Factors for collaboration in Florida's tourism resources: Shifting gears from participatory planning to community-based management

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Article info
Article history:
Received 9 July 2009
Received in revised form 24 May 2010
Accepted 2 June 2010
Available online 7 July 2010

Keywords:
Co-management
Community-driven conservation
Ecotourism
Environmental policy
Florida tourism
Scenic highways

Abstract
Filling gaps in participatory theory is vital as natural resource policy increasingly shifts from community-based planning to community-based management. This study was designed to identify how participatory planning factors (i.e., the perception of non-monetary resources, community ownership, non-government organization involvement, and local government involvement) contributed to perceived management success in a working example of collaborative management, the Florida Scenic Highways Program. Using a web-based questionnaire, participants in four locally-based scenic highway groups were asked to rate their perceptions of success (i.e., dependent variable) and factors that guided their scenic highway management (i.e., independent variables). Results showed non-monetary resources (i.e., information and skilled personnel) and community ownership most important for management achievement. Specifically, the study showed that a feeling of community ownership improves the outcomes of a project. This research and other tests of participatory theory will help achieve sustainable management as it pertains to the role communities play in decision-making.

1. Introduction

The need to better integrate community residents into natural resource decision-making is a widely held belief, but the factors that underlie effective community-based planning and management are not well understood (Wilson, 2006). Frameworks for participatory planning often describe the characteristics for community empowerment, beginning with Arnstein’s (1969, p. 217) basic definitions for participation, varying from “manipulation” to “citizen empowerment” or full participation. Much of the literature, from watershed councils to ecotourism cooperatives, supports full community participation at every stage of decision-making (e.g., Getz and Jamal, 1994; Chambers, 1994a; Akama, 1996; Scheyvens, 1999).

1.1. Community-based planning vs. management

Many participatory planning models that have been developed and implemented in industrialized countries are used in short-term planning, which is defined as decision-making on future action that occurs in a finite time period (e.g., Getz and Jamal, 1994; Chambers, 1994a; Akama, 1996; Scheyvens, 1999b). Natural resource and tourism policies are undergoing a landmark shift from community-based planning into community-based management, which is decision-making, implementation, and monitoring of actions for indefinite time periods (Wilson, 2006). The new application of participatory concepts in ongoing management creates a pressing research need. Theory-based frameworks that define the structure, function, and limitations of community-based decision-making groups must now address ongoing management settings if we are to expect appropriate application of this increasingly advocated practice (Korfmacher, 2000; Steelman and Carmin, 2002; Moore and Koontz, 2003).

1.2. An example of community-based management of tourism resources in the US

The Florida Department of Transportation’s (FDOT) Florida Scenic Highways Program was created to coordinate with the federal National Scenic Byway Program (Transportation Consulting Group [TCG], 1998). The FDOT office of Environmental Management oversees the Florida Scenic Highways Program. Several state representatives assist applicants in the set-up of their local corridor program. The purpose of the Florida Scenic Highways Program is to identify roadways that increase visitor and resident awareness of Florida’s unique resources, history, and culture and manage the designated roadways in a fashion that promotes culturally appropriate tourism and provides for community enhancement (TCG, 1998).
The corridor group (later in the process referred to as the Corridor Management Entity), which is the local unit under the Florida Scenic Highways Program, creates a vision and plan for the proposed scenic highway, which is called a corridor management plan. Corridor groups participate in activities to change land use categories in the corridor (e.g., restricted development zones), develop signage and landscaping to enhance natural and historical resources, pursue historical site designations, acquire easements or land trusts for preservation, and share the corridor's "story" through various outlets.

The Florida Scenic Highways Program has a participatory process that is heavily dependent upon community-based collaboration and participation throughout planning and management. Scenic highway designation can be initiated by a person, group, or local government department. The application process for scenic highway designation, which includes documentation of resources and other planning activities, must be completed through a Corridor Advocacy Group that includes representation from local citizens, civic organizations or non-profit groups, business organizations, and local government entities. After designation, management activities must continue through the same or similar group (i.e., the Corridor Management Entity). Corridor group participation is open to the public, meetings are publicly announced and a board is elected by corridor group attendees.

2. Theoretical framework

Participatory planning frameworks describe a cyclical process of reflection and action (Elden and Levin, 1991; Getz and Jamal, 1994; Grudens-Schuck et al., 2003). The collaborative theory framework (CTF) in participatory planning describes such a process that is typically used in the urban settings of industrialized countries (Getz and Jamal, 1994; Jamal and Getz, 1995). In fact, the process used in Florida scenic highways management conforms to the major components of the CTF. The CTF outlines defining a vision, issuing an environmental scan, undergoing issue analysis, and choosing a strategic response in the implementing, monitoring, and adjustment stages (Getz and Jamal, 1994; TCG, 1998).

