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Participatory Action Research in Rural Community Sport and Recreation Management

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Kinesiology

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Abstract

The research conducted for this dissertation involved a participatory action research (PAR) project with the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee. Framed with the literature pertaining to sport and recreation development, community development, and rural community studies, the project sought to explore the perceived significance of sport and recreation, to examine the processes of sport and recreation management, as well as to inform changes to current management and policy making practices within the rural community context. Further, this project sought to identify strengths and challenges of PAR as well as to explore the processes through which researchers can work with community stakeholders as agents of change within the context of (rural) community sport and recreation management.

Drawing from communitarian theories and participatory methodological approaches, the contributions of this research can be summarized in three themes. Firstly, this research contributes to scholarly understandings of the social processes and outcomes of sport and recreation management in rural community contexts. By identifying priorities of community organizers and exploring the ways that diverse community members understood their experiences in sport and recreation, this research provided insights which informed municipal management and policy making (in the municipality) as well as a scholarly understanding of sport and recreation management in the community. Secondly, this research provides an exploration of the ways that action can be involved in and through the research process. Drawing from the historical and philosophical traditions of PAR, a discussion of the ways in which action was conceptualized and facilitated in and through sport and recreation management, policy making, and research is provided. Finally, a reflective approach was used to examine the various

ways that first person action research, or reflective methodological practice, was employed in order to shape the evolving research process. Through this account, I demonstrate the usefulness of reflective methodological approaches in navigating the often unarticulated role(s) of researchers as instruments of research.

Collectively, the research documented in this dissertation contributes to theoretical, empirical, and methodological literature in community in sport and recreation management. By foregrounding collective understandings of community, the nuances of rural community contexts, and the potential of community partnership, this research explored the metaphorical peripheries of community sport and recreation management and attempted to draw attention to the rich insights that can be derived from doing so.

Key Words: Rural, Community, Sport and Recreation Management, Participatory Action Research

Co-Authorship Statement

The research presented in this dissertation was conducted as part of my doctoral program of study. While the information presented in this document is my own original work, I must also acknowledge the contributions of my supervisor Dr. Laura Misener as well as several community members who supported and contributed to this work throughout the duration of the project. The support, guidance, and suggestions I received along the way were integral to this work. Although I am the primary author, this project would not have been possible without the direction, feedback, and hard work of many people along the way.

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“I could tell you my adventures—beginning from this morning...but it’s no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then.”

— Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

The last four year have been quite an adventure. There are many people with whom I crossed paths along the way that I should be thanking, but this document is already way too long...

First and foremost, I cannot thank my friends and colleagues in Powassan enough for the immense support and countless resources that they provided throughout the past four year. I owe a special thank you to Mike for being the most relaxed and helpful colleague that one could hope for - there is no way this project could have ever come together without your constant support, willingness to discuss change, and dedication to community and recreation. Secondly, thank you to everyone (past and present) on the academic side who supported and challenged me, while also providing me with countless opportunities and resources during my time at Western. In particular, thank you Laura and all of the different faculty members - particularly those who served on committees - who supported and encouraged me along the way, especially while I tried to figure out if and how I could do things differently.

Finally, thank you to all of my friends and family who put up with me and my antics for the past four years. Whether it was a travel buddy for one day or a rock (or a couch) that I could always come back to while I spent months living out of my car, the people with whom I shared

friendship, laughter, late nights, and early mornings made this process worthwhile. Although I've taken a very different path than I could have ever imagined I would, all of the twists, turns, and unexpected obstacles made this adventure worthwhile. From the bushes in Northern Ontario to the beaches in Southern Australia, I've learned more from the people that I have met, played, socialized, and worked with along the way than I could ever learn in a book or classroom. Thank you to everyone who shaped me and my adventures, stuck with me while I figured myself out, and supported me along the way.

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Preface

In the final year of my doctoral program, I was fortunate to participate in a discussion that helped to clarify much of my thinking about the research project described in this thesis and the approach used throughout my doctoral work. The discussion took place as part of a conference pertaining to rural development and revitalization on a field trip visit to Six Nations Polytechnic. In this discussion, our host placed a cup of water in the centre of the group. The cup represented the issue we were concerned with and metaphorically highlighted that although we were all discussing the same issue, none of us sees the issue in exactly the same way; that is, we each had a different perspective of the same cup. For example, both rural settler farming families and indigenous communities are very invested in environmental issues, however both of these groups may bring different perspectives and discussions to a conversation. Our host explained that only by acknowledging these diverse perspectives, engaging in dialogues, and working together can we holistically be part of a solution. These holistic solutions require us to move beyond “rights arguments” (i.e., who has the right to what), and to start thinking within a “responsibility framework” (i.e., what can we do well to benefit the most people) because, as he put it, “it makes no difference if we are all fighting for the right to catch a polluted fish” (personal communication, October 12, 2016). These discussions (and metaphors) helped me to reconcile and articulate the approach used in the research project documented in this dissertation. For me, this project was about responsibilities: the responsibilities of academics conducting community based research; the responsibilities of governmental organizations who create policies and systems that serve diverse communities, and; the responsibilities of communities engaged in allocating and managing their (sometimes limited) resources.

Throughout the processes involved in this research project, these responsibilities were engaged and explored in different ways, most notably by attempting to aggregate many diverse perspectives on issues of sport and recreation management in rural contexts. Through a participatory approach, I attempted to work with community members and also to acknowledge and respect these diverse perspectives and engage them in ways that were meaningful for all of the collaborators on this project (i.e., both academic and community partners). As I will elaborate on throughout this dissertation, this process involved looking both inwards at my own assumptions and understandings, as well as outwards to discuss and engender positive action with the communities involved in this project. As it was poetically put in the discussion I referred to above, “data or knowledge has to live in the way you conduct yourself in the world...[This] knowledge was given to us for free, [so] why should we then become the gatekeepers of the knowledge?” (personal communication, October 12, 2016).

Chapter 1: Introduction

To conduct the research described in this dissertation, I engaged in a participatory action research (PAR) project with the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee. The project involved engaging a variety of community partners in the processes of recreation and municipal policy making as well as program design and development. Drawing from literature pertaining to sport and recreation development, communitarianism, and rural community development, this project examined an important intersection that has been somewhat overlooked in the extant literature: the processes and experiences of developing and managing sport and recreation in rural community contexts. Given the participatory nature of the project, the community was engaged in various ways from the identification of issues to the data analysis and dissemination of results. In this introductory chapter, I outline the research objectives of the project and provide a review of the extant literature to contextualize this research on sport and recreation in rural Canada before providing an overview of each of the chapters included in this dissertation. In the subsequent chapters, I provide an overview of the theoretical approach and methodological groundings for this project (i.e., communitarianism and community based and participatory research approaches) as well as the specific research activities undertaken for this project in chapter two. In chapters three, four, and five, I discuss the findings and outcomes of the project. Finally, in chapter six, I reflect on the significance of these findings and opportunities for further research, as well as implications for the practice of managing sport and recreation in rural community contexts.

Research Objectives

The research conducted for this dissertation was situated in the fields of sport/recreation development, community development, and rural community studies. While the research

described herein explored the intersection of these three fields, the contributions of this dissertation are threefold. Firstly, this research contributes to the theoretical and empirical understanding of “community” in sport and recreation management. Secondly, this project explored the topic of rural sport and recreation management, which is (as I will demonstrate below) a context that is somewhat neglected by academics and policy makers. And finally, this research makes a methodological contribution to sport and recreation management by exploring the role and potential of participatory approaches in the construction of knowledge and practice (Chalip, 1997). That is, this research makes an argument for the potential benefits of employing a PAR approach in the context of (rural) community sport and recreation management in order to trouble the reliance on (post)positivist approaches to research in the field (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016; 2017).

The research described herein was conducted in collaboration with the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee. As I will describe below, Powassan can be described as a rural community located in the Almaguin Highlands Region within the District of Parry Sound. The objectives of this dissertation emerged through the research partnership with members of the committee and community. At times my own objectives differed significantly from those of community members and of the Recreation Committee. While my own objectives were mediated (and to a certain extent dictated) by the requirements of my doctoral program of study, community members and the Recreation Committee were more keenly focused on outcomes related to the effective management and provision of sport and recreation participation opportunities (I will elaborate below on the process of identifying objectives). Broadly, the objectives of this dissertation are as follows:

1. To explore the perceived significance of sport and recreation within a rural community.
2. To examine the processes of sport and recreation management in a rural community context.
3. To identify strengths and challenges of applying a participatory action research approach within rural community sport and recreation management.
4. To explore the processes through which researchers can work with community stakeholders as agents of change within the context of rural community sport and recreation management.

Research Context

The Municipality of Powassan is located in the Almaguin Highlands Region in the District of Parry Sound. With a population of approximately 3,400, Powassan can be described as a bedroom or commuter community as many residents travel to nearby centres (e.g., North Bay) for employment and to access services (McSweeney & Associates, 2013; Statistics Canada, 2017). With a history of development linked to lumber and agriculture, and a geographical location in relation to local waterways (e.g., the South River and its tributaries) and the Northern and Pacific Junction Railway (now known as the Canadian National Railway), Powassan developed much like many other settler rural municipalities in the district (Municipality of Powassan, 2017). Although there are several examples of social and historical research in and of rural communities which may be relevant in framing the current project, there are two known scholarly works conducted within the region specifically which warrant attention. While these projects were not conducted exclusively in Powassan, they provided important insights to the

historical and contemporary social context of the region which are important considerations for the discussion that will follow. Firstly, Noël (2009) provided a micro history examining family and community life in the region during the 1920's and 1930's. Importantly, Noël (2009) highlighted the ways in which the birth of the Dionne Quintuplets shaped the social, economic, and cultural landscape of the area. Born in 1934, the Quintuplets were put on display as a tourist attraction which brought millions of tourists (and tourism dollars) to the area during The Great Depression. The narratives stemming from this social history are still recognized in popular conscience, as evidenced by businesses such as the local boat builders who attribute their development and success to tourism during this time period (see CBC, 2016). In a more contemporary example, Michels (2017) provided an anthropological exploration of rural gentrification and tourism in the Almaguin Highlands region (of which Powassan is the largest and northern-most municipality). In his work, Michels (2017) thoroughly explores the politics of gentrification in the region including nuanced discussions about the relationships between locals, tourists, cottagers, business owners, and retirees to the area as well as the implications of government investments in infrastructure (e.g., highways) and of the tensions around the pending “muskoka-fication” (Michels, 2017, p. 158) of the area¹. While Michels (2017) engaged perspectives from many communities in the area, he aptly highlights the tensions between local, part-time, and full-time residents of the area. These discussions are particularly useful in understanding local experiences in the region as well as framing the insider and outsider positionalities engaged later in this dissertation.

¹ Muskoka is the region located to the south of the Almaguin Highlands (approximately one hour south of Powassan). It is well known as “cottage country” or a high-end tourist area with many luxury resorts and cottages.

More broadly, the discussion that follows explores the intersection of sport, recreation, and rural community development. Both sport/recreation management and rural community development are dynamic and evolving fields which have experienced (and continue to experience) marked changes in the last two decades. Notably, since 2000, the Canadian sport and recreation system underwent significant changes in governance (Barnes, Cousens, & Maclean, 2007 ; Thibault & Babiak, 2005). Furthermore, sport and recreation are increasingly being touted (in popular conscience as well as in political fora) as producers of positive social outcomes such as youth development, the development of social networks or capital, and the inclusion and integration of marginalized demographics into the broader society (Coakley, 2015; Hoye & Nicholson, 2008; Nicholson, Brown, & Hoye, 2013). Additionally, the increased globalization of resource and political economies has produced social contexts where rural communities (particularly those with resource based economies) are increasingly connected, but not in control of the factors influencing their viability. In order to contextualize the research described in this dissertation, I briefly sketch the literature pertaining to the professionalization of sport/recreation as well as rural community development. Finally, before outlining the research more thoroughly, I provide an overview of the small, but growing body of literature pertaining specifically to sport and recreation in rural communities.

Sport and Recreation in Canada

Sport and recreation occupy important roles in both the lives of Canadians as well as the work of policy makers at the community, regional, provincial/territorial, and national level. Participation in sport and recreation is linked with individual and community outcomes related to health, social cohesion, skill development, as well as economic development (Bloom, Grant, &

Watt, 2005), however as noted by Ferkins, McDonald, and Shilbury (2010), sport presents many complex issues as it is implicated in public, private, and non-profit domains. For example, it is not uncommon for a national (or provincial) sport organization to provide resources to a non-profit community sport group who leverages both corporate sponsorship and public (e.g., municipal) subsidies to offer a program with goals of improving physical activity participation, community pride/cohesion, as well as athlete recruitment and development. Furthermore, although they occupy their own distinct spaces in public policy, the terms sport and recreation and not so easily distinguished at the community level. Therefore, not surprisingly, sport and recreation policy makers (at all levels) are faced with many complex decision-making processes. As multiple stakeholders play roles in the management and development of sport and recreation, which in turn produces outcomes for individuals, communities, and economies in various ways, the evaluation of sport and recreation policies and programs is evidently complex and multi-faceted (Grix, 2010). Further, policy making in sport and recreation is often complicated by selective and inconsistent use of positivist and market-based data as well as expert knowledge and skepticism to inform processes of (pseudo-)evidence-based policy making (Piggin, Jackson, & Lewis, 2009). As such, Sam (2009) described sport and recreation policy issues as wicked problems as they are difficult to define, complex in nature, and relentless (as potential solutions often lead to further problems). These activities are inextricably bound up in discussions (both academic and in popular conscience) about community health and wellbeing (Frisby & Hoerber, 2002; Wankel, 1994), making them prominent topics implicated in policy making in many sectors. It is also pertinent to recognize that the issues and problems involved in sport and recreation may vary depending on the policy forum. Where national policy makers grapple with

issues over funding mass participation or elite athlete development (Pringle, 2001), local government and community organizations are more intimately involved with processes of community development (Hylton & Totten, 2008) which influences both the legitimations and intended outcomes of policy making activities.

In Canada, the national sport and recreation sector(s) experienced marked changes dating back to 1961 with the federal government's endorsement of *An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport* (Macintosh, Bedecki, & Franks, 1987). This legislation signalled the beginning of the formal intervention of the federal government into the sport sector. Since the early 1990's in particular (following poor results in the 1988 Olympic Games and the subsequent Dubin Inquiry), Canada followed a trend (similar to other developed nations such as Australia and the United Kingdom) marked by consistently increasing intervention by the federal government in sport, coupled with debates around funding priorities (namely competing interests of mass participation and elite sport), as well as the discursive construction of sport policy as a technocratic and/or rational process (Green, 2007). In line with these trends, the development of the first *Canadian Sport Policy* reflected a shift towards a more athlete centred (Thibault & Babiak, 2005) and synergistic approach to sport involving cross sport partnerships as well as a collective agenda for sport in Canada with a broadened scope of objectives (Barnes, et al., 2007). Throughout much of this time, recreation policy and delivery remained in the domain of provinces and municipalities. Although the federal government was (and remains) involved in the development of recreation in various ways (e.g., notably through national parks system), the branch of federal government responsible for recreation (at the time called Recreation Canada) was dissolved in 1980, as it was speculated that federal involvement "was never a viable concept

because recreation was clearly a provincial responsibility” (MacIntosh, et al., 1987, p. 80). However, this is not to suggest that both federal and provincial governments did not remain involved in recreation in various ways (e.g., through funding for the construction of recreational infrastructure in communities and offering strategic planning resources). While federal and provincial funding structures (e.g., the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund) and professional organizations (e.g., Parks and Recreation Ontario, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association) existed in supporting roles throughout these time periods, municipalities were largely tasked with planning and delivering recreation in their respective social, cultural, and economic contexts (BC Recreation and Parks Association, 2009).

Contemporary Political Context. An examination of recent developments in sport and recreation policies at the national level shows a clear acknowledgment of the intersection and interdependencies of sport and recreation at various levels (e.g., municipal, provincial, and federal) and sectors (e.g., health, economic development, education, private, non-profit, etc.). For example, the 2012 *Canadian Sport Policy* (Government of Canada, 2012) clearly identified recreational sport as a key component of the sport system and also identified the recreation sector as playing a critical role in the Canadian sport policy framework.

In the recreation sector, local governments and municipal recreation departments provide facilities and infrastructure, deliver sport programs, train leaders, officials, administrators and volunteers, and stage sport festivals and events. The recreation sector plays a large role in facilitating sport’s contribution to personal, community and socio-economic development. (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 8)

Additionally, the recreation sector has also endeavoured to create a national strategy to unite and inform recreation development in Canada. In 2015, a collaborative endeavour of provincial and territorial parks and recreation associations along with the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) developed *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing* which issued “a call to action that invites leaders, practitioners and stakeholders in a variety of sectors to collaborate in the pursuit of common priorities, while respecting the uniqueness of individuals and communities across Canada (CPRA & Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, 2015, p. 5). This policy document shares some of the same priorities as the *Canadian Sport Policy* such as increasing physical activity participation and building capacity within communities and it also highlights key stakeholders in sport and community development. Additionally, this document (CPRA & Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, 2015) made clear the intended outcomes of recreation in individual and community health and well being, further aligning it with the potential outcomes of sport participation (Bloom, et al., 2005).

