerns have also been voiced by Senator Feinstein that workload allocation decisions within recent budgets for the Plumas, Lassen, and Tahoe National Forests do not include sufficient staff to carry out QLG projects. Nevertheless, the concepts of shared governance and local control in national forest planning have been sources of motivation for community activists not only in communities nestled within the Sierra Nevadas but in other rural areas of the American West as well.

Should the institutional arrangements imbedded within the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act be adopted on a larger scale? We believe that the policy experiment shows considerable promise. However, it is important to wait for the five year results so that the linkage between project goals and on the ground results can be more properly evaluated. In addition, we also believe that a more fulsome discussion of its implications for representation, agency autonomy and other administrative values should be part of the policy debates in Congress when questions of statutory reauthorization or replication to other national forests arise.

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<sup>46</sup>. Jane Braxton Little, "Quincy Library Group Bars Outsiders," High Country News 31 (April 26, 1999), p. 3.