Although many variables may be involved in building positive collaborative planning and management, three areas have emerged from the literature as important and often volatile topics: (1) accessibility of planning or management resources, (2) issues of community ownership, and (3) maintaining a broad stakeholder base (Elden and Levin, 1991; Jamal and Getz, 1995; Mohan and Skokke, 2000; Stevens et al., 2003; Lachapelle and McCool, 2005). This research focused on testing the basis of the collaborative theory framework, which addresses the above topic areas. Here we reviewed the overall structure of collaborative theory and operationalized four major participatory planning factors (non-monetary resources, community ownership, NGO involvement, and local government involvement). These basic building blocks of the collaborative theory framework (Getz and Jamal, 1994; Jamal and Getz, 1995) are similarly highlighted in other related discourses (e.g., Elden and Levin, 1991) and are described below.

2.1. Non-monetary resources

Accessing the resources needed to make management a reality is a large challenge for community-based projects (Chambers, 1994b; Loker, 2000; Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Eversole, 2003). For communities to manage public goods they must have adequate information on the resource (Ostrom et al., 1992), adequate expertise (McCarthy and Zald, 1977), and individuals with adequate time (Jamal and Getz, 1995). Although local groups often have the resources that contribute to place-specific knowledge, information on larger scale phenomena might be held by upper level authorities (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Pretty, 2003).

2.2. Community ownership

Despite the common reference to community ownership in participatory planning, the concept is not standardized (Guevara, 1996; Sanderson and Kindon, 2004) and is often not explicitly defined (Chambers, 1994b; Eversole, 2003). Some researchers consider it an outcome of successful community participation (e.g., Bracht and Tsouros, 1991) and others see it as a factor needed for successful community participation (e.g., Simmons, 1994; Guevara, 1996). More recently, Lachapelle and McCool (2005) defined community ownership as a shared sense of problem and process within a specific context. That context requires community voices to be heard and considered legitimate, community control over the outcome, and a distribution of power that contains both “horizontal and vertical” links (Lachapelle and McCool, 2005). Additionally Bracht et al. (1994) list general criteria for community ownership. Based on Bracht's criteria and previous definitions, we define community ownership as a sense of strong community leadership and authority in the creation and maintenance of decision-making structures and processes, control over the ultimate project direction, and a satisfactory distribution of power at multiple scales (Bracht et al., 1994; Lachapelle and McCool, 2005).

Community ownership of a project is a sliding scale dependent on many variables. The perception of a project being "imposed from the outside" is not limited to methods with low community control (Arnstein, 1969; Akama, 1996; Eversole, 2003). Project ownership seems to depend upon the presence of an upwelling of concern within the community, the ability of the project to address issues that cause concern within the community, and an avenue for the community to exert influence in the planning process (Akama, 1996). Community ownership is often cited as important to community empowerment (Guevara, 1996; Eversole, 2003; Sanderson and Kindon, 2004), but has not yet been linked with any measure of success in the current literature.

2.3. Broad stakeholder base: NGOs and local government

All stakeholders bring different, yet equally important knowledge bases to the table (Elden and Levin, 1991; Getz and Jamal, 1994; Sanderson and Kindon, 2004). The cogenenerative dialogue theory places equal importance on the respective skills and frames of reference of "insider" and "outsider" voices because each group plays a distinctive role that the other cannot share (Elden and Levin, 1991). This typology, however general, illustrates the knowledge-sharing and knowledge-creation process that participatory planning generates through the inclusion of multiple stakeholders.

Grassroots organizations, local level NGOs, and regional level NGOs must be involved to truly claim broad-based stakeholder involvement (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Eversole, 2003). NGOs can provide specific resources or expertise as well as represent opinions that might be different than those of local residents, such as the opinions of neighboring communities or broader societal interests. Community-based management must navigate both the horizontal and vertical links that NGOs provide to create an interdependent network that can make equitable and well-informed management decisions (Grudens-Schuck et al., 2003).