Although these two policy frameworks share commonalities, there are important distinctions to be made. While the recent edition of *Canadian Sport Policy* has made clear links to other sectors (e.g., education, recreation, etc.) and the potential roles of these sectors in both athlete and social development outcomes, the policy remains informed and underpinned by notions of physical literacy and long-term athlete development. Although these justifications serve important political purposes (e.g., increasing the legitimacy of sport development and informing evidenced-based policy), such a process is reflective of the trend of rationalization and a technocratic approach to sport policy identified by Green (2007). The *National Framework for Recreation*, on the other hand, more coherently foregrounds priorities of access, inclusion, and

community development which may embody different priorities in different community contexts (Hylton & Totten, 2008). Although the similarities and interdependencies of sport and recreation are now highlighted in various policy documents, there remains a lack of literature examining how community level organizers and policy makers, particularly those in diverse/rural community contexts, understand and manage sport and recreation within their communities. Collectively, given the complexity (and sometimes incoherency) of sport and recreation-related policies at various levels, individuals at the community level with diverse levels of capacity (with respect to knowledge of and skills related to sport and recreation systems) may struggle to understand, access, and engage with these policy systems.

Rural Community Development in Canada

Although rural communities are often associated with ideas of homogeneity, the very definition of rurality remains elusive and hard to define. Rural communities can be classified based on several indicators such as population size or density, degree of remoteness or proximity to larger centres, as well as the most prevalent sources of economic development (du Plessis, Beshiri, Bollman, & Clemenson, 2001). Reimer (2002) noted that rural Canadian communities can be classified based on relationships between the dimensions of their exposure to global economies, stability of local economies, remoteness or adjacency to metropolitan centres, and their levels of community capacity. Although these analytic classification systems are useful, rurality can also be understood as an experience or a social context within which individuals and communities of people experience their lives. Balfour, Mitchell, and Molestane (2008) described an interpretivist theory of rurality. In this theory, rurality is understood as a context within which: forces (e.g., employment, economies, tourism) constantly push and pull individuals to and from

rural communities; individuals exercise agency (e.g., activism, entrepreneurship) to comply with or resist attempts to regulate their experiences of time and space, and finally; material, emotional, conceptual, or physical resources (e.g., families, natural resources, places) provide communities with the capacity to influence forces and agencies. As such, diverse rural residents engage in social processes (e.g., the development of social networks/capital, engaging in informal economies, etc.) differently in order to sustain themselves and support their families and communities in times of fluctuation or change (Reimer, 2006a; 2006b). While there are many ways to discuss and describe rurality, as the research described in this dissertation draws from interpretivist traditions and explored understandings and experiences in rural community sport and recreation, I elaborate here on understandings of place as a way of theorizing rurality and framing the discussion that will follow pertaining to rural community development.

As sport and recreation opportunities and experiences vary greatly in rural communities due to available resources (financial, physical, and natural), an understanding and distinction between space and place is important to consider. While space refers to the physical dimensions of an area (e.g., a pool that is 25 metres long and three metres deep, or a ten kilometre hiking trail over a mountain), place refers to the social meaning (e.g., a feeling of nostalgia and connectedness associated with the community pool where one spent their childhood summers) that people attach to those spaces (Smale, 2006; Tuan, 1976). A sense of place is complex as it can encompass an individual's attachment to physical spaces (e.g., the serenity of a lush green park at the end of a quiet street) as well as acting as a repository for social relationships (e.g., a skating rink where friends gather weekly to pick up ice hockey to socialize) that are cultivated between individuals, groups, and communities within spaces (Kyle & Chick, 2007; Low &

Altman, 1992). Therefore, by considering rural spaces where individual, families, and community(ies) live (e.g., on a farm), work (e.g., in the forestry industry), and play (e.g., on an outdoor skating rink), we can begin to conceptualize the complexity of associations involved in the creation of a sense of place, and how a rural sense of place might provide distinct sport and recreational experiences (and consequently understandings) compared to the urban equivalent. Importantly, communities must not inherently be assumed to be positive spaces where people connect, celebrate, and share. Indeed, communities are also places of tensions, resistance, fragmentation, and struggle (Defilippis & Saegert, 2012) both within (e.g., between community members) as well as without or between different communities. In his study of rural gentrification in the Almaguin Highlands, Michels (2017) demonstrated the importance of considering the meanings attached to rural spaces, as he discussed the (often oppositional) understandings of what development should look like for diverse residents (e.g., cottagers, long-time residents, tourists) in the region.

Rural Sport and Recreation

To date, research pertaining to sport and recreation in rural communities highlights interesting and somewhat contradictory trends. Importantly for this project, the terms sport and recreation were understood to be emergent and interchangeable (in some ways) based on the context they were used and the meaning assigned by those in conversation. In terms of the literature reviewed, I draw from the literature in sociology, management, and leisure studies as they applied and articulated their relationship with a rural context. With regard to social processes, sport and recreation are described as important activities in rural communities which facilitate the creation and maintenance of social networks and/or capital (Atherly, 2006; Hoye &

Nicholson, 2012; Spaaij, 2009) and act as a source of social support which may enhance health outcomes for rural residents (Leipert, et. al., 2011). However, the apparent significance of these activities is not reflected in rates of participation or health outcomes of rural populations. Although there are many contextual and methodological complexities to consider, rural populations in North America are generally at a greater risk of being inactive, overweight, or obese than their urban counterparts (DesMueles, et. al., 2006; Patterson, Moore, Probst, & Shinogle, 2004). These trends are attributed to several socio-ecological factors such as socio-economic status and low population (densities) in large geographical areas. Shearer and colleagues (2012) elaborated on rural-urban differences and suggested that rural and suburban youth were more affected by proximity of opportunities/infrastructure and the use of active modes of transportation than their urban counterparts. In another study, rural youth reported higher levels of physical activity but also reported higher levels of obesity than their urban peers (Joens-Matre, et. al., 2008). As economic landscapes of rural communities are quickly changing with emerging, globalized industries, so are opportunities to participate in sport and recreation for rural residents (Mair, 2009; Oncescu & Robertson, 2010). As such, rural sport clubs may be described as third spaces (where people can gather and engage away from the home and work) serving many functions (e.g., youth centre, seniors centre, restaurant, pub, dance hall, etc.) in rural communities (Mair, 2009). More broadly, leisure activities in rural contexts can hold contradictory meanings (particularly when considering the family unit), as they can serve as both a way to connect with and express rural heritage and also to prepare children and youth for non-rural and/or agricultural lifestyles (Trussell & Shaw, 2009). While community contexts and the sport and recreation opportunities within these contexts vary greatly based on economies,

proximity to larger centres, and community capacity (Reimer, 2002; 2006b) as noted above, rurality can be understood as a factor that exacerbates other determinants of health as well as sport and physical activity participation (Smith, Humphreys, & Williams, 2008).

Given the implications of sport and recreation in and for communities as well as the aforementioned potential of rural places to foster and hold meaning for residents and visitors, further exploration of rural sport and recreation is warranted. Moreover, given the complex and changing political landscape, an understanding of how diverse communities and community members participate and organize sport and recreation in and for their communities is also necessary to understand the broader social outcomes of these activities (i.e., sport and recreation) and their corresponding policies. The research described in this dissertation provides insights into diverse experiences in organizing and participating in sport and recreation in the context of Powassan, Ontario.

Outline

The research documented in this dissertation is presented in a monograph format. Chapter two provides an overview of the theoretical and methodological approaches which informed the research described in the rest of the document. In each of subsequent three chapters, I discuss processes of managing sport and recreation in the community, processes of action as research partners and agents of change, and the use of reflection as a methodological tool. As each of these chapters are intended to make unique contributions to the literature, some of the literature reviewed as well as contextual information pertaining to the community with which the research was conducted may be repeated. Further, given the emergent participatory approach used for this research, these three chapters are not presented, or necessarily meant to be

read, in chronological order. These chapters were prepared synchronously and thus might be read as such. The order in which they are presented in this document was selected in order to give the reader, first, a sense of the community; second, an understanding of the action initiatives involved in this project; and third, a reflection on the methodological processes involved in the project. Given the approach employed for this project and the centrality of community partnership in this approach (Bradbury Huang, 2010; Israel, et. al., 2003), the use of both first and third person voice is engaged throughout this document. Although the shifting use of voice may be unconventional, it is used here to emphasize the contributions of the community and recognize them as co-authors of many parts of this document (Giles & Castleden, 2008). While community co-authorship is a complex issue, it is pertinent here to acknowledge these contributions given the theoretical and methodological approaches used in this project.

As noted by Giles and Castleden (2008), traditional authorship practices are rooted in liberal rather than communitarian assumptions, and the process of acknowledging community authorship “affords the opportunity to recognize [this] co-construction and calls into question notions of singular ownership of knowledge” (p. 211). This does however, raise questions about what constitutes authorship and meaningful contribution to research beyond the production of written texts. Indeed, while the inclusion of community members in every aspect of research may appear to be an ideal case scenario, this approach is not always feasible, productive, or necessarily safe for researchers, research participants, or community members. For example, Elliott and colleagues (2015) described a turbulent process of working with marginalized populations in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. This account (described as both the research team’s biggest challenge and success) described how the team confronted issues of addictions,

safety, health, and professional aspirations in their attempts to include their research team in the dissemination of their work at a national AIDS conference. The story provided by these authors highlights inequities related to power, politics, and economics within education and research, while also illuminating the ways that community participation in research projects and/or peer research are contentious processes requiring constant navigation and reflection by members of the research team (Elliott, et al., 2015).

Similarly, there are several aspects of representation and ethical engagement of community members within the research process which should be considered. Flicker, Roche, and Guta (2010) highlighted ethical issues of engaging in peer research. These issues surrounded confidentiality, conflicts of interest, communication, power sharing, and the requirements of different types of support for peer researchers. These issues also provoke concerns around the politics of representation within the written outcomes of research. As not all community members will be engaged in a research project (Israel, et al., 2003) and social identities and realities are fluid and constantly changing in the context of research (Trussell, 2014), it is imperative to consider who is involved in determining which perspectives are engaged and represented in research outcomes. Coffey (1996) described these politics of representation (particularly in the context of ethnographic work), highlighting that research data are “socially constructed text[s] developed and created by a[n] authorial figure” and therefore, researchers cannot assume that these “texts unproblematically and transparently represent the social actors and the social action of everyday life in a given setting” (p. 66). Considering these ethical and political implications, it is important to note that textual representation of “others” is always

partial and reflective only of the authors' perceptions, understandings, and interpretations (England, 1994), in some cases blurring lines between "fact" and "fiction" (Coffey, 1996).

Given the contested and political nature of community authorship, I do not intend to engage in the process uncritically. Indeed, the nature of this project (i.e., involving my return to the municipality where I spent my childhood) required careful consideration of the process of community engagement and how to (re-)enter the field, create new relationships, and re-kindle old ones. As such, I envisioned the research process as dialogical (Gilbert, 1994). Through this dialogical process, I engaged my own understandings and interpretations along with those of various community members (in varying capacities - as I will discuss in chapter two with regard to data collection and analysis) in order to negotiate a respectful engagement of community members. As such, I have come to understand the complex and varying roles of many individuals in the authoring of this document. In particular, action initiatives carried out in the community - which were a large portion of this research project - were designed, organized, and implemented by many different individuals, through a process where I intentionally attempted to distance myself (see chapter four). Therefore, while this text is ultimately a project of my final interpretations, many individuals authored portions of this document in various ways. In order to acknowledge these contributions, as noted above, I shift between the use of first and third person voice in different sections of this document.

In the third chapter of this dissertation, I explore the areas of interest identified in collaboration with the Recreation Committee early in the research process. Specifically, committee members identified key questions pertaining to the attraction and retention of people, processes of community development, as well as unstructured (particularly outdoor) sport and

recreation participation. In that chapter, I draw from interview data to discuss what we found pertaining to these themes in order to interrogate processes of sport and recreation management in a rural context, and provide reflections and recommendations for how rural sport and recreation can be managed for the community as a collective. By problematizing the idea of community, we provide a uniquely contextual discussion about the social processes of rural sport and recreation management in Powassan. With regard to the larger project, this chapter serves to provide detailed contextual information of the municipality and the social processes involved in managing sport and recreation. As attempts were made to incorporate input from community members in the design and analysis of the research conducted for this chapter, I employ the third person voice throughout this chapter to recognize these contributions.

In the fourth chapter, I focus on the action components of the research project. This chapter includes a detailed record of the many initiatives undertaken in and with the community over the tenure of this project. Using the concept of a continuum of action research (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003), I discuss the ways that we attempted to work with the resources and capacity available in the community and within the current sport and recreation systems to develop effective and sustainable approaches to policy making and program delivery. These action initiatives were developed and carried out by various community members and municipal employees involved in this project and as such, third person voice is used in this chapter to acknowledge their work which was integral to this research process. As there are few examples of scholarly discussions in sport and recreation pertaining to frameworks for conceptualizing action initiatives in and with communities, this chapter makes a timely contribution to this literature.

In the fifth chapter, I discuss the role of reflexivity in the process of conducting action oriented research with communities. In this chapter, the use of reflexivity or first person action inquiry in conducting research as an insider (or long time community resident) and sometimes outsider (or current graduate student researcher) is explored. I discuss the process of reflecting on research and practice in sport and recreation management and I elaborate on the ways that this process enriched the project and provided useful insights for both academics and community members. As this chapter focuses on my own experiences navigating the processes involved in participatory research, both first and third person voice is employed to reflect this perspective and acknowledge the input of community members as well as my doctoral supervisor.

Finally, in the sixth chapter of this document I provide concluding thoughts and reflections on the contributions that we (collectively and collaboratively) have made to the literature pertaining to rural sport and recreation management and PAR. After summarizing these contributions I provide a framework for conceptualizing the process of PAR as a fluid and emergent process. In doing this, I also present and discuss some critical questions that researchers working with communities in the context of sport and recreation may use to guide themselves through the fluid and emergent processes of PAR.

Chapter 2: Theoretical and Methodological Approach

The research conducted for this dissertation involved a PAR approach which was informed by communitarian theories and political action. As neither of these approaches are among the most common choices in sport and recreation management literature, this project in and of itself represents an attempt to explore and challenge the theoretical and methodological periphery of the field. Further, these approaches trouble some of the ideological assumptions created and perpetuated through traditional positivist and individualistic world views which underpin much of the current research in sport management (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016). Research underpinned by a positivist epistemology typically employs a philosophy of science which posits that facts or truths are objective, observable, and discoverable through a scientific process (Crotty, 1998). While this philosophical underpinning is prominent within the sport and recreation management literature, there are a growing number of scholars engaging diverse methodologies, paradigms, and orientation to research within the field (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016, 2017). Indeed, qualitative inquiry in sport and recreation can be understood as an emergent field of study that is constantly evolving through experimentation and sophistication (Giardina, 2017). Through this research project, I contribute to these discussions by engaging constructivist (Crotty, 1998) and transformative (Mertens, 2010) approaches to research. That is, this research drew from the epistemological assumption that our realities are socially constructed and engaged in discussions of how the relationship between the “researchers” and the “researched” affects knowledge which is constructed through research (Mertens, 2010). Accordingly, these underlying assumptions dictated the theoretical and methodological decisions made throughout this project. In this chapter, I elaborate on communitarianism and PAR approaches in order to explore their development and highlight some of the rich insights that they may offer for sport

and recreation management. I also outline the specific recruitment, data collection, and data analysis procedures used in this project.

Theorizing Community

The study and theorizing of community (along with that of the individual and society) has long and interwoven traditions in many fields, including philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and political science. Much of this theorizing involved two different yet equally important conceptions: that of the immediate community, roughly associated with the Greek understandings of the *polis* which was particular and encompassed all of the public life of individuals; and, that of a universal community to which we all belong, associated with early Roman and Christian understandings of citizenship and the church (Delanty, 2010). Contemporary work on community is often traced to the work of Tönnies (1963) who distinguished between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as two conflicting types of associative life. While these terms are not easily or directly translated, *Gemeinschaft* communities can be associated with horizontal relationships, regular contact, thick forms of trust, and solidarity; whereas, *Gesellschaft* communities are characterized by thin forms of trust, looser relationships, and vertical or hierarchical associations which are more conducive to inclusion and integration in large-scale and/or diverse societies (Arai & Pedlar, 2003; Delanty, 2010). While there is much that might be explored and unpacked with regard to the historical conceptualizations of community, we focus this overview on contemporary trends in communitarian thought and practice with a specific focus on structures that influence meaning and experiences within communities.

