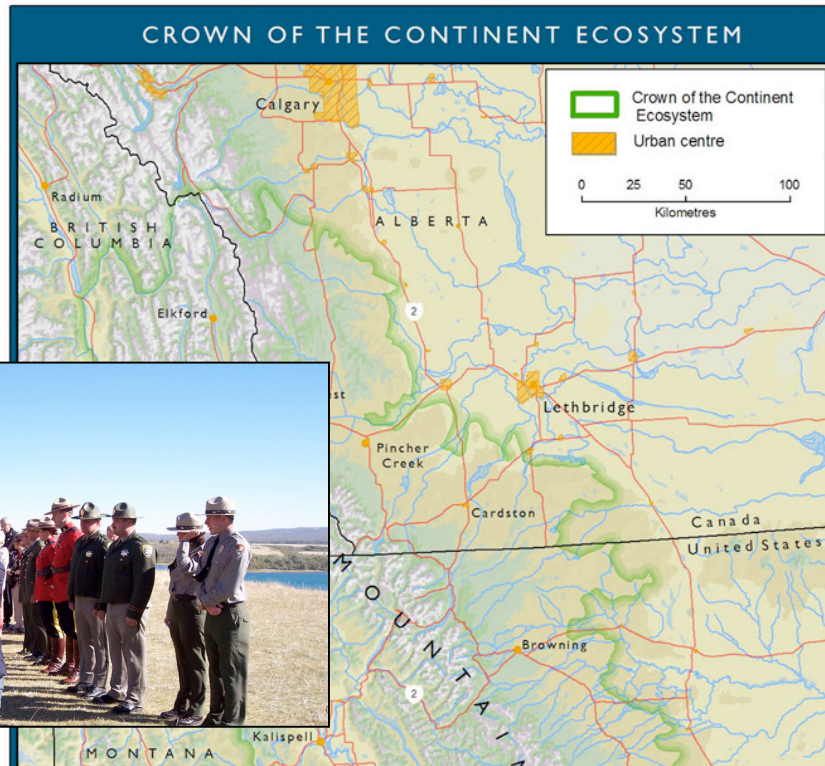


# COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE CROWN MANAGERS PARTNERSHIP

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Land Policy



This report addresses strategic communications for the Crown Managers Partnership (CMP). It builds on existing positive and successful working relationships, partnering, networking, and information sharing within CMP. As such, this report can be used as a starting point for a communications plan, identifying purposes, audiences, tools and strategies, and monitoring and evaluation protocols for the two main aspects of CMP communications:

1. Internal communications (among CMP members); and
2. External communications (between CMP and other players in the Crown region).

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

### Purpose

The Crown Managers Partnership exists because its members want to sustain and improve the health of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem. To do this, they must coordinate the management of a large, complex eco-region overlaid by their own multiple jurisdictions. Working across these borders cannot happen without open, strategic, and robust communication among CMP members.

The plan should outline a systematic approach to internal communications to:

1. Provide accessible, consistent channels to foster and support communication among CMP members.
2. Enhance two-way communication between CMP members and the CMP Steering Committee.
3. Establish decision-making protocols for CMP.
4. Establish decision-making protocols for the CMP Steering Committee.
5. Enhance the engagement and long-term participation of member agencies.

These purposes are consistent with the broad goals articulated by CMP, which are to:

- Build awareness of common interests and issues in the Crown of the Continent ecosystem.
- Improve relationships and opportunities for collaboration across mandates and borders.
- Identify collaborative work already underway and opportunities for further cooperation.

These purposes are also consistent with the four strategic foci and goals outlined in CMP's 2006-2009 Strategic Plan, as follows:

#### *Focus – Improve Understanding*

- Goal 1: Develop a shared, regional approach to understanding ecological health in the Crown of the Continent ecosystem.
- Goal 2: Improve data sharing and methodology standardization across the Crown of the Continent ecosystem.

#### *Focus – Raise Awareness*

- Goal 3: Promote public understanding of the significance of place and strategic issues facing the Crown of the Continent ecosystem.