Managing a public good involves conserving a resource for not only a small group of residents, but also for the larger community, with often varied interests among multiple local groups. This suggests the need for local government activity to represent the external or societal interest (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Singleton, 2002). This can also be accomplished by having representation from
regional level government or interaction with surrounding communities and their local government entities. Local government involvement can contribute legitimacy and potentially represent viewpoints of the wider society and those of underrepresented minorities (e.g., diverse races, ages, income groups that might not be active participants in the planning group) (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Singleton, 2002). Furthermore, research on grassroots art and culture committees have shown that government employees with strong local ties act as bridges to funding opportunities and can be vital in efforts to integrate community visions into larger planning and management contexts (Eversole, 2003). However, problems can occur when government agencies see community-based collaborations as an additional bureaucratic obstacle. Research shows that it is not uncommon for government agencies to resist less familiar participatory decision-making pathways and heavily favor traditional agency-centered planning (Getz and Jamal, 1994).

2.4. Collaborative management and planning success

Success is difficult to define in collaborative planning and management since different parties may harbor different agendas. Although less objective than an outsider-defined measure of success, past research supports the notion that a self-defined picture of success is more appropriate in collaborative management (Chambers, 1994a). Therefore, we operationalized perceived success based on the definitions of the groups participating in this study. Perceived success was operationalized as having two elements: (1) progress on highway-specific goals (different and self-defined for every corridor group) and (2) general area economic, social, and environmental benefits, which could apply to all highway groups (self-defined by the regional-level scenic highway planners).

Depending on the program, non-monetary resources, community ownership, NGO involvement, and local government involvement, among others, are likely to interact in a theoretical sense. Although many suggestions are given in participatory literature, practitioners struggle to understand what contributes to productive community-based planning and management. We defined perceived success in a manner appropriate to collaborative management and outlined our theoretical framework developed in participatory planning settings. This research tested the contribution of major participatory planning factors (non-monetary resources, community ownership, NGO involvement, and local government involvement) in an ongoing management context.

3. Research question

This study’s overall research question asked how community-based planning frameworks apply to ongoing management. The problem statement was the need to understand if the major components of planning frameworks, which apply to temporary groups and processes that have a definite endpoint, were still present and applicable in successful ongoing management (a process with no endpoint). The goal was to isolate participatory planning factors that contribute to perceived management success. Success, as operationalized in this study, was determined by Scenic Highway Program planners familiar with the areas examined. To achieve the study’s goal, participants’ perception of scenic highway management success, acting as the dependent variable, was analyzed for covariation with four major participatory planning factors:

- Perception of non-monetary resource availability: the level of personnel and informational resources available to the group.
- Community ownership: the sense of community leadership and authority in the project.
- Perceived non-governmental organization (NGO) involvement: the presence of a valuable and active NGO.
- Perceived governmental involvement: the level at which local governmental departments are involved and whether that involvement helps move the process forward.

These factors were chosen for this study based on the previously developed collaborative theory research (Getz and Jamal, 1994; Jamal and Getz, 1995). We hypothesized that each of these variables (developed in participatory planning settings) would positively impact perceived success in ongoing management (e.g., McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Elden and Levin, 1991; Ostrom et al., 1992; Jamal and Getz, 1995; Guevara, 1996; Weaver, 1997). This study linked the major concepts of planning models, which typically are designed with an endpoint in mind (i.e., a management plan), to the relatively new context of ongoing management.

4. Methods

This research analyzed four Florida Scenic Highways Program groups to look at how community-based planning frameworks were reflected in ongoing management settings. The preliminary research activities to identify the final study groups and components of the questionnaire that measured key variables were prescreening interviews, Likert scale development that involved pilot testing, and index development that included interviews and a mini-questionnaire. These activities took place between March 2004 and February 2005. Personal observation of scenic highway meetings took place between February 2005 and May 2005.

4.1. Prescreening interviews

The Florida Scenic Highways Program has 21 corridor groups at various stages of planning and management (FDOT, 2005). A short telephone interview gathered information from the community leader, or chairperson, of each group to identify corridors that fit the selection criteria below. The final study groups were selected based on similar levels (4–5 years) of management experience (not including the application and designation stages, which take one to several years), a range of success (outcome variable) and a range of local government involvement (independent variable). The four groups chosen had been in the management stage following designation as a scenic highway for 4–5 years: (1) Old Florida Heritage Highway, (2) Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Highway, (3) Florida Keys Scenic Highway, and (4) A1A Ocean Shore Scenic Highway (Fig. 1).

We originally developed a case-study design, where cases were selected for between-case comparisons using a 2 × 2 factorial design: two high success vs. two low success cases and two high government involvement vs. two low government involvement cases. However, as explained later, the responses in the research questionnaire invalidated our a priori classification. Therefore, a case-study design was not possible, but we were able to combine the cases for quantitative analysis of individual perceptions of scenic highway management success in groups with 4–5 years of management experience.