Understandings of communities in the twentieth century were undeniably complicated by the concomitant rise of globalization, technology, and (neo)liberal policy agendas. In this context, communitarianism can be understood as a “phenomenon which reveals common ground in the relationship between academic political and social theory - often of a very abstract and philosophical kind - and practical politics” (Frazer, 2000, p. 179). Communitarians are concerned with the community or the collective, rather than the individual as the unit of analysis. While defining what exactly is meant by a community, and the challenges which arise from poorly articulating these definitions are clearly discussed within the context of PAR (Israel et al., 2003), Frazer (2000) suggested that a strength of communitarianism is the possibility of a coalition of diverse groups (of thought and action) around the idea of a greater good or collectivity. While there is no concise agreement on a definition or conceptualization of community within communitarian discussions and practices, Sandel (1982) distinguished between two moral and political streams of thought: those who value community rhetorically in and of itself and those who value community instrumentally. As the tensions between these two streams exist in both theory and political practice, diverse understandings of community persist ranging from any simple unit of identity (Israel et al., 2003) to much more complex conceptualizations. For example, Etzioni (2004) distinguished between ideas of community and identity highlighting the role of community in supporting human development and identity formation. He compares the two with the metaphor of learning how to walk (community) and learning in which direction you will walk (identity) to explicate the complexity of community as involving many identities and subcultures. In this discussion, he offers the following:

The definition of community here followed has two characteristics: first, a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often crisscross and reinforce one another (as opposed to one-on-one or chain-like individual relationships); and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity - in short, to a particular culture.

(Etzioni, 2004, p. 20)

This definition is useful as it highlights both the particularistic and universal aspects of community in order to broaden our understanding of the term and appreciate its complexity.

Although communitarianism is a relatively small school of political theory and practice, its scope is broad, encompassing several streams of thought, practice, and action. While discussions of communitarians vary in their scope and approach, Frazer (2000) noted that they hold at their core a critique of liberal schools of thought and politics which privilege individual autonomy and free market systems. Where liberal approaches value individual rights and freedoms, communitarianism argues for a balance between individual autonomy and collective or pluralistic obligations (Etzioni, 2004; 2014). In short, communitarians engage with discussions of a common good to which citizens are also accountable beyond that of individual rights. This thinking is evident in the shift whereby groups and organizations recognize a list of rights *and responsibilities* in order to recognize both conditions of reciprocity and mutuality.

Much of the sport and recreation management research (and indeed education) is founded within positivist traditions, quantitative research, and in the context of (neo)liberal market principles (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016). As such, communitarian perspectives have not been widely accepted or employed despite the fresh insights they may provide, particularly in the context of

community sport and recreation. In the sport management literature for example, Warner and colleagues (2011, 2012, 2013) have operationalized a sense of community in a social-psychological way in order to determine factors that may enhance sport participant's identification with a given community as a result of participation. Although the finding of these studies provide interesting insights into understandings of sport and community, methodologically it relies on data collected in collegiate settings and in many ways (I would argue) under-theorizes the complexity of community and how it has been problematized in various other literatures. Literature stemming for the field of leisure studies has been more proactive in problematizing and addressing complex understanding of community. Authors such as Arai and Pedlar (2003) and Blackshaw and Long (2005) for example, made open critiques regarding the individualism (and/or liberal perspectives) that underpins much of the leisure literature. For this project, I pick up on these discussions in order to explore the theoretical implications of communitarianism for sport and recreation management and practice. As such, community is conceptualized here as more than simply geographic location, membership of a social group, or a unit of identity (although it does include all of these to a certain extent).

Towards a Critical Communitarianism

As noted above, community can be valued rhetorically in a way that assumes it is a universally positive construct. However, this uncritical acceptance of the idea of community may serve to mask the politics inherent in communities and silence the voices of diverse community members. Indeed, several traditional social structures and activities (such as those related to community, the family unit, or community sport and recreation) are inherently imbued with values of sexism/gender roles, racism, and homophobia. Therefore, adopting a critical

perspective of community allows researchers to unpack the complex social dynamics involved in community life. In order to inform this sort of approach, much can be drawn from social justice and feminist critiques of community. While both communitarians and feminists share a critique of the extreme individualism of (neo)liberal political agendas, their grounds for doing so and proposed solutions or alternatives are quite different (Weiss, 1995). Where communitarian discussions centre around balancing autonomy and collectivity or the preservation or return to traditional values of community, a more critical perspective of communitarianism questions whose autonomy is privileged, whose input is heard and considered in the collective, or which of these traditional values are acceptable in a socially just and equitable community. Rather than the traditional, idyllic, and tightly knit homogenous community, Young (1995) suggested that community might be understood as an unoppressive city space that is constituted by “openness to unassimilated otherness” (p. 253), or a politics of difference. In short, a critical communitarian perspective is concerned with the power and politics of community and how this can be shifted or radically changed. Young’s (1995) politics of difference offers a theoretical tool which is helpful to problematize the complex social dynamics involved in sport, recreation, and leisure in and for community (Allison, 2000).

Within the contemporary literature, few scholars have discussed sport and recreation through a communitarian lens, and even fewer from a critical perspective. Notably, Jarvie (2003) applied a communitarian approach to discuss community activism and decision making around a pool and recreation facility in Glasgow, Scotland. Jarvie’s (2003) discussion highlighted the tensions between ideas of community and individualistic/free-market service provision in the context of a municipal sport and recreation facility in a large urban centre. Within the leisure

literature, Arai and Pedlar (2003) challenged the discourse of individualism in leisure research and practice. They suggested that a communitarian perspective of leisure as a focal practice allows for more nuanced analyses of outcomes for the collective rather than outcomes for individuals as part of the collective. Similarly, Gallant, Arai, and Smale (2013) drew from Young's (1995) politics of difference to challenge the concept of serious leisure and provide an alternative definition that would allow for more critical and contextual analyses by shifting the focus away from the individual and theorizing leisure as an experience of the collective, to which not all individuals have equitable access. By applying a critical communitarian approach in this research project, I was able to interrogate the meaning of community more deeply along with the inherent power relations involved in management and decision making practices, as well as the research process examining community sport and recreation. Specifically, I explored the processes and limits of sport and recreation management and research in the community in order to inform management practices intended to serve the community as a collective. This approach allowed for a critical discussion of community framed within the sport and recreation management literature. Therefore, considering the theoretical perspectives of communitarians (e.g., Arai & Pedlar, 2003; Etzioni, 2004, 2014; Frazer, 2000; Sandel, 1982) as well as more critical appraisals of community (e.g., Allison, 2000; Weiss, 1995; Young, 1995) allowed for a novel discussion which contributes to the theoretical and empirical understandings of sport and recreation management. This theoretical orientation outlined above was also instructive in the emergence of the methodological approach of this research.

Participatory Action Research

The research described in this dissertation was conducted using a PAR approach with the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee. PAR is an approach or orientation to research where the researchers seek to equitably and responsibly share power and engage the community in all phases of the research project (Israel, et al., 2003). Thus, PAR approaches are often underpinned by a participatory worldview (Reason & Bradbury, 2001) and embody core features of partnership, participation, actionability, reflexivity, and significance (Bradbury-Huang, 2010). As put by Baum, MacDougall, and Smith (2006), despite taking on many forms and methodologies, PAR might be described as an attempt to understand and improve the world by changing it through collective/self-reflective inquiry undertaken by both researchers and communities. Thus, PAR approaches may draw from many methodological orientations and take on different forms of partnership.

Contemporary forms of community-based, participatory, and/or action research draw from several historical and philosophical traditions. Some of the earliest work typically cited is the process of action research advanced by Kurt Lewin (1946). Lewin described a process of research involving cycles of action and reflection with practitioners allowing them to evaluate actions, learn from the process, plan next steps, and modify overall plans. This approach was developed as a way to engage practitioners in the research process to collaboratively explore the connections of theory and practice. Following these early developments, social scientists developed other approaches to action research to address different issues and contexts. For example, Chris Argyris (1983) advanced the idea of action science in attempts to restore primary features of action research, being problem-driven, client-centred, challenging the status quo, and

producing propositions which could be organized into theories that are usable in everyday life (Lewin, 1946). Argyris (1983) advanced this approach as he argued that practice oriented scholars were so “client-centered that they failed to question how clients themselves defined their problems and they ignored the building and testing of propositions and theory” and that theoretical scholars were “disconnected from and distanced from everyday life” (Argyris, 1983, p. 115). Other scholars, particularly in the context of health and research with marginalized or disadvantaged communities, drew from the work of critical pedagogist Paulo Friere (1972) to incorporate participatory components into action research approaches. Participatory approaches engaged participants in the co-creation of knowledge and often conceptualized action as liberation or emancipation from oppressive forces (Brown & Tandon, 1983). As many approaches (e.g., action science, participatory research) fall under the umbrella of action research, they may share similarities and strategies. Indeed, action research is described as a continuum of approaches to research/practice, ranging from very participatory work in community based settings to very structured action research in highly structured organizational settings. As I explore further in chapters four and five, an understanding of these various approaches to action research was integral to the overall development of this project.

In the context of sport and recreation management, the use of PAR is not common, but has been employed in some contexts. For example, Frisby and colleagues (1997, 2002, 2005) discussed the use of participatory approaches with women of low income in Vancouver, British Columbia. Similarly, Green (1997) utilized an action research approach with a community youth soccer program, and more recently action research approaches have been taken up in the context of Australia and New Zealand national and state sport organizations (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010;

Ferkins et al., 2010; Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2009). While these approaches differ in many ways, they typically share several features that are common in participatory and/or action research. These approaches typically involve phases of defining a purpose and/or identifying issues, understanding the community, mobilizing resources, collecting and analyzing information, implementing action, and evaluating results (e.g., see Frisby et al., 1997; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010).

Participatory research in sport and recreation management has identified the tensions involved in the process of community engagement (i.e., including participants in all phases of the research project). In these cases (Frisby, et al., 1997; 2005), community members were engaged in identifying research questions, determining the purpose, process, and context of the research, as well as identifying issues and the nature of the research outcomes. Frisby and Millar (2002) also discussed strategies for fostering the inclusion of low income populations in sport and recreation management. These strategies included forming public sector partnerships, adopting collaborative principles of organizing, and collectively developing and implementing action plans (Frisby & Millar, 2002). While the aforementioned strategies are helpful guidelines and examples of a PAR approach, it is also important to note that the process is messy and requires ongoing reflection on the challenges and tensions that arise throughout the process. While reflective methodological practice is useful in navigating researchers' assumptions and expectations, Ferkins and Shilbury (2015) also noted the way in which their own reflections allowed them to understand power and relationships within the participants in their project which ultimately shaped the way the research was being conceptualized and implemented.

As noted by Frisby and colleagues (2005), given the implications of ethical, funding, and academic structures on how and when community engagement is possible, it is important for researchers to incorporate a responsible and reflexive attempt to acknowledge the power relationships inherent in the research process and do what is possible to address them.

Considering this, it is pertinent to acknowledge that this dissertation was prepared to fulfill the requirements of a doctoral degree and satisfy certain academic standards while simultaneously attempting engage community members and facilitate the development of meaningful action items within the municipality. Therefore, these competing interests shaped the way the project developed, the way we were able to work together (as community members and researchers), as well as the way that this document is formatted and written up to emphasize the community context, the action initiatives, and the methodological processes involved. While PAR approaches in sport and recreation management tend to be written up in phases or a cyclical presentation format (e.g., see Frisby et al., 1997; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010; Ferkins, et al, 2009), action research approaches are “numerous and varied” (Bradbury-Huang, 2010, p. 98). Therefore these approaches do not always unfold so neatly or linearly and given the inherent process of navigating power and positionalities, the process involves “higher than usual risks of becoming a little ‘lost’” (Coghlan & Holian, 2007, p. 8) along the way.

Within PAR approaches, there are several strategies used to engage community members in the research process. As involving community members equitably in every stage of the research process (from issue identification to data collection/analysis and action) is idealistic but not necessarily practical in all cases, different strategies of peer research may be employed. At the project level, peer research has emerged as a common strategy for engaging communities

in the research process. Peer research involves training and supporting community members to engage in the process in various capacities such as full partners, advisory boards, or by employing members of the community as research assistants (Morford, Robinson, Mazzoni, Corbett, & Schaiberger, 2004; Flicker, et al., 2010; Guta, Flicker, & Roche, 2010; Roche, Guta, & Flicker, 2010). With regards to specific strategies, various approaches can drive, direct, and/or shape community engagement. For example, Frisby and colleagues (1997) described an ideal case scenario where “low-income women initiated the project themselves” (p.21) thereby determining the purpose and issues to be explored. Other strategies include a conducting interviews or hosting workshops with community members in order to explore their perceptions of issues in their community or organizations (e.g., see Chalip, Green, Taks, & Misener, 2016; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015). Data collection and analysis represent both a challenge and opportunity to be creative in participatory approaches. For example, Frisby and colleagues (2005) discussed the use of ‘research parties’ as data collection where community members participated in interviews as well as small and large group discussions based on their level of comfort in the process. Further, the use of journaling and reflection by research/community members are often common ways of engaging community members in collecting/generating data (e.g., see Frisby, et al., 1997; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015). Data analysis is often cited as the most challenging aspect of incorporating community members in the research process (Frisby, et al., 2005), particularly given the time and resources required for traditional data analysis processes. In this phase, community members may be trained and supported through employment to work with data in various ways (e.g., see Roche, et al., 2010).

Given the nature of PAR, methodological approaches may also be fluid and emergent as the project develops (Reason & Bradbury, 2001) - a process which is discussed further in chapter five. Notably, this project simultaneously included formal data collection (through semi-structured interviews and participant observation - described below) and several action items executed in and with the community. These action items were funded through a community sport and recreation development grant and they are explored and described in detail in chapter four. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter focuses on the approaches used to engage the community in formal data collection and analysis. Other important components of this methodological approach (i.e., community action and reflective practice) are discussed in the subsequent chapters (four and five). Importantly, these two components of the project (i.e., formal data collection and action-oriented initiatives) were conceptualized and undertaken simultaneously. Therefore, this project did not unfold within clearly defined cycles or phases (as discussed in the literature above), but rather was conceptualized as an iterative and emergent process of conducting action and reflection in and with the community in order to navigate the complex and messy process of navigating multiple roles and identities of student/researcher/insider/outsider (Coghlan & Holian, 2007).

The Partnership

The research undertaken for this dissertation took place over a period of three years, through which time several strategies were employed in attempts to engage the community throughout the research process. Following discussions with the Recreation and Facilities Manager and determining that there was interest in engaging in this type of project, the process of engaging in community partnership began. In these initial discussions, it was suggested that

there was a desire to develop a youth summer program in the municipality, which eventually evolved to constitute the committee's objectives for the project and consequently, the majority of the action initiatives pursued for this project. Further, I was able to articulate my own objectives (i.e., related to completing a dissertation) and the way that we could engage community members in the research process. Following consultation with the Western University Research Ethics Board, it was determined that given the emergent and community-based nature of the project, I should seek out consultation from community members before completing the ethics review process. Subsequently, in January of 2014, I met with the Recreation Committee to determine the purpose and direction of the research project. In this meeting, we discussed the expectations of my doctoral program of study (i.e., that there would need to be some formal data collection involved in order to produce academic publications and presentations) as well as the practical outcomes for the community. It should be noted that, while I recognized that engaging with the entire community is not a realistic assumption (Israel, et al., 2003), the Municipal Recreation Committee provided the opportunity structure to engage with a group whose interests lie in serving the general population within the municipality (as per their mission statement), rather than working with an individual sport group or club. Formally, the Recreation Committee consists of approximately nine members, including one municipal councillor and the others typically representing various community groups (although membership is open and not formally mandated). The committee reports to the municipal council on all matters related to recreation and special events (including the municipal budget). As such, the Recreation Committee provided a (relatively) structured body with their own mission and objectives (articulated as offering and supporting the delivery of recreation opportunities for all members of the

community) which served to provide some initial direction for the project. Importantly, in the initial conversations, I made it clear that we would be working on programs and policy initiatives within the municipality while simultaneously collecting data for formal research manuscripts. As researchers engaged in participatory strategies face tensions regarding academic expectations and community level engagement and outcomes (Frisby, et. al., 2005), this was done intentionally in order foster transparency and an understanding of the requirements for both parties.

I then facilitated the initial consultation meeting (see Appendix B for the meeting agenda and worksheets used). Three Recreation Committee members attended the consultation and one community organizer sent notes with the Recreation and Facilities Manager as they were unable to attend. Participants were invited to participate in a dialectical process (Chalip, 2001) whereby they individually identified the key issues for their group or activity in the context of the community (e.g., changing demographics with the municipality). The participants were then invited to rank their issues by importance and share their issues with the larger group. This was followed by a broader discussion of these issues in order to identify common themes and issues among different groups present at the meeting (e.g., a reliance on a small pool of dedicated volunteers). Based on these themes, we discussed key focus areas or research questions that would be interrogated as well as the appropriate methods to collect data pertaining to these focus areas. Finally, we discussed the most appropriate way for the findings to be communicated and translated back to the community in a way that would be useful for the Recreation Committee (see a summary of the outcomes of this meeting in Appendix C).