- Goal 4: Promote agency understanding of the regional nature of strategic issues facing the Crown of the Continent ecosystem, and of the Crown Managers Partnership.

*Focus – Promote Collaboration*

- Goal 5: Maintain effective interagency collaboration for the Crown of the Continent ecosystem.
- Goal 6: Design and pursue joint initiatives to address regional management issues.

*Focus – Build Organizational Strength*

- Goal 7: Maintain the Crown Managers Partnership as a financially and organizationally stable association.
- Goal 8: Sustain the Crown Managers Partnership as a strong and vibrant partnership.

**Audience**

The audience for internal communications within the Crown Managers Partnership includes CMP members, Steering Committee members, and staff (currently personnel at the Miistakis Institute). As of March 2007, 21 agencies have been invited to participate as CMP members. Some of these are more actively engaged than others.

*CMP Members*

| <b>Canada</b>   | <b>United States</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>First Nations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ktunaxa Kinbasket Treaty Council</li> <li>• Blood (Kainai) Tribe</li> </ul>   | <b>Tribal Governments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blackfoot Tribe</li> <li>• Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Federal Agencies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks Canada – Waterton Lakes Nat'l Park</li> </ul>  | <b>Federal Agencies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nat'l Park Service – Glacier Nat'l Park</li> <li>• USDA Forest Service – Flathead and Lewis &amp; Clark Nat'l Forests</li> <li>• U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs</li> <li>• U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</li> <li>• U.S. Geological Survey</li> </ul> |
| <b>Province of Alberta</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta Environment</li> <li>• Alberta Sustainable Resource Development</li> <li>• Alberta Parks and Protected Areas</li> </ul>                       | <b>State of Montana</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks</li> <li>• Department of Natural Resources and Conservation</li> <li>• Flathead Basin Commission</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Province of British Columbia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management</li> <li>• Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection</li> <li>• Ministry of Forests</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Higher Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Calgary</li> </ul>   | <b>Higher Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Montana</li> </ul>  |

*CMP Steering Committee Members*

- Brace Hayden, Leigh Welling - Glacier National Park
- Ian Dyson - Alberta Environment

- Bill Dolan - Waterton Lakes National Park
- Jimmy DeHerrera - U.S. Flathead National Forest
- Roy Doore - U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Blackfeet Nations
- Rich Moy - Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- Wayne Stetski – British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection
- Mark Holston - Flathead Basin Commission
- Mike Quinn - University of Calgary
- Len Broberg - University of Montana

*Miistakis Institute Staff*

Guy Greenaway

Mike Quinn

Danah Duke

## **Tools and Strategies**

### **Communications Task Force**

CMP should form a task force to focus on both internal and external communications issues. Initially, the task force would review and deliberate on the suggestions and options presented in this draft communications strategy. Ideally, task force members would include a cross section of CMP participants, communications professionals from member agencies, and a communications specialist from the Miistakis Institute. Outside communications professionals could also be tapped for advice, design ideas, and insights.

The task force should meet (by phone, email, or in person) at least quarterly on an ongoing basis to guide, troubleshoot, monitor, and adapt CMP's strategic communications.

### **Membership Review**

During our interviews, several agencies listed as CMP members said they were unaware that they had been invited to participate in the Crown Managers Partnership. They typically attend the annual forum, but otherwise are not active participants in CMP planning and decision making. Subsequently, they have little to no ownership of CMP's strategic plan and work plan, and a few expressed resentment at being listed as members when they feel they have had no voice in CMP's internal decisions.

To remedy this situation, CMP should:

1. Review the membership status and degree of participation of the 21 invited agencies.
2. Consider re-seating the steering committee to ensure consistent participation of a representative cross section of interests.
3. Extend a new, person-to-person invitation to “missing” members.
4. Develop and emphasize opportunities beyond the annual forum for members to partner with other CMP members and otherwise get involved.

### **Charter**

Many collaborative coalitions—even informal ones—use a written charter or articles of alliance to articulate the group's history, purpose or mission, vision, membership, roles and responsibilities, guiding principles and shared values, and structure. A charter fosters



continuity of purpose as individual representatives of member agencies change, and as participants respond to changing environmental, social, and political conditions.

