Slide 1

Public Participation: Match the Promise to the Process

Module 11 self-study — Chapter 13

NRES 315: HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Last updated: November 4, 2626

1 / 20

Slide 2

How to use this self-study lesson

There is **no class meeting today**.

Plan for **25–30 minutes**. Keep the Willow Bay brief open, write responses to the pauses, and complete the reading quiz by **11:59 p.m.**

2 / 20

Slide 3

"The public" is not one audience

A **public** is a person, group, or organization relevant to, affected by, or able to affect an issue.

The name matters. "Stakeholder," "beneficiary," "resident," "user," and "participant" highlight different relationships and can include or obscure different people.

Define whom you mean instead of treating "the public" as a single viewpoint.

3 / 20

Slide 4

Map relevance, effects, and absence

For Willow Bay, consider:

- people directly affected by a rule;
- people with knowledge needed for the decision;
- people needed for implementation;
- people with legal, cultural, or governance relationships; and
- people likely to be missed by convenient contact lists.

Presence in an existing record is not the test of relevance.

4 / 20

Slide 5

Participation, involvement, and engagement

Participation is the broad family of practices that involve publics in planning and decisions.

Public involvement is usually formal and tied to a specific decision or required process.

Engagement is continuing, two-way, trust-based relationship work. A single hearing or comment period is not ongoing engagement.

5 / 20

Slide 6

Why participate?

A well-designed process can:

- improve information and judgment;
- clarify conflict and implementation needs;
- strengthen legitimacy and fairness;
- build trust and relationships; and
- support equity and inclusion.

It can also consume time, intensify conflict, exclude people, or lower trust if the agency over-promises.

6 / 20

Slide 7

Pre-work starts with self-assessment

Before choosing a technique, managers should examine their assumptions, authority, skills, and willingness to share influence.

If the outcome is already fixed, do not advertise collaboration. If staff cannot facilitate fairly, pause, seek help, or change who leads.

7 / 20

Slide 8

Five strategies differ in influence

1. **Inform:** provide understandable information.
2. **Consult:** gather input and explain how it was considered.
3. **Involve:** work directly with publics throughout the process.
4. **Build consensus:** partner to shape alternatives and seek agreement.
5. **Co-manage:** share continuing decision and implementation authority.

8 / 20

Slide 9

More influence is not always better

The spectrum is not a moral ladder.

The appropriate strategy depends on discretion, concern, time, law, staff capacity, public capacity, and what implementation requires.

The ethical requirement is alignment between the **promise** and the **actual influence**.

9 / 20

Slide 10

Name what is open

For every process, state:

- what has already been decided;
- what participants can still shape;
- who will decide;
- how input will be used; and
- how the agency will report back.

Transparency about limits can protect trust better than an inflated promise.

10 / 20

Slide 11

Diagnose before choosing a technique

A situational analysis examines the issue, history, authority, conflict, relationships, capacity, risks, and decision timeline.

A stakeholder or public analysis identifies who is relevant or affected, why, their interests and influence, and how they can participate accessibly.

Technique comes after diagnosis and strategy.

11 / 20

Slide 12

Techniques are not strategies

An open house, survey, focus group, workshop, advisory committee, or negotiated agreement is a **technique**.

The same technique can serve different strategies depending on its purpose and the influence promised. A survey used to estimate preferences is research; a survey used to solicit advice is participation; sometimes it serves both.

12 / 20

Slide 13

Inform and consult well

Informing requires timely, accessible, understandable information—not a data dump after the decision.

Consulting requires listening, documenting input, and explaining how it affected the outcome. A comment period with no response loop is incomplete.

13 / 20

Slide 14

Involve or build consensus when the work needs it

Use greater ongoing influence when local knowledge, implementation partners, shared problem solving, or durable relationships are necessary.

These strategies require time, representative access, skilled facilitation, and real discretion. A ten-week advisory group can help shape alternatives but cannot honestly be called a long-term co-management relationship.

14 / 20

Slide 15

Trust means accepting vulnerability

Trust is willingness to accept vulnerability under uncertainty.

It grows through competence, fairness, honesty, follow-through, and respectful relationships. It can decline when an agency asks for input after drafting the answer or hides how comments were used.

Participation is not a quick repair for prior broken commitments.

15 / 20

Slide 16

Equity requires more than an open door

Equal invitation does not create equal ability to participate.

Timing, transportation, technology, language, disability access, childcare, compensation, and past treatment affect who can join. Select techniques and supports that reduce those barriers.

16 / 20

Slide 17

Pause: choose a Willow Bay promise

Suppose MDWP selects component D, the four-meeting advisory working group, but the Commission keeps final authority.

Write one honest sentence promising what members **will** influence and one sentence stating what they **will not** decide.

17 / 20

Slide 18

Check the promise

A defensible promise might be:

> Members will help define the problem, develop alternatives, and advise MDWP; MDWP will show how that advice shaped its recommendation.

The group will **not** make the final rule. Calling this co-management or promising that its preferred alternative will be adopted would overstate its authority.

18 / 20

Slide 19

Participation is evidence —but not a referendum

Comments, meeting discussion, and advisory recommendations reveal experiences, arguments, knowledge, and implementation concerns.

Unless a probability design supports it, do not turn attendance or comments into "X% of the public supports…" Self-selection changes who participates.

19 / 20

Slide 20

Prepare the entry ticket

Your Willow Bay plan should align five things:

purpose → public → strategy → technique → promise

Submit the individual entry ticket by **Thursday, November 5, 11:59 p.m.** Bring it Friday, but do not draft the group response in advance.

20 / 20