Through the consultation meeting, I attempted to engage community members in the early stages of the research process. Through this process, the group identified four overarching

themes that were pertinent to be considered for the research process: (1) the geography or location of the community (i.e., a rural bedroom/commuter community); (2) the nature of sport and recreation opportunities and level of formalization (i.e., competitive/recreational, organized/unstructured, and whether or not a group was affiliated with other organizations); (3) a reliance on contributions of volunteers; and, (4) difficulties that had arisen through the process of amalgamation. Based on these themes, the group identified the following key focus areas to be explored: (1) What is the role of sport and recreation in the attraction and retention of people to the community?; (2) How is sport/recreation development related to community development (i.e., creating a sense of community and shared identity)?; and, (3) What are the implications of unstructured and outdoor activities within the community, particularly with regard to community and sport/recreation development? The group then determined that these key focus areas could be explored through interviews with people about their experiences in and with sport and recreation in the community as well as through participant observation in community programs and activities. Importantly, these discussions allowed Recreation Committee members to clarify several expectations with regard to the project. Firstly, they identified that efforts should be made to recruit participants from various sport and recreation activities (from line dancers at the seniors hall to competitive sportspeople), as well as those who do not participate in organized sport and recreation activities. This was important as they viewed their role as representing and serving all members of the community. Secondly, the group noted the importance of engaging with various groups in the community including youths, seniors, long time residents of the three former jurisdictions, as well as newcomers to the community. These two details served to direct recruitment activities which were also supported by the committee members themselves. Finally,

it was confirmed by the group that the Recreation and Facilities Manager would be the appropriate person to consult with all questions and developments for the project. While community members were engaged with the research process in various ways and to various degrees (e.g., in some cases identifying their own issues and in others by having an individual review tools, documents, data, etc.), this is reflective of the emergent and spectral nature of engagement in PAR approaches:

[c]onsider practitioner engagement as happening along a spectrum. On one end there is the ‘as minimum as necessary consultation with the practitioners to have them be engaged with your work’ position, which essentially means you have practitioners’ perspective on all important matters. On the other end is bringing practitioners on as ‘co-researchers’ who co-design the work and may take it in new directions. (Bradbury-Huang, 2010, p. 104)

As such, this project was designed considering the various ways that community members could be engaged in the research process, while also acknowledging that the full or traditional participatory engagement would not always be possible.

Following the initial consultation meeting, I returned to London in order to complete the remainder of the coursework required for my doctoral program of study. During this time, I worked with the Recreation and Facilities Manager to complete an application for the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund (OSRCF). In June of 2014, it was announced that our application was successful and that we had received the funding we had requested. As result, over the summer months, a job description was posted and I was hired as the Program Coordinator for the Get Active Powassan Program. In the fall of 2014, the program operated on

school holidays while I spent much of the semester in Powassan reading and studying for my candidacy examination - which took place in January of 2015. In the spring of 2015, with a clear direction for the project and an articulation of how the community would be involved in the research process, details of the project were discussed with my supervisory committee and subsequently an application was filed and approved by the Western University Research Ethics Board (see Appendix A).

Engaging the Community and Determining the Methodological Approach

Given the community-based approach used for this project, a clear understanding of the community context is necessary for the analyses and discussions that will follow in the subsequent chapters. The Municipality of Powassan is located approximately three hours north of Toronto in the District of Parry Sound. Located north of Muskoka and just south of the City of North Bay, Powassan can be described as a commuter or bedroom community as many residents travel to the nearby city for employment. This metro-adjacency (Reimer, 2002) creates several opportunities as well as challenges for local business and community service providers. With many citizens commuting regularly to the larger centre, they have the opportunity to access goods and services there. For example, many youths will travel to the city in search of more competitive athletic endeavours which reduces the number of participants who register in community programs. Conversely, proximity to the city also provides a wealth of employment opportunities including many higher-income positions that are not typically accessible in more remote rural communities of the same size. These factors are commonly felt and discussed in rural communities and the literature pertaining to rurality where they are described as forces that push and pull people to and from rural communities (Balfour, et al., 2008).

According to the most recent census data, Powassan has a slightly older population in comparison with provincial and national averages (Statistics Canada, 2017). These statistics are not uncommon as processes of youth migration tend to draw young people away from rural and remote communities in search of education and employment (Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, 2006). Further Statistics Canada (2017) reported that Powassan is largely English speaking, with only 8% of census respondents reporting that they speak French as well as English, and less than 1% reporting that they speak other languages (i.e., German and Italian). Interestingly, McSweeney and Associates (2013) reported that over 60% of people working from Powassan commute outside of the municipality for work - confirming the assumption that Powassan is a bedroom or commuter community. Further, this report indicated that while the proportion of residents holding an educational certificate is similar to that of the province, far fewer Powassan residents hold a certificate, diploma, or degree from a university. With regard to income, the mean income reported in Powassan is approximately 60% of that of the provincial average (McSweeney & Associates, 2013). Although I do not intend to oversimplify the various lived experiences and understandings (related to class, culture, and community) of residents in the municipality, this demographic information provides a superficial look into population trends in Powassan.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that the current municipality was created as a result of the amalgamation of the former Town of Powassan, Town of Trout Creek, and Township of South Himsforth in 2001 (Michels, 2017; Municipality of Powassan, 2016). At the time, municipal amalgamations were being pushed by the provincial government in an effort to promote efficiency of governance and a reduction in the number of paid officials, however these

forced amalgamations also created tensions regarding representation and decision making in these newly formed jurisdictions (Kushner & Siegel, 2003). In Powassan, these tensions were particularly evident in recreation as amalgamation created a duplication of facilities (i.e., arenas, baseball diamonds, community centres, etc.) in a single municipality. Consequently, the newly-formed municipal government was put at odds with local community groups for whom these facilities represented important community spaces (Rich, Misener, & The Trout Creek Community Centre Board, 2017). In the following chapters, these contextual considerations will be discussed as they were important for the management and governance of sport and recreation in the community and were implicated in the subsequent analysis in various ways.

Within the community, the majority of sport and recreation is managed and delivered by volunteers. In some cases, these volunteers are formally organized in clubs who have executive members who take formal responsibility for decision making (e.g., the Powassan Minor Hockey Association or the Powassan Curling Club), but in many cases sport and recreation opportunities are largely organized by one or two volunteers who take on the role of manager (e.g., the Powassan Soccer Association, the Trout Creek Men's Hockey League, or the local Dart leagues). Additionally, there are other, more organic organizations that are not formally organized but meet regularly to engage in sport and recreation activities and are managed collectively through informal decision making by the group (e.g., Oldtimer's hockey and a local women's weight loss group). Politically, all of these groups are represented by the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee. The Recreation Committee meets monthly to discuss all matters regarding sport and recreation. Formally, the committee reports to council on all of these matters including the budget for programs and facilities. All Recreation Committee meetings are

conducted as public forums where all residents are able to attend and bring forward items for discussion. While the committee's membership is formalized for voting/quorum purposes, the makeup of the committee is flexible (and fluctuates) in order to include a variety of members who represent various sport and recreation groups in the community, as well as Members At Large who bring diverse perspectives to discussions. The municipality employs a Recreation and Facilities Manager who organizes meetings and reports on behalf of the Recreation Committee. As noted above, the Recreation and Facilities Manager was the main point of community contact for this research.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews (Fontanna & Frey, 2005) and participant observation (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002) took place over the course of approximately two years. A loosely structured interview guide was created by the researchers and subsequently reviewed and approved by the Recreation and Facilities Manager (see Appendix D). A primary set of interview questions pertaining to sport and recreation and the community (e.g., how do you think sport and recreation benefit, contribute to, or disadvantage your community?) were used for all participants. Additionally, the interview guide included additional sets of questions for new(er) community members, for leaders within recreation (e.g., coaches, managers/organizers, and board members), and for members of the former or outlying municipalities and community groups in these areas (e.g., the Trout Creek Community Centre Board). These subsidiary sets of questions allowed for a prioritization of key focus areas (as identified in the initial consultation) and for a critical exploration of understandings of community within and outside of the municipality. In total, 40 interviews were conducted with community members over the course

of the study. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviews ranged from 20 minutes to two hours and efforts were made (with the support of members of Recreation Committee Members) to recruit participants from diverse groups within the community (as identified above). In total, 12 interview participants identified as male and 28 as female ranging in age from high school students to senior citizens. While specific demographic information was not explicitly collected, approximately 11 participants identified as youth or students; five as seniors; 17 occupied some sort of leadership position related to sport and recreation (e.g., members of the Recreation Committee, community club board or fundraising club member, etc.); 11 were current or former employees in sport or recreation (with some link to - but not necessarily directly employed by - the municipality); 14 identified as newcomers to the municipality (for anywhere from one to “many” years), and; one person identified as having a disability, another as a lesbian, and one as a single parent. While we did not explicitly discuss factors related to culture and ethnicity, participants did not appear to engage discussions that varied from traditional white/settler/Eurocanadian perspectives. All names used in this documents are pseudonyms assigned after data collection in order to protect the anonymity of participants.

Participant observation (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002) was conducted at a variety of community events, programs, unstructured activities, and policy making activities. Participant observation was conducted overtly as I engaged with sport and recreation in a variety of forms including as a participant (e.g., as a player in sports activities or by contributing at Recreation Committee meetings), as a volunteer (e.g., as a bartender at community events or as an umpire at a local baseball tournament), as well as a paid staff member (e.g., as a program developer and coordinator in the children's day camp program, as a lifeguard at the local pool, and as a first aid

instructor for the municipality). During this time, I kept a reflective journal outlining the activities undertaken and the social processes, management practices, and contextual factors that resonated in each of these activities. Reflective journaling for this project, was undertaken as iterative cycles of reflection to examine assumptions and personal meaning-making, while also questioning social systems and understandings within the community (Marshall, 2001). As the role of self-study is only beginning to be explored within sport management research (Kerwin & Hoerber, 2015), I explore this process thoroughly in chapter five. Collectively, semi-structured interviews and participant observation allowed for the collection of a rich set of data that included both a wide range of perspectives within the community as well as a description and reflection of the community context and how sport and recreation played out within the community.

Data Analysis

The emergent nature of PAR approaches involves ongoing cycles of action and reflection in order to both decode social realities and engender change in community contexts (Frisby, et. al., 1997; Marshall, 2001). With this in mind, analysis for this project was not conceived to be a one-time activity conducted in order to prepare a research manuscript, but rather an ongoing process. By engaging in frequent conversations with the Recreation and Facilities Manager throughout the duration of the project, we were able to discuss the emerging findings, tweak interview guides, and adapt action initiatives accordingly. This approach also allowed for an exploration of emergent themes within the aforementioned focus areas (e.g., Amalgamation; Rich, et al., 2017) as well as the process of collecting these data (Rich & Misener, 2017) on an ongoing basis. Further, emerging themes in the data also informed

discussions that took place generally during participation in community activities as well as during future interviews (e.g., others have discussed a “small town mentality” in Powassan, what do you think that means?). Near the end of data collection, two youths in the community were also hired as research assistants to assist with transcription, to engage with some of the data (see chapter five), and to provide support at the community forum. Finally, once formal data collection was complete, the data were also summarized and communicated back to the community as well as for this dissertation (see chapter three).

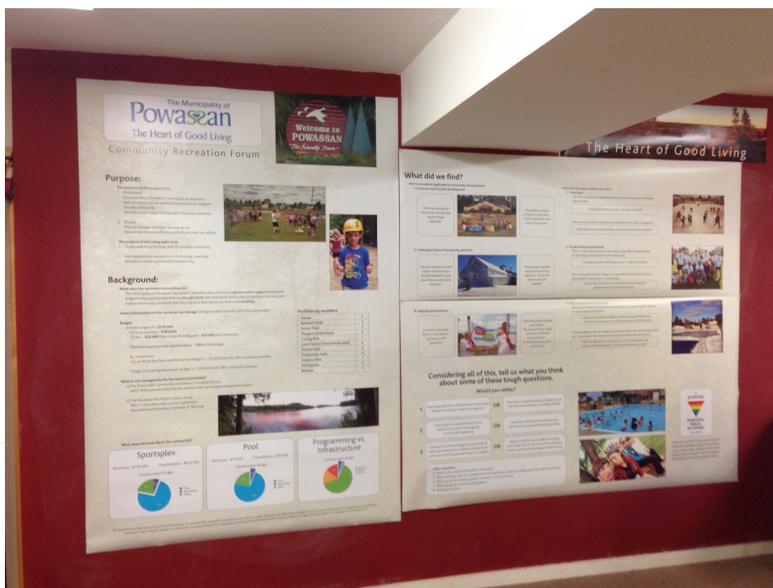


Figure 1. Community Recreation Forum. This image shows the infographic on display at the Powassan and District Union Library.

In an effort to engage the community in different and meaningful ways, the data were analyzed deductively according to the key focus areas identified previously in consultation with

the Recreation Committee. Following consultation with the Recreation and Facilities Manager, it was determined that a summary of results should be presented first to the Recreation Committee and then presented in an open community forum. As such, I analyzed the data and then presented preliminary results at a Recreation Committee meeting where the committee was able to review and comment on the findings as well as to identify additional questions or reflections on the data and its organization. These findings were then depicted visually on an infographic which was displayed at a community forum hosted at the local library. The infographic included a brief overview of recreation in the community (e.g., budget information, which facilities are included under the scope of recreation in the municipality, and how recreation resources are distributed within the community) followed by a brief version of the results presented in chapter three. The final portion of the infographic included two sets of questions. First, readers were invited to evaluate the importance of opposing strategies for managing recreation in the community (e.g., “Continue to run the same programs and activities we always have because they are deeply important for the community and the way we have always come together” or “break from traditions and try different initiatives, even if they fail, in an effort to provide more/diverse recreation opportunities that appeal to different groups” - see Figure 2). The oppositional questions strategy was developed for this forum in order to encourage people to rank strategies according to their values, opinions, and/or preferences. Through interviews and discussion with the Recreation and Facilities Manager, it was noted that community members often spoke very positively of all recreation opportunities but were less likely to express opinions which prioritized programs, opportunities, or strategies for managing sport and recreation. This discourse in the community made decision making and strategic planning difficult for the

Recreation Committee. Therefore, these questions allowed for an understanding of which approaches to sport and recreation delivery were perceived as more valuable by community members. A second set of broader questions invited readers to reflect and comment on the findings (e.g., “What can we do to better support recreation in the community?” and “What did we miss?”). Thus, while I analyzed the larger set of data collected, the infographic and community forum attempted to engage the community in the analysis process by soliciting their feedback on preliminary data and also providing feedback to the Recreation Committee on their activities.

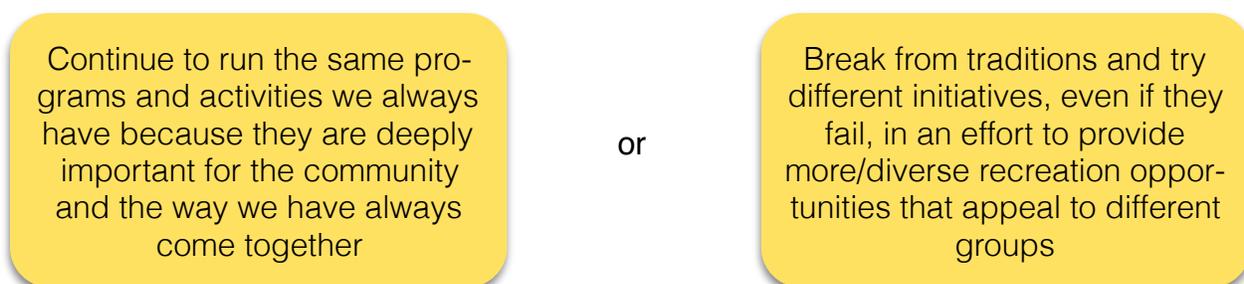


Figure 2. Oppositional Management Practices. This figure demonstrates the alternatives that were provided on the Community Recreation Forum Infographic.

The community forum was hosted at the local library where the Recreation and Facilities Manager and I were present to discuss the infographic and findings. Subsequently, the infographic was displayed at the library for the week following the forum. Participants who attended the forum or those who viewed the infographic were able to respond to the questions electronically on an iPad at the library or individually in a survey that was accessible by email. In total, approximately 30 people attended the forum and a total of 29 participants responded to the electronic survey. Survey responses allowed for the engagement of community members (beyond

those involved with the Recreation Committee) to engage in the analysis process. The data collected from the infographic and community forum were particularly useful in the data analysis process as it allowed community members to express their (dis)agreement with the analysis, provide comments on the major themes, and also share their suggestions for how the Recreation Committee could direct future efforts to manage sport and recreation opportunities in and for the community.