CMP's strategic plan already contains all of the elements of a charter. CMP should create a separate charter document—based on the following text adapted from the strategic plan—for all member agencies to sign and ratify.

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## **DRAFT CMP CHARTER**

### **History of the Crown Managers Partnership**

In February 2001, government representatives from over 20 agencies gathered in Cranbrook, B.C. to explore ecosystem-based ways of collaborating on shared issues in the transboundary Crown of the Continent. Participation included federal, aboriginal, provincial, and state agencies or organizations with a significant land or resource management responsibility within the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem. The aim was to involve a blend of senior and middle managers with technical and professional staff that have a role in management at the ecosystem scale (e.g., conservation biologists, land use planners, etc.). The Miistakis Institute for the Rockies was invited to help facilitate the process and act as a neutral third party. No attempt was made to put a firm boundary around the area of interest, but the region is generally defined by the Rocky Mountain ecoregion from the Bob Marshall wilderness complex (MT) to the Highwood River (AB) and Elk Valley (BC) and is known as the Crown of the Continent (see cover graphic). The highly successful workshop, hosted by the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, resulted in a commitment by all participants to move forward collaboratively on regional ecosystem management. The Cranbrook Workshop highlighted several issues that were deemed important to the participants and could best be addressed at the larger regional ecosystem scale<sup>1</sup>. In order to advance progress on their priorities, the Forum struck a Steering Committee to guide progress.

The second Annual Forum, in 2002, resulted in the formalization of the group to a Collaborative Partnership (Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Managers Partnership) that is accountable to the membership through an annual forum and implements direction from the partnership through an annual work plan. The partnership includes an interagency steering committee and a secretariat.

CMP has met every year since then at an annual forum, and pursued additional work in creating networking opportunities, and pursuing strategic projects of mutual interest. In 2006, at the 5-year mark of the partnership, the CMP Steering Committee met to review and redevelop the original goals of the partnership, creating a strategic plan to guide the next five years.

### **Vision**

An ecologically healthy Crown of the Continent ecosystem.

### **Mission**

The Crown Managers Partnership (CMP) is a diverse group of resource management agencies who agree to work together to achieve the vision by:

- Building an understanding and awareness of the ecological health of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem;

- Executing individual agency mandates in alignment with the vision; and
- Building enduring relationships and collaborating across mandates and borders.

### **Guiding Principles / Shared Values**

- The Partnership believes that some resource and land management issues can only be adequately addressed at the regional ecosystem scale.
- Partnership activities are based on the belief that the social (including economic) health of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem is based on its ecological health and the need for compatible management strategies.
- Responsibility for direct management of the public land and natural resources lies with the individual agencies. The Partnership will not take a stand or position on resource-management issues, but rather will seek to inform and raise agency capacity to address those issues.
- By its very nature, the Partnership will draw together diverse opinions and approaches to ecosystem management. To best ensure the development of collaborative and effective solutions, the Partnership will interact in a manner respectful of that diversity.
- The focus of the Partnership will be on the development of management tools, data management and science (research/inventory/monitoring), and education and outreach at the regional ecosystem scale.
- The Partnership will operate on the principles of synergy and leverage, recognizing that in data collection, fund development, and problem-solving, numerous small contributions can be parlayed into something greater.
- As part of the Partnership's commitment to science-based decision-making, it will strive to maintain connections with the academic and research community.

### **Roles and Operational Structure**

#### **The Crown Managers Partnership**

The Crown Managers Partnership is open to all public land and resource management agencies within the Crown of the Continent Region. This includes First Nations/Tribes, Federal agencies and Provincial or State agencies, and local governments.

The Crown of the Continent Region is loosely defined by the Rocky Mountain ecoregion from the Bob Marshall wilderness complex in Montana to the Highwood River in Alberta and the Elk Valley in B.C. This boundary is necessarily indistinct, reflective of its ecological rather than political derivation.

Staff involvement is determined by each agency. However, as a principle, the Partnership focuses on senior/middle managers and those technical and professional staff who are managing programs with adjacent jurisdictions.