4.2. Data collection

Electronic communication (e-mail) is normally used to disseminate information to all scenic highway group participants on a regular basis. Therefore, a web-based questionnaire was a reasonable method to access the perceptions of scenic highway participants. A hyperlink to the questionnaire was provided in e-mails sent to the e-mail information-sharing network of each scenic highway between March 2005 and April 2005. The Dillman (2000) four
contact method was used: (1) a pre-notice, (2) participation request with a questionnaire link, (3) a reminder with a questionnaire link, and (4) a final reminder with a questionnaire link.

Potential study respondents were participants in the corridor groups: specifically those who attended meetings, made decisions, and purposefully stayed updated on the activities of the scenic highway group. A sampling frame of the four information-sharing e-mail lists for 2005, the major avenue used to disseminate meeting notices and other scenic highway related information, was used to attempt a census of current participants. In addition, information-sharing e-mail lists were obtained from the time period surrounding designation (between 2000 and 2001) to encourage the collection of all opinions. All four scenic highway study groups were active in the 2000–2001 time period due to the community events surrounding official scenic highway designation.

The sampling frame from the four scenic highway groups contained 418 e-mail addresses. Sixty-five e-mails bounced back because they were no longer valid addresses (mostly individuals from the 2000/2001 lists who were no longer available). This left 353 e-mail addresses that received the web-based questionnaire. We acknowledge that some of the 353 e-mail addresses might be dual addresses due to a single individual listing a work and personal address; therefore our response rate, based on the number of email addresses, is a conservative estimate. One hundred and forty-seven individuals responded with an overall response rate of 42%. Response rate varied by highway group: 54% for A1A Ocean Shore Scenic Highway, 50% for Florida Keys Scenic Highway, 45% for Old Florida Heritage Highway, and 32% for Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Highway. The socio-demographic variables of age and income were compared between respondents and the general population.

Non-active respondents were not qualified to answer many of the study questions due to a lack of familiarity with the management process and the dynamics of active participation. Two screening questions were included in the final questionnaire and were used to filter out the answers of inactive respondents: (1) those who did not attend any meetings and (2) those who defined themselves as not at all active. Seventy-two of the 147 respondents were not actively involved in the scenic highway groups. All statistical tests were conducted on data provided by 75 active respondents (inactive respondents were excluded).

4.3. Questionnaire structure

4.3.1. Dependent variable

We relied on past literature and structured, individual interviews with scenic highway planners to identify survey questions used to operationalize success. Scalar response questions asked participants to evaluate progress towards (1) specific scenic highway corridor goals and (2) eight general area benefits that include economic, social, and ecological implications. Based on these responses, an index was developed that provided a composite score of perceived success. All data analysis in this study was done using the SPSS version 11.0 statistical program. All questions used in the development of this index are available upon request.

4.3.1.1. Part 1: highway-specific goal progress. To measure the perception of highway-specific goal progress, each of the highway’s corridor goals were listed in the questionnaire. This varied between five to eight goals depending on the corridor group. Participants could rate each goal from “not at all achieved” to “completely achieved” (on a 1–5 scale). Examples of goals included “enhance historic sites,” “preserve/ enhance corridor for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists,” and “pursue extending the corridor into McIntosh (adjacent city).” Since each goal could not be assumed to be of equal importance, participants weighted each goal from “not at all important” to “very important” (on a 1–5 scale). The goal value was multiplied by the weight value and these amounts were averaged over the number of goals to represent the goal progress element of success.

4.3.1.2. Part 2: general benefits. The second portion of the index included the same eight general benefits that would apply to any scenic highway. Participants could rate how much their scenic highway program contributed to each outcome from “not at all” to “a large amount” (on a 1–5 scale). Examples included “enhances nature-tourism,” “preserves the character of the area,” and “increases community’s knowledge of environmental issues.” As with the goals, each outcome could not be assumed to be of equal importance; however, participants weighted each outcome from “not at all important” to “very important” (on a 1–5 scale). The outcome value was multiplied by the weight value and these amounts were averaged to represent the “general area benefit” element of success. Both elements of success (part one and two) were then averaged to give an overall rating of perceived success (on a scale that ranged from 1 to 25) that could be compared across participants and across highway groups.