Project Outcomes

In the initial consultation meeting, Recreation Committee members suggested that a useful outcome of formal research activities (i.e., data collected through interviews and participant observation) would be an updated and relevant action plan for recreation in Powassan. With this goal in mind, we engaged in a research partnership which included both formal data collection and action initiatives in the municipality. In the early stages of the partnership, we were able to secure funding through the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund to develop physical activity programming for children and improve access to sport and recreation opportunities to the community more broadly. Together we developed a series of programs and initiatives coined the “Get Active Powassan” (GAP) program which also involved the development of several policies and procedural documents at the program and municipal level (see chapter four). While the research partnership was primarily focused around the GAP program, I also worked in/with existing programs (e.g., the municipal pool) and I was also involved in several ad hoc projects and initiatives such as the development of an event to coincide with the Pan Am Torch Relay (which passed through Powassan on June 3, 2015 in the lead up to the Pan/Parapan American Games in Toronto) and the local Canada Day Celebrations.

Regular engagement in these action initiatives involved interactions and discussions with many community members. These interactions allowed me not only to examine and reflect on diverse perspectives from the community, but also to initiate and support change in a variety of organizations and forums within the municipality (e.g., by volunteering, conducting professional development activities, connecting people to existing resources, and assisting in navigating complicated policy documents and jargon). Therefore, through these action initiatives and ongoing interactions with community members, this project elicited change in ways that were both intentional (see chapter four) as well as unintentional (see chapter five). While I report and document several of these outcomes here, it is likely that working and researching in and with the community had many other outcomes (both positive and negative) for community members and organizations.

Researcher Positionality

In the following chapters I explore the outcomes of the research project. However, like any project, the way these outcomes are presented and discussed is a product of the decisions and interpretations of the authors (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While I attempted to responsibly engage community members as co-researchers and authors throughout the research, I must also acknowledge that a completely equitable partnership is idealistic and perhaps unrealistic (Israel, et. al., 2003). Therefore, it is also pertinent to address the positionality of the primary researcher (myself) in order to contextualize the findings and discussion that will follow. While this is not an extensive autobiographical account, certain aspects of my own identity are divulged here in order to frame the discussion.

It is important to note that I lived in Powassan for my entire childhood before leaving for post-secondary education in Ottawa and subsequently London, Ontario. As a child, I was involved as a participant in a many sport and recreation activities (from participating in ceramic painting classes to playing competitive hockey) as well as engaged in a variety of leadership roles (e.g., as a lifeguard and instructor at the local pool and instructor in the local archery program). Both of my parents' families were farmers, and therefore I grew up in a working class environment (although I perceived - and to some extent still do - this to be middle class given the opportunities that I was afforded). My extended family served as an important influence in my life, particularly with regard to sport participation and my understanding of community and the opportunities that are afforded through social networks and a strong sense of belonging. After pursuing a degree in human kinetics, I was discouraged by my inability to secure employment in anything related to sport and recreation in the Powassan area, so I returned to school to work on a project with the Canadian Red Cross Swim Program. It was through this experience that I developed a critical perspective and became interested in diverse social contexts - particularly those of rural communities.

Subsequently, I decided to pursue doctoral studies with a focus on rural sport and recreation which culminated in the preparation of this dissertation. My studies as a graduate student have also allowed me to travel to many parts of the world (for both work and pleasure) where I have been able to observe and participate in sport and recreation in diverse social, political, and historical contexts. Furthermore, throughout the time I worked on this research, I was also engaged in the process of reconciling various aspects of my own identity including my sexual orientation and my "ruralness." Without a doubt, my movement to and from Powassan in

various ways as well as my struggles to articulate and understand aspects of myself influenced the way I saw, interacted with, and understood the municipality, its residents, and its social processes.

A Note on Quality of PAR and the Contribution of this Document

Given the theoretical and methodological approaches employed in this research, it is pertinent to reflect on the underlying assumptions guiding its development. The research described in this document was undertaken with a participatory worldview. In this regard, Reason notes that “[r]eality is subjective-objective, always called into being and shaped by the participation of the knower in what is known” (p. 45). As such engaging with PAR may involve tensions in shifting thinking of researchers about how knowledge is constructed and acted upon. Considering this,

social scientists are faced with a fundamental *choice* that hinges on a dilemma of rigor or relevance. If social scientists tilt toward the rigor of normal science...they risk becoming irrelevant to practitioners’ demands for usable knowledge. If they tilt toward the relevance of action research, they risk falling short of prevailing disciplinary standards of rigor. (Argyris & Schön, 1989, p. 612)

Given these tensions that arise between PAR and traditional (post)positivist approaches to research, researchers have articulated alternative ways we might think about the quality of an action research project. These criteria are presented here in order to provide a platform for thinking about this dissertation and the contribution that it might make in both academic and community contexts.

Bradbury-Huang (2010) describes seven criteria (also called ‘choicepoints’) for quality often utilized by the editorial team of the *Action Research Journal*. These criteria are: articulation of objectives; partnership and participation; contribution to action research theory/practice; methods and process; actionability; reflexivity; significance. While “it is rare that any one piece of work will successfully respond to all choicepoints equally” (Bradbury-Huang, 2010, p. 101), here I reflect on the ways that I believe this dissertation responds to some of these criteria.

Firstly, partnership and participation refers the extent to which the work is concerned with participative elements, including a clear articulation of how and to what extent community engagement is evident. In this work, this choicepoint is attended to with regard to the formal data collection and analysis (chapter two) as well as in the discussion of the various action initiatives (chapter four) and the process of using reflexivity to navigate multiples roles in the research process (chapter five). Second, this dissertation contributes to our knowledge of action research theory and practice in the field of sport and recreation management. It does so by exploring the use of the PAR continuum to conceptualize action initiatives (chapter four) as well as by providing a living framework for thinking about PAR (chapter six). Additionally, this research contributes to the our understanding of methods and process of action research by providing a detailed account of the research/practice approach that emerged (chapter two and five). The project undertaken responds to the criteria of actionability as it “provides new ideas that guide action in response to need” (Bradbury-Huang, 2010, p. 103) - particularly for the Recreation Committee. This is evident in the extensive work that was undertaken to develop program and policy materials to support the ongoing work involved in sport and recreation in Powassan

(chapter four). Finally, chapter five of this dissertation explicitly addresses the criteria of reflexivity as it explores the location and roles of the author as a researcher and agent of change in the community context.

While these are not the only contributions made by this research, this overview is offered here as a starting point for thinking about the implication of this research project. These criteria are made explicit here as they were used as guiding principles in the development of the project, although they were not all engaged at every point in the process.

Chapter 3: Managing Sport and Recreation in and for Community

Sport and recreation management research has typically relied on strong traditions of positivism and individualistic world views (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016). These traditions have shaped the field in various ways; most notably by creating an academic discourse of ‘uncovering’ universal truths through an objective process of filling gaps in the literature. These theoretical approaches privilege the individual over the collective and fail to consider how pluralistic obligations or a commitment to “the greater good” (Etzioni, 2014) may influence decisions made subjectively by sport and recreation managers. Despite rhetorical assumptions that sport and recreation produce universally positive experiences and social outcomes (Coakley, 2011), lived experiences of sport and recreation (management) are complex social processes which are perceived and experienced differently by individuals and groups in specific contexts. The result of this rhetoric is a popular ideology that sport and recreation are positive social activities for all individuals and by extension their respective communities. As such, there is a dearth of literature examining the management of sport and recreation for communities as a collective, and the tensions that arise in the process.

In this chapter, we take up this discussion by interrogating the role of sport and recreation management in and for the Municipality of Powassan. The following text was created after working collaboratively with the Recreation Committee and discussing the data (collected through interviews and observations) both informally (through conversations) and formally (through presentation at meetings and the community recreation forum discussed above). Broadly, the purpose of this chapter is to problematize and enrich theoretical discussions about the relationship between sport/recreation management and community, as well as providing recommendations to Recreation Committee members for how to more effectively achieve their

mission. We achieve this by presenting an empirically informed discussion framed by a critical communitarian perspective. As the mission of the Recreation Committee is to offer and support the delivery of recreation opportunities for all members of the community, we sought to explore how this mission could be more effectively achieved and how recreation could be managed to more effectively serve the municipality or community as a collective. With input from committee members, the key focus areas of interrogation were identified as: (1) the role of community sport and recreation in the attraction and retention of people to the community; (2) the relationship between sport/recreation development and community development and; (3) the implications of unstructured sport and recreation opportunities, particularly outdoor activities, within the community.

The data discussed below were collected from semi-structured interviews and participant observation/reflective journaling, which are also supported and enriched by the input from the Recreation Committee (through the creation of the infographic) as well as with comments from participants in the community forum. These findings are organized according to the key focus areas identified by the Recreation Committee. The quotations presented here are intentionally presented in detailed (and sometimes lengthy) excerpts from discussions with community members. This presentation is intended to represent participant voices naturally, to demonstrate the complexity of community members' discussions, and to highlight the importance of participant contributions to this project (rather than by interpreting statements and risking cooptation). In each focus area we explore the major themes that emerged from the data and illustrate these themes with examples from the data and analysis process. We also discuss the implications that these themes had for the Recreation Committee and their management and

policy making practices. In all cases, all names and references to community groups have been substituted with pseudonyms. As participants often played several roles in the community, they are identified here according to the role that is most closely related to the corresponding quotation (see Appendix E for a list of participants and some of their roles in the community).

Attracting and Retaining People

The first focus area identified for the project was the intersection of sport and recreation and processes of attracting and retaining people to the municipality. There were several ways that sport and recreation were understood to be implicated with the flows of people to and from the community both temporarily and permanently. Within the scholarly literature, these flows of people are referred to as mobilities which are often reliant on and underpinned by stabilities in a community (Milbourne & Kitchen, 2014). In rural communities, prominent stabilities include a sense of belonging and tradition which is associated with the imagery of quiet, wholesome, and supportive community contexts (Matthews, Taylor, Sherwood, Tucker, & Limb, 2000). Conversely, mobilities are influenced by social and economic forces which push and pull people to and from communities (Balfour, et al., 2008). These mobilities can be temporary or permanent and are implicated in a variety of social processes such as tourism (see Mair, 2006; Michels, 2017) and youth outmigration (Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, 2006). Within the Almaguin Highlands, Michels (2017) noted the ways that the flows of people to and from communities are influenced by and implicated in broader neoliberal economic trends. In his research, Michels described the tensions and differences in opinions and understandings between residents and visitors in the area, as well as the ways that these interactions shape processes of development and gentrification. Here we discuss implications of these mobilities with regard to

the processes of attracting temporary visitors to the area as well as in the settlement of newcomers to the municipality.

Temporary Visitors

The importance of visitors to the community was discussed in terms of the potential to generate both economic and social outcomes. In many contexts, rural tourism has emerged as a strategic response to broader changes in political economies, where communities attempt to promote rural development through service-based industries (Mair, 2006). However, in Powassan, while opportunities created through tourism were generally perceived as positive for the municipality, they were not perceived to be central to the community's economy, nor were they described as a strategic pursuit. These perceptions are likely influenced by the municipality's metro-adjacency and the reliance of many residents on employment in the nearby urban centre. Rather, the impacts of visitors to the community were often discussed with regard to social processes such as visiting friends and relatives (Yousuf & Backer, 2015) as well as a construction of place and identity (Kyle & Chick, 2007). These flows of temporary visitors to the municipality also had implications for the management of sport and recreation and concomitantly residents' understandings and perceptions of the community itself.

Notably with regard to economic outcomes, visitors were actively encouraged to visit the municipality through the hosting of several sport and recreational events such as hockey tournaments, agricultural fairs, a winter carnival, and several festivals. An organizer of the annual Maple Syrup Festival discussed the way that the municipality had established itself (albeit unintentionally) as an attractive place to visit:

There's a good number of people coming from further away. Just using the Syrup Festival as an example, I think Powassan itself has established itself as ... If you go to Powassan, and even if it's crappy weather, there's still something to do, and you can still have a good time. The Syrup Festival now, it's hard not to get 5,000 people in the street.

(Chip, Festival Organizer)

Interestingly, although the municipality manages an extensive portfolio of events, there are only a few small (mostly seasonally operated) motels and bed and breakfasts offering accommodations. As a result, residents understood that visitors not only came to Powassan, but also visited other municipalities in the area. Therefore, hosting events and festivals was perceived to be beneficial not only in the municipality, but also for the region. As put by one interviewee:

People come, they eat in our restaurants, you know North Bay benefits because if they are going to rent motel rooms they go to North Bay because we don't, we have motels in Trout Creek, but they fill up quite quickly so they go to North Bay and the surrounding area. So it's not just a burden for Powassan, but the local area gets an injection of cash that they wouldn't have otherwise. (Alvin, Municipal Official)

Therefore, Powassan's reputation as a rural tourist destination was understood as an asset not only for the municipality, but also for the region. Although many residents relied on the nearby urban centre for employment and various services, in return, events hosted in Powassan were understood to contribute to the broader economy of the region. Contrary to the idea that commuter communities are simply somewhere people go to sleep, residents of Powassan were

able to articulate how the municipality was more than a bedroom community and was actually an active contributor to the vitality of the region.

While tourism within municipality and region were generally described as an economic opportunity, there were also several implications for the management of sport and recreation in the community. As the relationship between recreation and economic development through tourism was recognized as “parallel paths”, a long-term member of the Recreation Committee described how the municipality had attempted to combine these portfolios. Given the limited resources and capacity in the community, he also described how an attempt to formally combine these roles was short-lived and not successful:

We tried that for a short stint, when we were kinda still trying to reorganize things. We had the person who was running the Rec Committee...was the economic development officer as well, because we realize they are pretty much tied together. But at the same time it didn't really work. It was just too much work load for one person and...it's hard to walk on two paths at the same time. Even though they are parallel paths, they are separate paths and so that didn't work. That was a failed experiment. (Jess, Recreation Committee Member)

Therefore, while visitors to the municipality provided the opportunity to derive economic outcomes through sport and recreation, limited staff and resources in the municipality prevented the strategic pursuit of these outcomes (by the association of these two portfolios at the political level). Where large municipalities may employ several people (or entire departments) to work on tourism and recreation, allowing for the possibility of partnerships and initiatives across the sectors, the relative size (and budget) of these portfolios in Powassan means that each sector

comprises only a part-time role for one employee. As most of the sport and recreation opportunities in the municipality are organized by volunteers (who are not formally associated with the municipality), it is difficult to strategically realize the economic development potential of sport and recreation.

Temporary visitors for the purpose of sport and recreation also had important social implications for the municipality. Participants discussed the ways that sport and recreation created and maintained familial and friendly relationships, even when citizens had migrated out of the community. This process is consistent with the literature pertaining to tourism for the purpose of visiting friends and relatives (Yousuf & Backer, 2015), albeit sometimes on a micro level (i.e., travelling from the nearby urban centre to the municipality). For example, with regard to the Trout Creek Winter Carnival and the associated Family Hockey Tournament, one participant stressed the importance of the event as an annual reunion of family and friends: “It’s just like homecoming. [People who] used to live here and had to move away to work. They come home for that weekend” (Jim, Community Centre Board Member). Another participant expressed that participation in the local hockey league served the same function on a more regular basis:

Lots of people have commented on you know, they’ve moved to North Bay but find it a pain because they have to drive down here three nights a week to play hockey. So they’ll come down and stay at their parent’s house or they’ll come down and do this and I hear it all the time. They live in North Bay now but it’s a pain in the neck because they have to drive down here to play hockey. (Allen, League Organizer)

As sport and recreation appeared to be a facilitator of regular visiting of friends and relatives (and the maintenance of relationships), these activities might be interpreted as reflective of the

stabilities that underpin rural mobilities or movement to the community (Milbourne & Kitchen, 2014). The influence of these stabilities/relationships also had implications for sport and recreation organizers who expressed the importance of understanding relationships and expectations of participants in their activities. As noted by a tournament organizer, the affective nature of relationships within the community created interesting social dynamics in sport and recreation. These social contexts were further complicated by visitors from outside the community who were not aware of existing relationships and often have different expectations regarding their participation in sport and recreation:

You do have to watch out. I know because of the baseball tournament. We have North Bay teams come down, so they're a little bit more competitive. So you have to make sure that your family teams that are coming in from the small towns are still going to enjoy themselves by playing and not have the problem where they're getting beat all the time and they're not actually having fun. So you have to be able to organize on that kind of thing. So being in a small town is great because you get to know whose on what team and you can figure out okay I can play these people against each other. This year for example I had a brother-in-law and a sister-in-law that were going to be playing on opposite teams. Well they don't see eye to eye at all. So the sister-in-law is going do it, do it, do it, I want to play [against him]. And I'm going the rest of her team is not going to enjoy that because it's just going to be one great big fight on the field with the two teams. So you have to know the dynamics of the team to make sure that you're not going to have a blowout fight somewhere along the line. (Patti, Tournament Organizer)

Notably, knowledge of the relationships in the community as well as expectations of individual teams appears to be a necessary skill to organize a tournament in the community. In this example, it is evident that knowledge of social networks within the community extends beyond simple social structures and incorporates the affective nature of relationships and the values placed on these (sport and recreational) activities by different groups. In drawing from Etzioni's (2004) definition of community, we might interpret this nexus of group and sport/recreation relationships as constitutive of the community itself. This understanding also helps to explain the massive contribution of volunteers to sport and recreation in the community. If these activities are a constituent in the affect-laden web of relationships (community) contributions to sport and recreation may be understood as a way of fulfilling pluralistic obligations. Furthermore, visitors to the municipality who place different values on these activities (e.g., seeking competition rather than sociability) are perceived differently. This example highlights the complexity of organizing these the activities where locals and visitors interact, and potentially do not always agree (Michels, 2017). Again, the size of the community (and in this case of the tournament) influences the way that sport and recreation are managed and experienced by different participants.