Partnership responsibilities include:

- Pooling expertise in pursuit of the vision;
- Fostering an understanding and support for the CMP within member agencies;
- Contributing in-kind, financial resources and staff resources in support of the vision and mission of the CMP.

## **Steering Committee**

CMP members choose an interagency steering committee from its members, selecting representatives from aboriginal agencies; federal, provincial, and state agencies; the universities of Calgary and Montana; and the secretariat. The steering committee strives for representation from a variety of geographic areas and resource management sectors.

## **Crown Managers Partnership – Strategic Direction**

The steering committee takes direction from CMP through the annual forum, and implements that direction through annually reviewed strategic plans and annual work plans. Steering committee responsibilities include:

- maintenance and direction of the strategic and annual work plans;
- fund development to support the CMP's work;
- promotion of the CMP, both within and outside of their own agencies;
- oversight of the Secretariat, and any other entities operating on the CMP's behalf; and
- maintenance of the Steering Committee membership.

## **Secretariat**

On behalf of CMP, the steering committee delegates the day-to-day management and coordination of CMP activities to a standing Secretariat. The secretariat operates under the ongoing direction of the steering committee. Since the conception of the CMP, the Miistakis Institute has acted as the secretariat on a non-profit basis in close cooperation with the universities of Calgary and Montana. The responsibilities of the secretariat are:

- general coordination and facilitation of the CMP;
- *ex officio* membership on the CMP Steering Committee;
- financial management for the CMP;
- coordination of internal and external communications; and
- coordination of fund development, including seeking opportunities to leverage agency dollars.

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## **Ground Rules**

The CMP Steering Committee should deliberate on and draft ground rules to guide participation in committee and CMP meetings and decision making. The following sample ground rules offer a starting place from which to revise, add, or omit to tailor a set of ground rules to the needs and interests of the steering committee and CMP members.

### Representation

1. Each member agency will have a designated contact person and alternate within the agency.
2. Steering committee members will be selected and serve to represent several compatible interests so that each member agency will have a credible representative in committee-level deliberations and decisions.

### Meeting and Deliberation Protocols

1. Only one person will speak at a time and no one will interrupt when another person is speaking.
2. Each participant will express his or her own views rather than speaking for others at the table, and will not attribute motives to others.
3. Participants will avoid grandstanding (extended comments and questions) in order to allow everyone a fair chance to speak and to contribute.
4. Participants agree to challenge ideas, not the person proposing the ideas.
5. Participants will make every effort to stay on track with the agenda and to move deliberations forward.
6. Participants agree to focus on the merits of issues and arguments, seeking to understand one another's interests, underlying interests, and technical, legal, and other issues.
7. Participants agree to "no surprises" and will keep each other informed early and often about issues, concerns, and changes.
8. Participants will seek to identify areas of common ground where possible, without glossing over or minimizing legitimate disagreements.
9. Each person reserves the right to disagree with any proposal, and assumes a responsibility to offer an alternative proposal that seeks to accommodate his/her interest and the interests of others. In short, if you say "no" to a proposal, you must suggest an option that tries to satisfy all interests at the table.
10. Decisions will be made by deliberation and ratified by agreement to a package all participants can live with, rather than by voting. In the event agreement cannot be reached, dissenting opinions and alternative ways forward will be recorded in the agreement document.
11. Whenever possible, participants will confer with other members before responding to requests from the media about CMP activities or interests.
12. As far as possible, costs shall be distributed equitably among all participants.

### **Communications Budget and Staffing**

Without effective communications, successful collaboration across jurisdictions is impossible. Dedicating funding and staff time to communications will improve CMP's efficiency and effectiveness, reduce duplication of efforts, enhance existing partnerships and foster new ones, capture opportunities for more proactive work, and make it easier to anticipate challenges and rectify problems.



CMP should earmark an increase in funding for strategic communications, including money to cover the meeting costs of the communications task force, enhanced web site development and maintenance, and development of an external communications plan.