The above index that measures a composite score of perceived success is different than a traditional scale due to its creation based on construct validity or a logical combination of items in an overall category (Netemeyer et al., 2003). The set of items under success drives the total index score rather than acting as a scale, which reflects an underlying theory-based cause or construct (DeVellis, 2003). Perceived success, as defined by the Florida Scenic Highway Program planners, is different for each scenic highway group based on their specific goals and objectives. In essence, the individual “success measures” do not share the same causes, but they have the same effect (DeVellis, 2003). The grouped response regarding success measures different parts of the common outcome in two dimensions: (1) an overall evaluation and (2) importance of the individual item (Swisher, 2003). Therefore, the index value that measures the emergent variable of success is assumed to be comparable across different highway groups based on construct validity and not based on the internal consistency (Chronbach’s
4.3.2. Independent variables

4.3.2.1. Non-monetary resources. Information on non-monetary resources, which included personnel and informational resources, was measured with the averaged value (on a 1–5 scale) of several scalar responses based on past research (e.g., Elden and Levin, 1991; Getz and Jamal, 1994; Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; Mohan and Stokke, 2000). A three category nominal scale measured the quality of local governmental involvement in the scenic highway project (helpful, hinders due to low involvement, hinders due to high involvement).

4.3.2.2. Community ownership. An original scale of community ownership was created due to the lack of a general pre-existing measurement process (Bracht et al., 1994; Akama, 1996; Guevara, 1996; Eversole, 2003; Sanderson and Kindon, 2004). Qualitative expert interviews for statement development, two quantitative pilot tests to eliminate statements, and post-questionnaire analysis of the inter-item correlation values produced a Likert scale of eleven statements. The Cronbach’s Alpha statistic of the scale before inter-item correlation analysis was 0.65. After the elimination of items with low inter-item correlation values, the final scale of eleven statements had a Cronbach’s Alpha statistic of 0.81. The final list included positive statements (e.g., “management decisions are based almost entirely on the opinions and desires of community members”) and negative statements (e.g., “this is really just a government project”) (Table 1), which were reverse coded. The average response value for this statement list (on a 1–5 scale) measured participants’ sense of community ownership, where a higher value indicates a stronger sense of community ownership. All questions used in the development of this scale are available upon request.

4.3.2.3. NGO involvement. NGO involvement was measured with a nominal and a scalar response question based on past research (e.g., Elden and Levin, 1991; Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; Mohan and Stokke, 2000). The nominal question asked which NGO involved the group was the most active (list provided including the category “other”

one NGO (or more) was indeed acting to “amplify the voices” of the local community (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999).

5. Results

5.1. Testing case selection: perceptions of success

An ANOVA was conducted on the collective perceived success levels (the index score of perceived success averaged across all respondents in a particular corridor group) to determine if the four scenic highway success ratings were different enough for between-case comparisons. The intent behind the case-selection process was to compare high success groups qualitatively with low success groups. The assumptions for the ANOVA test were satisfied. The ANOVA showed a p-value of 0.69 (F = 0.49, df = 3). The members of the four case study groups did not have significantly different perceptions regarding the success of their respective corridor group. This indicates that we cannot qualitatively compare the groups in a case-study design and justifies combining the responses of the four groups for all further quantitative analysis.

5.2. Socio-demographics in four scenic highway groups

A glimpse into community representation was gained by analyzing the income levels and age categories present in the four scenic highway study groups. Over 72% of participants were over 50 years old and no representation existed for ages under 30. The median age category was 50–59 years. This compares with a median age of 38.7 in the state of Florida (US Census Bureau, 2000). Over 53% of participants were in annual income brackets above $65,000 and the most frequently represented annual income category was above $85,000. This compares with a median income of $38,985 in the state of Florida (US Census Bureau, 2003).

The population of scenic highway group participants represented a unique subset of the state-wide population that is slightly older and more affluent than the average Florida resident. The significance of this finding is that participants in these community-based management groups were not average working residents. The older and more affluent residents make up a larger portion of scenic highway management participants, likely due to their flexibility to allocate time toward non-income-based activities.
The perceived success in the four scenic highway groups did not differ significantly according to the ANOVA, despite differing community ownership (a Likert scale value). These two variables explained 40% of the variability in perceived success. The availability of non-monetary resources and community ownership were both positively associated with perceived success (standardized beta values of 0.40 and 0.36, respectively).

Variables relating to involvement of NGO’s and local government were shown to not be important to perceived success. Model three, which included the variable of the presence/absence of a valuable NGO, only slightly increased the variability explained (from 40 to 43%). The absence of a valuable NGO was negatively correlated with success, but the variable itself was not significant at the .05 level. The perception that local government involvement helped/hindered the process had no impact (negative or positive) on perceived success.