Newcomers to the Community

While relationships within the municipality were often maintained and reflected in sport and recreation, not surprisingly these activities were experienced differently by new residents of the municipality. Newcomers to Powassan discussed sport and recreational activities both as a social space where existing networks, relationships, and values were reinforced (as discussed above), as well as an opportunity to enter into these networks and create new relationships with

other community members. These existing networks were often associated with family histories and associated roles and expectations in the community. As put by one participant:

...especially Powassan where you have the five original families and if you're not from those families then good luck, you've got to be kind of "hey, this is who I am." But the GAP [summer day camp] program opened a lot of doors. We weren't like the single mom with three kids that came into town...So we became part of the community...Like honestly, I don't feel like an outsider anymore, I feel like part of Powassan. (Margot, Parent)

The implications of the roles associated with traditional ("five original") families was also discussed by a coach in the community who inferred that there are political implications of how you manage relationships with certain families in the context of sport:

I've seen the politics of sport raise its ugly head...one gentleman made a joke saying "the Jones' plus the Smiths equals Powassan", and then I made a joke back saying "well I'm the bantam rep coach, I cut three Jones' and a Smith. I guess I won't have that support, right?"...well that gets overheard and taken out of context and you get emails saying "what did you say?" and "did you say that?" (Ken, Hockey Coach)

Indeed, the value of family histories and relationships was also reflected in the management of sport and recreational activities such as the organization of family or kin-based hockey and baseball tournaments. In these tournaments teams are entered and compete under family names, which in some cases are policed extensively through intimate knowledge of relationships within the community (Rich, Bean, & Apramian, 2013). In these cases, the strong family associations provide a resource on which tournament organizers were able to capitalize in order to recruit

participants and, in most cases, raise significant funds for their organizations. However, these kin-based team/tournament structures also create a social context where newcomers to the community are valued differently (as organizers or second tier participants in “outlaw” or “inlaw” divisions) than members of traditional families in the municipality who are able to reaffirm their family relationships and reputations through participation. These tournaments are understood to be important community activities (e.g., see Rich, et al., 2013), however it is evident that they do not provide the same experience or social outcomes to all residents of the municipality. In these cases, it is evident that the value of traditional family structure has informed activities that privilege different groups in the community in different ways despite similarities in characteristics that are typical of oppressed groups (e.g., gender, age, class, culture/religious belief). A critical reading of these tournaments therefore, demonstrates the ways that traditional family structures and identities are deeply embedded in understandings of community and as a result, reflected in the management of community sport and recreation events.

Despite the way that sport and recreation participation was often structured by family histories and relationships, as Margot noted above, these participation opportunities were also perceived to be an effective way to foster relationships and integrate into the community. This sentiment was confirmed by Rita (New Community Member) who claimed that sport and recreation “was the easiest way actually to integrate into the community.” For some youth who were new to the community, the enthusiasm with which sport and recreation were embraced made volunteering or working in the sector an attractive option: “I find it was good because everyone’s a part of it [sport and recreation] in some way or form, whether it’s their child or

they're helping coach, and it's a positive way for people to see you help everyone else" (Elyssia, Volunteer and Recreation Worker). Interestingly, from these discussions, we can see how sport and recreation may be understood as a constituent or perceived universal good for the community as it involves or benefits "everyone." However, this understanding may overlook the experience of individuals who are excluded or subjected in and through sport and recreation activities in the rural context (e.g., see Blackshaw & Long, 2005).

Although sport and recreation were organized platforms through which new community members were able to build relationships in the community, some newer youth in the community were also critical of the social structures that were perceived to be associated with community organizations and activities, particularly with regard to the acceptance of diversity. In a conversation with Melanie, she noted a lack of diversity (specifically discussing sexual minorities and persons with disabilities) and the impact of a strong religious presence within the community:

Especially in these small areas where people can be so ignorant...[perhaps because] it is an aging population, they maybe don't understand how socially advanced we [youth] are compared to them...I think it's just because they aren't as exposed... I don't want to get too touchy, like get into places I don't belong, but religion can be a big factor...They become so focused on the community and they start ignoring the external environment and it just becomes a little too focused on our area. It can be to the detriment of the area because it's so important to accept diversity...mostly because they don't know any better, but it's willful ignorance. (Melanie, New Community Member)

The influence of these organizations and traditional community values were also evident in recreation where one (older) program developer described her approach: “I don’t have a strategy, I just – I kind of roll with it. I kind of do the best I can every day and I really hope that god leads me in the right way” (Jocelyn, Program Leader/Developer). These discussions distinctly highlight the differences in experiences and perceptions of community activities as well as diverse values (e.g., a strong moral direction vs. a commitment to inclusivity and acceptance) that should underpin the practice and delivery of these activities. Despite the extensive evidence-based policy framework in place to guide and direct sport and recreation development (e.g., the *National Framework for Recreation*), the quote above demonstrates that these policies and frameworks do not simply translate to community level organizations and their strategic approaches.

While in most cases sport and recreation were understood to be mechanisms of creating and maintaining relationships within the community, it was also noted that the social systems of the community were not necessarily inclusive and also served to regulate who was included and embraced as new community members. Indeed, it was regularly expressed that some community groups have “done things the same way for 100 years, so god forbid they change” (personal communication, Reflective Entry, June 17, 2015). In this case, the stability of tradition may be interpreted as a force (Balfour, et al., 2008) that would push individuals away from the municipality when they do not feel welcome. On several occasions, the tensions around traditional community values (e.g., heteronormative, nuclear family structure, working class ethics) and diverse community members were also evident in field notes and reflective entries. For example, I noted that youths at the local high school were ready and willing to engage in

discussions about social justice (Reflective Entry, December 1, 2014), however I also observed that it was a common understanding that youths with interests and identity characteristics that do not reflect the dominant community values (e.g., youth artists, queer identifying, etc.) typically leave the area following secondary school and do not feel compelled to return like those who have reaped the benefits of alignment with these traditional community values (Reflective Entry, July 7, 2015). However, participation in recreation was also noted as a way to resist these systems of exclusion and establish relationships, as described by Linda (Parent): “We are a gay family. Like it doesn’t go over well at first, but then you start volunteering and then you become involved and so that’s where I think that made the change for us.” Therefore, while traditional community values appeared to be powerful social forces which shaped experiences of groups in the municipality, it appears that sport and recreation offered a platform through which new residents of the municipality were able to exercise agency within existing community social structures. As noted, new residents of the municipality were able to establish relationships with existing residents through sport and recreation endeavours despite (as indicated by Linda) not always aligning with the values or practices of the traditional community structure/groups. However, the tensions between diverse identities and traditional values might also be productive in and for the community. As sport and recreation provided contexts for these tensions to arise and for diverse residents to establish themselves, these activities might be interpreted as drivers of tolerance and acceptance in the broader discourses of community. While it is not the intention to assume one positive experience is indicative of broader shift or change in values, what is notable here is that sport and recreation provided social contexts for diversity to be expressed, negotiated, and reconciled. In a rural context where few other opportunities for social

interactions exist, this is likely also reflective of a shift towards more secular social activities. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that sport and recreation, if managed and delivered appropriately, may serve as an important site for the fostering of new community values of tolerance and acceptance of diversity, or a politics of difference in rural contexts.

While the Recreation Committee and many of the local volunteer organizers were aware of diverse needs within the municipality, they did not appear to have the resources (e.g., finances, human resource, etc.) or capacity (e.g., knowledge, skills) necessary to develop initiatives targeted to include specific groups (e.g., sexual minorities, persons with disabilities, or new community members). Furthermore, pragmatically speaking, the small population of the municipality also makes the idea of targeted programs for very specific groups within the municipality unrealistic. Typically, accessibility of programs in Powassan was discussed as a socio-economic issue, and consequently addressed through cost reduction strategies. Indeed, there were many notable attempts in the municipality to remove barriers to participation in sport and recreation by offering them at a low cost or free of charge. A member of a local fundraising group described a hockey program that they fund and operate with the support of the local community centre staff:

I think it's important for them [children] to have something...that's affordable. Hockey for the entire season is \$40 [and the arena manager] has skates and equipment so if somebody doesn't have skates, or even if you do - like my daughter went and traded her own skates in - I'm like "I could have bought you a new pair of skates." She's like "they're not going to fit me next year anyways." So she took her skates and traded them

for a bigger size. I think that it's good that there's that community, everybody is included thing. (Jody, Fundraiser and Parent)

While the approach described by Jody is not a program targeted specifically for newcomers to the community, cost reduction (or elimination) initiatives like this one were commonly perceived as a way to include "everybody." Low-cost or free activities were provided in several ways including through fundraising organizations (e.g., the Trout Creek Booster Club), private sponsorship by local businesses (e.g., of free skating on school holidays), as well as by accessing grant funding from government and private sources (e.g., the Get Active Powassan summer day camp program and Powassan and District Union Library summer reading program). These strategies to reduce the cost of programs were supported through a strong informal economy (i.e., not involving money, through voluntary work, bartering, etc.) which is characteristic of rural communities (Reimer, 2006a). Further, these strategies were often developed (not only between individuals, but) in partnership or with the support of the municipality. For example, fitness classes were developed in the municipality by offering instructors free space in exchange for a percentage of the total revenue, which also allow instructors to be covered under municipal insurance and for the municipality to market the program as a service provided in the community (Reflective Entry, July 14, 2015). The perceived value of accessible, low-cost opportunities to participate in recreation was highlighted by participants at the community recreation forum who noted "costs", "cost for families", and "making it affordable for all" as key considerations for municipal recreation policy makers.

Community Development

As noted above, we discuss community development with regard to the fostering of a sense of community within the rural context of Powassan. Broadly, community development can be discussed with regard to providing people with everyday needs (e.g., food, shelter, safety, etc.), creating organizations/institutions that equitably distribute resources and support, as well as developing relationships among people to foster cultural, citizenship, and political outcomes (DeFilippis & Saegert, 2012). Within the field of sport management, a sense of community is operationalized and discussed in the literature with regard to factors including administration, common interests, levels of competition, equity of decision making, providing leadership opportunities, social spaces, and voluntary action (Warner & Dixon, 2011; Warner, Kerwin & Walker, 2013). For the purposes of this project, we discuss sense of community as a unit of collective identity with regard to feelings of community membership (Israel, et al., 2003). As this is what emerged from the data collected in and with the community, we discuss sense of community with regard to (both positive and negative) implications and understandings of membership. First, we examine the general perception in the community that sport and recreation can foster a sense of community as well the ways that this sense of community was experienced and understood by different community members. We also discuss the tensions that arose in the context of the community following amalgamation in 2001 and the resulting implications for managing sport and recreation in this context.

Sense of Community

Fostering a sense of community and closeness was commonly expressed as an outcome of sport and recreation in the community. Importantly, in the context of a small community with

few alternative options for social interactions and many residents employed outside of the municipality, recreational activities were highly valued for their function of bringing people together:

recreation is what gets people off their couch. It gets them out. It doesn't matter if it's knitting or quilting or the competitive hockey. It gets people out, gets them involved in the community so then they meet people and that spins off into other things. So if you don't have recreation where else are they going to get together? You're not going to meet your neighbour. (Jean, Former Municipal Employee)

Not surprisingly, interviewees distinguished between recreational and competitive opportunities to participate, as well as the tensions that may arise in attempting to use competition based activities to foster a sense of community. As put by Justin (Community Centre Board Member), "when people get competitive they can hold grudges against people and there is always negativities in that sense." This is in line with Warner, Dixon, and Chalip (2012) who noted the implications of context, competitiveness, and formality of the sport experience with regard to fostering a sense of community. Not surprisingly in Powassan, the social context of participation opportunities was also discussed as a key element for positively facilitating a sense of community, as put by Serena (Sport Participant) "I don't see it as competitive, I just like to go out there and have fun. We have a cooler with beer in it."

Within these understandings of the community, the physical dimensions of space and understandings of place and rurality featured prominently in discussions of sport and recreation. Proximity of people was discussed by several participants as an important factor in shaping understandings of the community. For example, Chip (Festival Organizer) expressed that "the

further people seem to be apart physically, the closer you are as a community.” He suggested that this leads to greater support for sport and recreation within the community: “I don't know what it is, exactly, but it seems that rural communities or smaller communities do better in supporting little events. Maybe it's just that because it's a smaller community, everybody maybe feels like they have more ownership.” Natasha, a youth who worked in recreation, discussed this idea, suggesting that the proximity of diverse people sharing limited resources and services in a small community creates a greater awareness of the experiences of others and consequently a sense of community. Interestingly, this understanding runs contrary to the notion that rural communities are homogenous and patriarchal, and suggests that the sense of community might be more accurately explained by an awareness of diversity, norms of reciprocity, and a commitment to pluralistic obligations. She eloquently described this through a metaphor of a fence and gave an example of how she saw this playing out in a recreation program:

You still have the social barriers but they're not as prominent. Maybe they're plastic fences instead of brick walls, and they are easily moved or easily taken down...So they're still there but they're not cemented into the ground. And in big cities you can climb over those brick walls to join someone on either side but you don't get to meet in the middle. Whereas in a small town, you can. You can pull them aside and meet in the middle and do something you both like and it's great. It's fun that way and it's something you don't get to see that often...You can actually see it happening when two kids from totally different families - like I know there's this one little girl who had an account that her mom bought for her on Animal Jam [an online video game], and then someone who is forced to have a free account because they can't pay for it. And the two of them sitting

side-by-side going well I've got this limited edition thing let me send it to you and that barrier is just out the window, it's gone... You see it with adults too. They don't do it as often as the kids but that fence is low for them so they can talk over it to each other, if that makes sense... It's just a slower pace, [so] you get to know the people that you're talking to... So the wall or the fence is there but it's not as big because we don't let it get that big, because we are just too close together for a giant brick wall. We don't have the room for it, so we don't build one. (Natasha, Youth and Program Leader)

While many interviewees expressed the prominence of this sense of community, how community members perceived fitting into that community was also influenced by and reflected in their sport and recreation participation. While Powassan was understood by some to be “a hockey town” (Blaze, Volunteer), based on the enthusiasm with which the community supported the sport, this enthusiasm had ramifications for those who did not participate. One participant described the way that she felt her family was perceived because they did not participate in the most popular activities in the community:

You almost feel in Powassan, like we feel like we're kind of outsiders because we don't hang out at the arena all winter. Like we're the weirdos that go to the cross country ski trails and we don't see anybody else from Powassan. (Pat, Parent)

An examination of the municipal recreation documents confirms this enthusiasm and dedication to certain activities at the political level. As noted in the municipal policy documents, in 2015 approximately 74% (\$574, 500) of the municipal recreation budget was allocated to the maintenance and staffing of the Sportsplex (arena and curling facility) while only 7% (approximately \$11,000) was spent on all staffing and materials for any/all other programs

coordinated by the Recreation Committee (this does not include programming run by the library as it operates under a shared service agreement). Additionally, with two indoor ice pads (the other operated by an independent community board) in the municipality, the service provision ratio (i.e., ratio of ice pads to residents - calculated at 1:1,626 in 2005) was more than three times the provincial average for municipalities with populations under 10,000 (dmA Planning & Management Services, 2005). While this ratio is likely the result of residual baby-boomer infrastructure rather than current strategic planning or policy making, the sense of community and collective action witnessed around municipal facilities (particularly those threatened by closure), suggests that they occupy an important role in the lives of residents (Rich, et al., 2017). This activity-based bias was also evident in the prevalence of discussions about the local junior hockey team at Recreation Committee meetings. Along with regular team updates, there were several instances where the interests of the team were weighted heavily in decisions about facility management (e.g., equipment purchases and timelines for ice production). This is relevant as the team is a private, for profit organization, owned by individuals from the nearby city, and not represented on the committee, but the team is effectively influencing municipal policy (and spending) in sport and recreation. In this case, these actions are inadvertently justified as these private business activities (i.e., games) are popular social activities for community members and a source of community pride (for those who follow hockey). However, although one committee member noted that “there’s a level of optics there where you have to maintain that arm’s length relationship with businesses” (Jess, Recreation Committee Member), there is no clearly identified strategy for managing these interests and to what extent they influence policy making at the municipal level. It is not the intention here to condemn all

involvement of the private sector, as public-private partnerships are integral to much of the sport and recreation opportunities (Ferkins, et al., 2010; Phillips & Newland, 2014). Rather, we suggest that private interests need to be acknowledged and their influence on policy making made explicit in order to manage how far and to what extent these private business activities will influence municipal policy making. Further, as the junior hockey team has been quite successful in their first seasons (e.g., finishing 9th in the Canadian Junior Hockey League in the 2016-2017 season, see NOJHL, 2016), it is also pertinent to consider the extent to which the success of the team will influence this process and the public perception of what is appropriate. Interestingly, at the time that the original research partnership was created, it was articulated clearly that the privately owned junior hockey team (different from the current team) was not to be considered in an examination of recreation in and for the community (see Appendix C). The former junior hockey team (the Powassan Eagles) was owned by an international organization and was only moderately successful playing in a league that was not sanctioned by Hockey Canada (colloquially called an outlaw league). There are many factors involved in the Recreation Committee's different treatment of these two entities, including the teams' levels of involvement (and re-investment) in the municipality (e.g., donations to the local food bank; Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes October 7th, 2015) as well as the professionalism with which the entities interacted with the Municipality (e.g., paying bills on time, formalization of partnerships, and agreements with regard to liquor licence, etc.; Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes October 7th, 2015). This notable shift is important to consider as it involves the clear introduction of private interests into the recreation policy making forum, which is apparently justified by the organization's approach to engaging with the community. Although the team's

activities present an attractive opportunity upon which municipal recreation can capitalize, it also presents a means through which biases in the allocation of recreation funding (i.e., towards the Sportsplex and by extension hockey) may be exacerbated. Further, given the small number of committee members and the tendency of membership to involve those who currently or have previously been involved in activities based out of the Sportsplex, strategically managing the balance of public and private interests presents a conundrum, or wicked problem for the Recreation Committee (particularly given the social role of hockey in the municipality). In this instance, it is clear that individual interests (which may have historically dominated public policy making in recreation) need to be starkly contrasted and considered alongside options that would be more beneficial for the community more broadly as a collective, particularly those such as Pat who do not “spend their winters at the arena.”