### **Web Site**

CMP should develop an interactive, members-only section of its web site to enable information sharing, discussion, activity updates, internal news releases, and other exchanges. Different formats offer a variety of features:

- Wiki – Similar to Wikipedia, a Wiki is a searchable database where members can upload information and documents for all other members to review, comment on, and edit. A Wiki tracks edits and changes, so deleted content can be easily recovered and introduced errors or misinformation deleted. Content is determined by the participants. A Wiki might be a good way to generate broader input from CMP members on draft documents, including such items as the strategic plan, work plan, and project proposals.
- Blog – A blog allows members to post comments on a particular topic or issue. A range of issues can be featured, and these can change or be updated over time. Active blogs foster real-time and ongoing discussions, and can also serve as virtual paper trails of these discussions and the rationales behind decisions.
- Links Index – Members can post hyperlinks to other useful and relevant web sites and resources, indexed by topic for easy searching and retrieval.
- Member profiles and email – Members can post information about themselves, their programs and projects, and areas of interest. A blind email link allows members to email each other without revealing email addresses (this prevents spammers and spyware from finding your email).
- Meeting minutes and forum summaries.

### **Members Email Listserv**

To date, email has been a hit-or-miss communication tool for most CMP members. A listserv could include all members on all selected emails, and can also foster real-time or ongoing discussions among all listserv participants on timely topics. Effectiveness depends on regular, consistent use and participation by all members. A smaller listserv of the steering committee members may be useful.

### **CMP logo and letterhead**

CMP should develop and adopt a branding logo that reinforces its strategic mission and is instantly recognizable. The logo should be incorporated on letterhead and all CMP publications, web pages, and other materials.

### **Annual Forum**

The annual forum is well attended and generally seen as productive. CMP should continue to convene the annual forum, with the following improvements:

- Develop agenda topics jointly among all CMP member agencies.
- Invite and encourage all CMP member agencies to participate in drafting the strategic plan and annual workplan.
- Create more opportunities during the forum for informal networking and information exchange.

- Foster deeper agency participation by instituting a mentoring program to help active members recruit and engage colleagues in their agencies.
- On a rotating basis, invite other players in the region—ngo’s, local government, business, recreation interests, etc.—to participate in the forum when relevant topics arise.

### **Issue-Specific Workshops**

CMP members may want to partner more frequently on specific issues, within smaller sub-regions, or on particular projects. CMP could encourage and support such partnering by sponsoring and convening workshops as needed on relevant tools, research and implementation strategies and technologies, and other resources to help people bridge the boundaries between jurisdictions.

### **Data and Format Standards**

CMP should coordinate among member agencies to establish standards for data gathering, formatting, and analysis protocols. CMP could form a task force to:

- Inventory existing data (gathering protocols, content, format, and analysis) and identify data needs.
- Identify what scales/grain (watershed, sub-regional, region-wide) would be most helpful for data users.
- Draft recommended standards for member agencies’ review.
- Explore the potential for creating a central database, a clearinghouse for information, and services for research sharing and data reporting.

### **Develop an External Communications Plan.**

CMP should develop a draft external communications plan that articulates purposes, audiences, tools and strategies, and monitoring and evaluation protocols for communicating with other players in the Crown region, citizens, and other interested parties.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure that internal communication tools and strategies achieve their intended purposes, CMP should monitor implementation and conduct a biennial evaluation of their effectiveness. CMP should develop indicators for improved internal communications, such as the following:

- Increased agency participation in the annual forum and other CMP activities and events.
- Increased inter-agency cooperation among members (e.g., joint planning, projects, and publication).
- Increased consistency in data gathering, formatting, and analysis.

CMP should continue doing a five-year survey of members’ interests and satisfaction, including key aspects of internal communications.

## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

### Purpose

Given the size and scope of the Crown of the Continent ecological region, even the combined jurisdictions of the CMP member agencies do not encompass all of the critical lands, waters, habitats, other resources, and decision-making arenas that bear on ecosystem health and vitality. To fully accomplish its mission and vision, CMP must strategically engage other players in the region and beyond. through external communication.

External communication serves three broad purposes:

1. Outreach – inform and educate local, regional, and national audiences about the mission, vision, and activities of the Crown Management Partnership.
2. Partner – (1) participate in non-CMP planning and management activities related to the Crown region; (2) invite contributions from other people and organizations toward CMP planning and management activities related to the Crown region.
3. Empower – engage people and organizations in the planning and implementation of management activities within the Crown of the Continent.