### 6. Discussion

The perceived success in the four scenic highway groups did not differ significantly according to the ANOVA, despite differing...
progress on goals reported in the prescreening process. Therefore, the results are discussed in reference to individuals’ perceived success from the combined set of participants, rather than comparisons between highway groups.

6.1. Understanding the building blocks of perceived management success

These data show that, in our set of independent variables, non-monetary resources (i.e., information and personnel) that community groups depend on to make management decisions was the most important factor in perceived success (see Table 3). This verifies the importance placed on community groups’ access to resources in previous literature (Ostrom et al., 1992; Jamal and Getz, 1995; Portes and Landolt, 1996; Pretty, 2003; Eversole, 2003). Community ownership as measured by the Likert scale also co-varied with perceived success, which reflects the importance placed on community ownership in participatory literature (Akama, 1996; Guevara, 1996; Eversole, 2003; Sanderson and Kindon, 2004). The two-variable model explained a sizable amount (40%) of the variance in perceived success. Community ownership is normally discussed in terms of aiding community empowerment (e.g., Guevara, 1996; Eversole, 2003; Sanderson and Kindon, 2004). The two-variable model in this study delved beyond feelings of empowerment and directly verified a link between community ownership and success (i.e., perceived success towards highway-specific goals and less tangible overarching community enhancement).

The predicted importance of bringing multiple stakeholders to the collaboration table in the form of valuable and active NGOs (Elden and Levin, 1991; Getz and Jamal, 1994; Sanderson and Kindon, 2004) is not significantly reflected in the multiple regression. Contrary to the hypothesized importance of local government as an important actor, the results showed that local government involvement does not significantly contribute to participants’ perceived success.

6.2. Implications, limitations, and future research

Despite focus on access to non-monetary resources in participatory literature (e.g., McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Ostrom et al., 1992; Jamal and Getz, 1995; Portes and Landolt, 1996; Pretty, 2003; Eversole, 2003), some practitioners of participatory development and community management still focus extensively on involving community members with little focus on what these individuals have to work with (Portes and Landolt, 1996). Based on these results, which show a high importance placed on non-monetary resources, we speculate that practitioners who do not emphasize access to resources are making a significant oversight. For other scenic highway corridor groups we recommend meeting non-monetary resource needs by providing a dependable institutionalized network of individuals, such as staff, with knowledge and skills in scientific arenas, administrative tasks, project-specific technical procedures, and project-specific physical maintenance.

A limitation of this study was the unexplained variance from the models, indicating the factors outlined in the applied collaborative theory framework may be incomplete. Based on the literature, other variables that might be considered in future research include monetary resources and more explicit measures of social capital such as community members’ influence in government and number of social connections for vertical and horizontal networking (e.g., Putnam, 1995; Akama, 1996; Scheyvens, 1999; Pretty, 2003).

Our results are also specific to the groups we studied and cannot necessarily be generalized to other community groups and collaborative management. However, while we recognize that collaborative management groups are unique in their composition and local context, our findings illustrate the potential utility of assessing successful collaborative factors, which will help practitioners make collaboration management more successful. To examine this, future research could focus on examining the differences between a diversity of groups and successful management outcomes. For example, collaborative groups differ in structure, goals, strategies, and barriers. Comparing these differences in relation to their observed outcomes will provide an improved understanding between collaborative structure and process and demonstrated outcomes. It will also highlight how different barriers affect the ability to achieve desired outcomes.

7. Conclusion

This study directly supports the importance of non-monetary resources and community ownership in this example of community-based management. Results show community ownership correlates with empirical impacts to a measure of success in these community-based management ventures. Contrary to some participatory literature (Pretty, 2003), our measure of perceived success functions independent of local government involvement in the four scenic highway groups. Our data confirm the importance of access to non-monetary resources, including information and personnel, which could potentially come from local government involvement. However, in our example, local government may not have been perceived as consistently providing this service as effectively as some of the other actors in the grassroots management process.

Although some of the factors outlined in participation frameworks were not significant in this example of ongoing community-based management, we speculate that these results depict community-based management of natural resources as a reasonable management alternative. A participation space for local and outside knowledge is generated and local community volunteers do acquire a sense of success and ownership. Future research and attention to policy gaps will help to better integrate local government actors in the Florida scenic highway process and support both insider and outsider voices in their effort to come together for the sake of protecting and enhancing unique resources.

References