Such a critical reading of municipal policy making was confirmed and supported through the feedback provided at the community recreation forum. Information regarding the municipal budget allocations for recreation was included in the infographic created as part of this project. This information was clearly identified as something of which many readers were not aware. These feelings were expressed through comments such as “costs are unbelievably high for arena use” and “certain venues are not self funding and that more work needs to be done to make them so.” Unawareness of the municipal budget for recreation and the sense of concern expressed by readers suggests that while most did not understand the costs associated with maintaining recreation facilities, they generally supported these investments and valued their potential to foster outcomes in and for the community. Thus, the level of transparency and accessibility of

information regarding budgeting and municipal spending on sport and recreation emerged as important considerations for the Recreation Committee.

Implications of Amalgamation

It is also pertinent here to explore the implications of municipal amalgamation with regard to the development of a sense of community, as this featured prominently in discussions with community members as well as within Recreation Committee activities. As expected, the forced amalgamation of three former jurisdictions created tensions within the community that manifested and continue to be reflected in sport and recreation. This was expressed by Jim who was a resident of the former town of Trout Creek:

We're pretty divided...[I don't know] if it's old timers who are too stubborn or what...

Personally, I had no problem at all, but I know a lot of people who stopped shopping there [Powassan] and go straight to North Bay now, cause they want nothing to do with [Powassan]. (Jim, Resident of Trout Creek)

Since amalgamation, the perceived political agenda of the municipal council was a key factor in the way that change was understood to be influencing the management of sport and recreation in the community. Notably, following amalgamation a recreation action plan was commissioned by the municipality to assess and provide strategic direction on recreation in the municipality. This action plan provided detailed information on the state of recreation facilities and programs and made a series of recommendations for the municipal council to consider (see dmA Planning & Management Services, 2005). One of these recommendations suggested:

At such time when the Trout Creek Community Centre arena requires significant capital development to retain it as an ice facility, an assessment of the viability of transferring

all local ice use to the Sportsplex should be undertaken and the Trout Creek Community Centre arena assessed for its structural viability to be used as a non-ice facility, consistent with the needs and interests of local community organizations wishing to use the facility. (dmA Planning & Management Services, 2005, p. 35)

Although this recommendation, and indeed the entire document, was prepared by an external consulting firm that conducted independent research, this recommendation was perceived by many to be an attack on the former Town of Trout Creek. These perceptions led to increased interest and collective action within Trout Creek around the management of the community centre:

for a while I think after the amalgamation there was a lot of waves about people in the community in powerful positions that didn't want the arena to exist. And I don't even know how true that is, I think that might have been half rumour and I think that really sparked a fire under peoples asses a lot to get using it and improve it and get involved with it because if you don't, it's gonna go. (Allen, Community Centre Board Member)

The collective action to improve the use and management of the facility is reflective of process of resiliency through which communities coalesce and grow stronger following adversity or change (Kulig, Edge, & Joyce, 2008). More recently, a new municipal council elected in 2010 was consistently praised as a source of support as they valued the work of the Community Centre Board in Trout Creek. With this renewed relationship and support, the Community Centre Board has negotiated new agreements with the municipality which allowed them to focus on programming and providing sport and recreation opportunities in the former town:

I think the use of the community centre and the strength of the community centre has been a change in our council and our council's values. And the current mayor has been, he's supported that community centre like we could never have imagined compared to the original leadership...the previous leadership group wanted to knock it down to one, and I know that our community centre was on the chopping block. And this leadership group is the complete opposite. They want to make sure that both these community centres are just thriving... And the current leadership, and you know congrats to [them], you know we have these two communities that are polar opposites and I find that [they have] done such an awesome job of bringing both groups together. There are events at each community centre and especially ours where there's a mash of people that show up to them from one end of the community to the next. (Justin, Community Centre Board Member)

In the early 2000's, Amalgamations created tensions and struggles for newly-formed municipalities across the province (Kushner & Siegel, 2003). In Powassan, tensions noticeably manifested with regard to sport and recreation. These tensions are similar to the intra-class conflicts described by Michels (2017) with regards to tourism and rural gentrification in the area. That is, these conflicts emerged within groups of similar socioeconomic circumstance, based on life experiences and places of permanent residence. In participating in policy making activities, the post-amalgamation social context continues to be a factor which is considered in the way decisions are made. For example, the current Recreation Committee strategically organizes annual community events in each of the former town centres (a Canada Day Celebration in Powassan in July and a New Years Eve Celebration in Trout Creek in December). The

importance of these strategies are expressed in their intention to “pull the community together” (personal communication, January 6, 2016). Therefore, by considering the sentiments expressed by groups from the two former jurisdictions, we see how the sense of community created through sport and recreation is understood quite differently by residents of the two former towns. Further, the Recreation Committee is attempting to use recreation as a tool to address tensions created through amalgamation and foster a more unified sense of community among residents of the municipality.

Interestingly, within policy making activities, the limits of the community and who should be served by municipal services was clearly articulated on several occasions. While preparing a municipal lending policy for recreation equipment, the following was noted:

The biggest discussion was about people from outside the community using municipal resources/services. The committee wants to have it clearly noted that this [service] is for rate payers only and not others [particularly those from neighbouring townships of Chisholm and Nipissing]...this highlights regional tensions around Powassan’s budget and who pays for services that the entire region uses...Likely linked to the Family Health Team situation where they [the Family Health Team] want to expand but the Municipality refused to support the proposal and called on the other townships to step up...These tensions highlight the power and politics inherent in regional development which cut across sectors including sport and recreation. (Reflective Entry, January 7, 2016)

Unpacking the excerpt above highlights several important aspects of sport and recreation in Powassan. Firstly, sport and recreation are implicated with, and closely tied to all other

municipal sectors and services and must be considered within the broader workings of the municipality. Therefore, when faced with the decision to start a new recreation program, the same municipal policy makers may also be considering whether or not to replace the roof on the medical centre or upgrade the roads, water, and sewer infrastructure. Indirectly, tensions and discussions in other sectors (e.g., dealings with the Family Health Team, the shared service agreement which funds the local library) also influence recreation policy making. While issues cutting across sectors is not unique to Powassan, these examples demonstrate how the relatively small size of a rural community (and its various sectors) allows for certain issues to dominate discussions and permeate across policy making activities. Finally, although the idea of striving to provide recreation for everyone is articulated, the financial implications of those objectives place clear limits on these goals, restricting these services provided to rate payers in the municipality. By extension, these restrictions might also suggest that the sense of community fostered through recreation participation would be exclusive to these rate payers; however, this inference did not appear to be so simply understood as volunteer run organizations often relied on leadership of residents from various parts of the region. Indeed, during the discussion highlighted above, an active member of the Recreation Committee lived outside of the boundaries of the municipality and was valued for her contributions and “outsider” perspective. In these discussions, she was empathetic of the position of the committee and supported the view that these restrictions were required as municipal resources were used to acquire, manage, and maintain the resources (Reflective Entry, January 7, 2016).

In summary, there is a complex nexus of factors which influence the management of sport and recreation in a rural community context. In Powassan, inter and intra-community

politics and conflict complicated these processes in several ways. Subsequently, the sense of community fostered through recreation is influenced by understandings of groups within the community as well as regional politics and the outcomes of policy making in other sectors which have in/direct links to sport and recreation. The emerging influence of private sector stakeholders complicated policy making by contributing resources to the sector, but also presenting challenges with regards to managing sport and recreation for the community as a collective (particularly those who don't engage in certain activities). Although at times, policy making in this context appeared to rely on a simple decision making process based on what committee members thought would be best for their community; as demonstrated above, some instances required policy makers to navigate complex political relationship within and outside of the community and consider issues in the community more broadly in their decision making processes.

Unstructured Sport and Recreation Opportunities

Not surprisingly, the rural context of Powassan offers many opportunities for unstructured, unsupervised, and or outdoor sport and recreation opportunities. These activities take place in a variety of venues including municipal facilities (e.g., the outdoor rink which is maintained but not supervised by the municipality), private property (e.g., personal farms and large properties), and the abundance of Crown Land² in the area (e.g, hunting, fishing, and trapping). Further, the location of Powassan, geographically close to both Lake Nipissing and Algonquin Park (both heavily regulated and politically laden environmental spaces) engenders

² Crown Land is property in Canada that is owned by federal or provincial governments. This property makes up approximately 85% of the property in Ontario and is accessible to all residents for tourism and recreation activities such and camping, hunting, and fishing (see Government of Ontario, 2016a).

an awareness of the implications of outdoor spaces, how they are used, and the implications of changing regulations and accessibility of rural spaces and land³. Here, we explore these perceived implications of these activities with a specific focus on youths and land based activities such as hunting and fishing.

Rural Youths

Throughout the interactions with the Recreation Committee (including the initial community consultation meeting), children and youths were regularly discussed as a group that warranted specific attention in the community. This is not surprising as youth out-migration is an issue or threat faced by many rural communities and is a process associated with cycles of rural poverty and decline (Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, 2006). Rural youths face a variety of barriers and constraints with regard to participation in sport and physical activity including family support, changes in technology, and access to facilities, transportation, and opportunities that suit their interests (Walia & Leipert, 2012). These constraints may not be unique to rural contexts, but rurality is noted as a factor that compounds other indicators, such as lifestyle and socio-economic status, which influence health-outcomes such as physical activity participation (Smith, et al., 2008). The rural context of Powassan and the associated constraints to participating in sport and recreation were discussed by several participants. Here, we consider how this context influenced youths' understandings of themselves and their community.

³ Recently, political decisions regarding conservation measures have elicited widespread criticism and speculation about the management of natural resources in the area. Declining Walleye populations in Lake Nipissing have been a point of contention for many years (see Campbell, 2014) and recently local fur management professionals have criticized the motivations and appropriateness of hunting and trapping regulations imposed by the Ministry of Natural Resources (Downey, 2017).

Several youths discussed their experiences living in Powassan and how they understood the community. It is pertinent to note that there is not a high school in the municipality, and as a result, all of the youth are required to attend secondary school at schools in North Bay or South River (approximately a 30 minute commute north or south respectively). Youths' experiences attending school outside of the municipality created an awareness of the rural context of Powassan. As a result, youths were articulate about the implications of the rural context on their own identities. For example, Layla discussed the way her peers from North Bay perceived Powassan and how this affected her own understandings of herself:

Hick and country. People think that just because you live in Powassan you drive a tractor around everywhere. There's different stereotypes, but from being from Powassan people hear that they go, isn't that close to Trout Creek? Yeah that's kind of – they think it's very country. That would be the best word... I was proud of it, I didn't care. I was happy, I was proud of us. There was a couple of us, it wasn't just me. That was just the joke, if you live out in the boonies or the country you're from Powassan or Corbeil or somewhere, you're not right in the city. (Layla, Youth)

The contrast between urban and rural were also expressed by those who had competed in sports in both of these contexts. Serena discussed her experience navigating levels of sociability and competitiveness in sport participation:

We'd always say the parents from North Bay are crazy. They're so into their sport and whatnot and their competitiveness, they aren't humble at all with anything. I guess they're poor sports. I guess that's what it would be. But when you come down here everybody – not everybody, everybody's not like that – it's calm and there's no, unless

there's drinking involved, but that's usually how it is...I don't know if it's because everybody knows each other somehow, or is related, so you have to keep the peace I guess. I find it's just like the way you grew up. (Serena, Youth)

These understandings of the differences between urban and rural also intersected with many other aspects of youths' identities. Notably, several participants expressed their understandings of being a young rural woman in contrast to peers from the nearby city:

...even just to talk to North Bay girls, like not try to work with them in any manner, but just to be near them, you're like oh my god - you girls from the city - I can't handle you. No one cares your eyebrows are drawn on, can we calm down? So I think that's a big thing. When you're from South River and Port Loring and Powassan you just have this whole different attitude because you aren't near other people all the time so you just have this kind of don't care attitude. (Twyla, Youth)

Participants also discussed the implications of space on their identities as rural youths. Time and space are factors associated with rural communities and the forces that push and pull people to and from rural communities, such as in the process of youth out-migration (Balfour, et al., 2008). With regard to unstructured sport and recreation, an abundance of space where young people can engage freely (and in some cases unsupervised) was understood as an important factor shaping youths' experiences as it was oppositional to the hyper-regulated risk-reducing nature of many school and urban/structured programs. One participant discussed this with regard to free play time in the school setting: "Like you have to protect the child and everything, so you can't play tag... There's all these rules they put on it at school so what's the point of doing it [playing]" (Steevie, Youth). Having the opportunity to engage in unstructured, risky play was

implicated in the way youths engaged with sport and recreation activities as well as how they developed both physical and social skills. One youth discussed this at length:

...all of the Powassan kids were these hardy, these tough kids and they were all built for it...Just being outside. We have surplus [of space], the average person in Chisholm would have 12-14-15 acres, I have 200 and all of my friends had all this property to run free. And these kids are in North Bay and they're like oh yeah I play hockey and stuff. Yeah but what do you do outside of that? ...We didn't have that luxury all the time so we were always outside...Just the more area you have the more diversity you have to be able to do things. Like when we were kids we used to go to a random field and we'd have a baseball game, and just because it was there we had the necessary area, instead of having to pay to rent a baseball field or pay to rent a hockey rink we would just build one and it didn't cost us a thing...You knew oh yeah down the road that's so and so because they helped me when our tractor was stuck, they helped us pull it out or it became more like we were a close community. As opposed to say you'd go to North Bay where their population is higher and it's more condensed and maybe you don't know the guy who lives two doors down from you or across the street. But when you lived in Chisholm it was a mile to the next house and you knew who they were...North Bay friends loved, and they all admit to it still, they loved coming to my house for the first time because it was just freedom, dirt bikes, you could go paint balling, you could do everything just stepping outside of the door...I grew up, I was on a dirt bike at 6, I was on a four-wheeler at 6. I learned all of these motor skills – like I learned how to do all this stuff and respect machinery and stuff like that at an early age. And I think people

that don't get to experience, say they go back and they're now 16-18 and they have a car and they've never driven before, I feel like it was less stressful for me to learn how to drive a car as opposed to my friends who live in North Bay. (Ben, Youth)

As demonstrated by this quotation, access to space was implicated in both an understanding of place as well as the development of a sense of community and an individual skill set. Further, the experiences of youth in the community reflect the quickly changing social context of a bedroom community. While the rural municipality offers an abundance of space and subsequently opportunities to participate in unstructured sport and recreation activities, youths' experiences are understood in contrast to their nearby urban peers. These relational understandings are important considerations for the Recreation Committee as they attempt to understand and articulate their role in retaining youth or attracting young people to live in the community. In reviewing past activities of the Recreation Committee, it is evident that there have been several efforts to engage with youth in the community and adapt to their interests. For example, shortly after amalgamation, youth in the community mobilized resources and constructed a skateboard park in the former tennis court at the local park. The construction led to tensions with the municipality with regard to monitoring and maintaining the infrastructure. As a result of these discussions, for several years there was a youth Member At Large included on the Recreation Committee (Rich, Braimoh, & Misener, 2014). Interestingly, in fall of 2015, a group of youths from Trout Creek approached the Recreation Committee with a similar proposal. In this case, the youths first approached the Trout Creek Community Centre Board on the advice of the Trout Creek Booster (fundraising) Club. The Community Centre Board then referred the youth to the Recreation Committee as they are officially in charge of park space which the youth were hoping to develop.