### Audiences

Potential external audiences for CMP include agencies, conservation groups, tourism and recreation associations, business and industry, and citizens at large. (See Appendix \_\_\_ for a list of groups that are active in the Crown region.)

- Agencies that aren't CMP members
  - Members of Parliament representing Alberta and British Columbia
  - Canadian Ministry of Natural Resources
  - Canadian Ministry of the Environment
  - Canadian Ministry of International Cooperation
  - Canadian Ministry of Western Economic Diversification
  - U.S. Bureau of Land Management
  - U.S. Department of Agriculture (agencies and programs dealing with agricultural, noxious weed, surface and groundwater management, and other land-use related issues).
  - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
  - U.S. Department of Energy
  - U.S. Congressional representatives
  - Montana Governor
  - Alberta Premier
  - British Columbia Premier
  - County governments

- Municipal governments
- Non-governmental organizations
  - Conservation groups
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Business and industry representatives
  - Landowner associations
  - Developer and real estate associations
- Centers of Education
  - Flathead Community College
  - Salish Kootenai College (Polson)
  - College of Great Falls
  - Community Consortia of Alberta
  - University of Lethbridge
  - Lethbridge Community College
  - Mount Royal College (Calgary)
  - Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (Calgary)
  - Selkirk College (Castlegar)
  - College of the Rockies (Cranbrook)

## **Tools and Strategies**

### **Crown Stewardship Network**

Collaborative stewardship is the primary focus of the National Geographic geotourism Mapguide project on the Crown of the Continent. The associated website—[www.crownofthecontinent.net](http://www.crownofthecontinent.net)—includes profiles of other stewardship-oriented groups in the Crown region and resources for networking. In contrast to formal partnerships or member-based coalitions, a network is a system of independent actors. Groups and agencies collaborate as much or as little as they choose, when it’s advantageous and appropriate.

CMP should participate in networking with other groups in the Crown region, and should support, endorse, and sponsor, as appropriate, the Crown Stewardship Network.

### **Joint fact finding**

Public policy issues need to be grounded in the best available science *and* reflect public values. In joint fact finding, scientists, technical experts, and citizens work together to gather, select, analyze, and format information. This process integrates technical knowledge and the values of “public” knowledge to result in better informed, more robust planning and decision making on public policy issues.

CMP should create and participate in opportunities for joint fact finding on issues that are particularly sensitive to public values and knowledge. Also, many non-governmental groups in the region have significant expertise and data on subjects and issues relevant to CMP’s work. When appropriate, CMP should engage such groups in joint fact finding and information sharing.

### **Talking Points**

CMP should draft and use consistent talking points and vocabulary to deliver core concepts, such as the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, ecosystem health, regional stewardship, critical habitat, etc. Word choices and “terms of art” should resonate across CMP’s (and the region’s) diverse cultures and constituencies.

### **Web site**

The keys to generating interest and activity with a web site are a steady stream of fresh, useful information, and easy navigation. CMP should develop a budget for web site improvement and maintenance, enabling the secretariat to update web content on a weekly basis, including:

- Announcements of upcoming projects.
- Opportunities for public participation.
- Requests for comments.
- Planning and project updates.
- News and feature stories.
- Other topical information.

### **Visioning and Scenario Tools**

CMP should engage others in building a common vision of change in the region, using visioning and futures scenarios tools and software to consider various land use, conservation, and development options.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure that external communication tools and strategies achieve their intended purposes, CMP should monitor implementation and conduct a biennial evaluation of their effectiveness. CMP should develop indicators for improved external communications, such as the following:

- Increased awareness and understanding among non-members of CMP issues and activities.
- Increased synergy of CMP and non-governmental planning and activities in the Crown region.
- Increased cooperation between CMP and non-governmental groups and citizens (e.g., joint fact finding, cooperative planning and projects).

CMP should conduct a survey every five years of non-members’ interests and opinions on CMP activities, including key aspects of CMP’s external communications.