The Recreation Committee was receptive to the idea and willing to work with the group, however the committee advised the youth that they did not currently have funding for such an initiative so fundraising would be left up to them. Although the youths “had clearly done some work to prepare their proposal with support and encouragement from the Booster Club” (Reflective Entry September 9th, 2015), proceeding with the project required them to do substantial fundraising at their own expense. These decisions were justified as “kids need to have a stake in it,” along with the concern about the sustainability of the project as “future groups wont have ownership” (personal communication, December 2, 2015). Interestingly, this case differs from the former skatepark development in that the youths are not currently able to mobilize the resources to construct their own infrastructure. In the previous case, the Recreation Committee responded reactively when youths were able to commit significant resources to build their own infrastructure (e.g., by soliciting donations of materials and labour through their parents). In the more recent case, despite navigating the (overly) complex and ambiguous political roles in the community (The Booster Club, the Community Centre Board, and the Recreation Committee), as the new youths have not yet been able to mobilize the resources required, they have not yet received any formal resources or support in return. In comparing these two cases, it is pertinent to consider what resources groups are required to commit to recreation in the community in order to have their voices considered within policy making activities, and what this means for marginalized or “resource-poor” groups in the collective. From these cases, it can be inferred that groups may be required to commit substantial human, financial, and or physical resources in order to have their proposals considered legitimately in public policy making. As the committee continues their attempts to be responsive to the needs

and interests of youths (and others) in the community, they will need to consider the ways they can solicit input and remain engaged with diverse groups in the municipality.

Land-based Activities

In many instances, land-based activities such as hunting, fishing, and camping emerged as prominent features in the context of the work of the Recreation Committee. These activities were discussed with regard to the construction of a rural identity as well as the ways residents engaged in sport and recreation. Land-based activities were accompanied by an articulated appreciation for the environment, or in the terms of sustainable community development scholars, as an ecological imperative (Dale, 2005). Thus, land-based recreation participation emerged as a platform through which social and cultural understandings were transmitted as well as a space to promote a sense of pluralistic obligations to protect universal resources (i.e., the environment).

Participation in land-based activities appeared to be an important component of the rural identity of community members. Patti discussed this with regard to her work with the local Girl Guides:

We have more outdoor experience to things, I do see it. It's a lot different to take a kid from a small town area and take them out camping because they're more prepared, they're more prepped for it, they're more adapted to it. Where if you take somebody from the bigger cities it's a little different because - okay I've never had to do this before, or you get into certain things of - oh when I'm with mom and dad we don't do that. (Patti, Girl Guide Leader)

While participants generally spoke positively of their participation in these activities, there was also an awareness of changing social contexts, particularly with regard to technology and connectivity that was changing the way people engaged in sport and recreation activities. As put by Ken (Hockey Coach), “everybody is so connected now, like the farm kid that used to jump off the tractor and then throw his skates on and come on the ice - that doesn't happen anymore, or if it does it's very rare.”

Land-based activities also appeared to influence the ways that residents engaged with other sport and recreation activities as well as other aspects of their lives. A notable example of this was the scheduling of programs such as the men's hockey leagues “around the deer hunt” (Reflective Entry, September 9th, 2015). This was also evident in a visit to run a workshop for staff at an area local high school where teachers discussed the implications of hunting season on student attendance (Reflective Entry, December 1, 2014). Additionally, this surfaced again when a member of the Recreation Committee had to decline my invitation to the community forum as the date landed “during moose season” (personal communication, October 5, 2016). These examples suggest that the seasonal nature of hunting is an important structural consideration that permeates personal and professional lives of residents across the lifespan. As engagement in land-based activities such as hunting and fishing are heavily regulated and policed (most notably by seasonal restrictions), engagement in these activities influence participants abilities to engage in other recreational activities and even professional activities. Further, as these activities also serve to provide food for many residents of the municipality throughout the year, they also serve the important role of providing basic necessities for living. The use of these activities intentionally as a fitness activity was also noted: “He described using

archery practice as a fitness activity where he turned shooting into an exercise by holding the bow back for and extended time to build up strength” (Reflective Entry, November 23, 2014). Therefore, the Recreation Committee’s engagement with these activities might also be indirectly involved in supporting other broader processes of community development and health promotion. These findings demonstrate that a sense of community, conservation/an ecological imperative, community health, as well as outdoor recreation are all linked in various ways with the lived experiences of community members, and as such present important and complex considerations for the Recreation Committee.

Hunting was repeatedly described as an important social activity for residents who participated in this activity. The significance of hunting as a social activity was highlighted by Layla who elaborated on the social role of the activity that was different from other recreational activities:

Hunting you can do with family and have more of that kind of bond with people that you’re close to, and yoga is something for the mind body and soul where you can go and stretch and work different parts of your body than hunting would, where you’re more focused and in a quiet area. (Layla, Youth)

Hunting was also described as an important social activity by Jean who suggested that it was a popular activity for families in the area and consequently an opportunity for recreation programming:

Well archery, everybody likes to hunt, so a hunting thing because that’s something everybody does. That’s something that your dad does so your dad is going to say absolutely let’s go do that sport. So it’s based more on what the activity of the parents

are, and what they want to do. Because you hope you go out as a family. So in a small town it's really in relation to your location, what your parents like, your parents hobbies and they're the ones that you hope will set up the programs. (Jean, Former Recreation Worker)

Consequently, land-based activities were prominently included and considered in municipal recreation programs and policy making. For example, the Recreation Committee organizes an annual canoe race to promote the use of a local paddling route within the municipality as well as a fish derby to coincide with provincial license-free family fishing weekends⁴. Further, in 2016 the Recreation Committee worked in partnership with the Commanda and Area Anglers and Hunters club to donate and install a micro-hatchery into the local public school to provide an educational opportunity regarding the process of raising and stocking fish in local lakes (Mendler, 2016). The outcomes of this partnership were understood to be important in providing youths in the community with knowledge and a sense of respect for the environment. As noted in a Recreation Committee meeting: "It's not about stocking lakes, it's about teaching kids about water quality, and the environment" (personal communication, January 4th, 2017).

Collectively, these endeavours illustrate the regular consideration of land-based activities and the environment in the operations of the Recreation Committee. As the social context of these land-based activities is changing (e.g., with the increasing prevalence of

⁴ Twice per year, the Government of Ontario allows all Canadian residents the opportunity to fish in Ontario without a license. During this time, residents are required to follow all other rules and regulations. Many organizations across the province host fish derbies and other family events to coincide with these dates (see Government of Ontario, 2016b).

technology and changing regulations on the use of natural spaces), the rural context of the municipality presents both an opportunity and challenge to engage residents in diverse and meaningful outdoor recreation opportunities. Additionally, communicating an appreciation and respect for the environment can be read as a form of communitarian political action. As noted by Etzioni (2004), advocating on behalf of the environment is a form of communitarian action as it represents a commitment to a shared resource rather than acting solely out of individual or self-interest. Therefore, the support and integration of land-based activities in municipal recreation provides a platform where participants and policy makers engage with discussions of pluralistic obligations (e.g., conservation and respect of the environment as a universal resource). Although peripheral to the mission of the Recreation Committee, valuing ecological capital (Dale, 2005) and promoting engagement with “the land” emerged as a recurring theme in municipal policy making, and was also implicated in the rural identity of residents of the municipality. As described by Jess (Recreation Committee Member):

Being closer to the land is one thing that uh, like people in Toronto and the metropolitan areas they lose way too quickly - and that's the biggest problem we have right now. In a lot of our societies...that people aren't close enough to the land... We've got an excellent area here that you know...hunting and fishing and all kinds of stuff ... Learning to respect what you have rather than just taking everything and not putting back.

Managing Sport and Recreation For the Collective

Given that the goal of the Recreation Committee was to support and offer recreational opportunities for the community as a collective, in this chapter we attempted to problematize and

better understand experiences in and with sport and recreation in the community. Rather than examining the management of sport and recreation as a series of individual interactions, we attempted to avoid the idea of individual autonomous engagement and examine the work and implications of the Recreation Committee for the community as a collective (Arai & Pedlar, 2003; Frazer, 2000). This nuanced discussion is useful both for the Recreation Committee as it proceeds with their policy making activities, as well as for the researchers who were able to develop a contextually informed understanding of sport and recreation management in Powassan. In conclusion, we draw from these insights in order to provide recommendations for managers and policy makers engaged in supporting and/or organizing sport and recreation in and for the community as a collective. While the recommendations that follow were developed specifically in and for the Municipality of Powassan, they may provide insightful considerations for other researchers and community members engaged in managing municipal sport and recreation in both rural and urban contexts.

Firstly, in order to foster more equitable access to sport and recreation opportunities in the community, we must develop a stronger understanding of the demographics in the municipality as well as a process for monitoring the sport and recreation opportunities that are available in the municipality. As discussed above, management practices tended to rely on traditional approaches or “the way things have always been done” even though experiences in sport and recreation and subsequent understandings of the community developed through these experiences varied. In the changing context of a bedroom community, an up-to-date understanding of community members and recreation opportunities is necessary to effectively manage the limited resources available. Although monitoring these opportunities may prove

difficult as many of these activities are organized and delivered by individual volunteers and/or community groups, a better understanding of the people and activities available in the municipality will allow the Recreation Committee to support or organize initiatives to engage those residents who may be served less effectively or feel excluded or not welcome in various community activities. This process would also be served well by broadening the scope of recreation and soliciting input from groups who might not traditionally be considered under the umbrella of recreation (e.g., in Powassan, the library) or those who may feel excluded from sport and recreation activities (e.g., sexual minorities or persons who identify as having a disability). In monitoring sport and recreation more effectively, the committee may also be able to consider the influence of interest groups or opinions which are over-represented or strongly heard in the community (e.g., those involved in activities taking place at the Sportsplex), and also consider the perspectives of those who may be excluded or oppressed in these processes (e.g., resource-poor groups of youths). Moving forward, the knowledge gained through this monitoring may provide a platform upon which to engage diverse community members in programs and initiatives, increase facility use (for diverse programming needs), and improve the collective understanding of sport and recreation in the community.

Secondly, as sport and recreation activities are understood as important social activities in the community which have the potential to perpetuate and change attitudes and beliefs both within and about the municipality, these platforms should be leveraged intentionally to promote a sense of community and collective identity. Further, as these activities are implicated in value systems associated with traditional understandings of community and contemporary or changing social contexts, the Recreation Committee might consider and capitalize on the existing assets in

the community (i.e., engage in asset-based community development; Misener & Schulenkorf, 2016). Given the way that these social activities are understood both as reflective and transformative in residents' lives, it is imperative that citizens are informed and aware of the policy and management systems and how they can participate in these systems. While significant resources are dedicated to activities and infrastructure that have traditionally been important in the lives of community members (e.g., the Sportsplex), changing demographics and social processes (e.g., aging baby boomers and the outmigration of rural youth) present new considerations for the management of community sport and recreation. These considerations require regular input from community members in order to express their wants, needs, and interests with regard to sport and recreation in the community in a changing rural context. Additionally, with improving technological infrastructure and connectivity, it can be expected that increasingly diverse recreational pursuits will be pursued within the municipality, potentially displacing previously celebrated sport and recreational activities.

Finally, the operations of Recreation Committee are also influenced by the changing social context and processes of the community. Indeed, as a small group with flexible membership, losing or gaining even a few members may result in radical shifts in priorities of the committee members and consequently on the distribution of public resources through their activities. Furthermore, as discussed with regard to the Trout Creek Community Centre, political pressures or opportunity structures within the municipal council may also have major impacts on the future activities and operations of the committee. Therefore, in line with requests made in the process of designing this research partnership (see chapter 2 and Appendix L), the mission and operations of the Recreation Committee should be formalized through the creation and

maintenance of a strategic planning process in order to guide the current and future activities of the committee. Following learnings gained through previous attempts of creating a strategic plan for recreation in the community (see Rich, et al., 2017), this strategic plan should be carefully crafted to reflect the social and political circumstances in the community. As community-based planning can be conceptualized in a variety of ways (e.g., social mobilization, social learning, radical planning; see Mair & Reid, 2007), the Recreation Committee may consider the range of approaches and the potential outcomes that they can derive from this process. As such, a strategic plan may be a living document and able to adapt to pressures, challenges, and opportunities. As a starting point, the Committee may clearly articulate and remain focused on the goal of supporting and offering recreation opportunities to the community as a collective (see a discussion of this in chapter 4).

In summary, supporting and offering sport and recreation for the community as a collective requires more than simply allocating resources into activities that appear to be popular or well attended. These processes require an awareness and attentiveness to collective or pluralistic obligations in order to mitigate the interests of various groups and consider diverse perspectives in the processes of policy making and program delivery (Etzioni, 2004). In the context of Powassan, these processes were complicated by aspects of rurality including population distribution and mobilities, as well as informal economies and traditional family and community values. Moving forward, managing and delivering sport and recreation for the community as a collective will require a continuous consideration of who is represented by political structures and processes, how these interests are reflected in decision making, and how

these activities can be intentionally managed to promote openness and community participation in the activities themselves as well as their management.

**Chapter 4: Getting Powassan Active: Developing Programs and Policies in a Rural
Community Context.**

PAR is a process characterized by partnership with those affected by research in order to effect systematic change in communities (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). As described by Frisby and colleagues (1997), the purpose of PAR is not only to decode social reality, but also to apply drastic changes to it. However, the way that the research partnerships are structured and the resulting processes through which communities are engaged in effecting change varies greatly between projects and community contexts (Roche, 2008). PAR approaches can be conceptualized along a continuum between the two historical and philosophical origins of the methodology (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003): the structured action research of Lewin (1946) designed to compare forms and conditions of social action while satisfying multiple stakeholders; and the emancipatory, educational, and participatory methodology of Friere (1972) which attempts to foster a critical consciousness of systems of oppression. Although these two approaches to PAR are ideologically different, they both may be engaged in various ways as research unfolds and emerges in diverse and dynamic community contexts.

In this chapter, we consider the ways that community partnerships were used to foster systemic and sustainable change in sport and recreation with the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee. In doing so, we discuss the ways in which we operationalized the concept of a PAR continuum (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003) to inform our role as researchers and as agents of change. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the strategies undertaken by the primary researcher and the community to support sustainable and effective program development and policy making that was effective in and for the community. Specifically, we examine the action initiatives undertaken with the community to report and reflect on the ways in which we (1) acquired and managed resources; (2) developed policies, procedures, and partnerships that

were intended to outlast the tenure of the research partnership; and finally (3) monitored and evaluated initiatives. Throughout these discussions we reflect on the ways in which our partnership shifted along the conceptual continuum of PAR in attempts to support community organizers in taking ownership of the process, effectively promoting sustainable community outcomes and ongoing initiative development. Through this chapter, we contribute to the literature on PAR in community sport management (e.g., Chalip, 1997; Frisby, et al; 1997; Frisby, et al., 2005; Green, 1997) by operationalizing the PAR continuum (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003) as a framework for thinking about the theory/practice, methods, and processes of PAR (Bradbury Huang, 2010). We argue that this approach may be considered by researchers and communities as a way of thinking about their efforts and strategic attempts to facilitate social change and sustainable community outcomes.

PAR and Community Change

PAR approaches are used as a process of working with communities to understand social realities and facilitate social change (Frisby, et. al., 1997). The process of PAR approaches may vary quite drastically between projects, however there are several commonalities within these approaches. Minkler and Wallerstein (2003) noted that core principles include a participatory orientation, community engagement, a process of co-learning, the development of capacity and systems at the community level, empowerment, and a balance of research and action. These principles underpin a process that typically includes defining a problem, understanding the community, mobilizing the community, collecting and analyzing data, as well as implementing and evaluating initiatives to elicit change (Frisby, et. al., 1997). Although these are common elements of the PAR process, given the explicit attempt to share power and engage community

members in the research process, these elements often do not play out so neatly or systematically, resulting in a messy and emergent approach to research (Frisby, et. al., 2005). Indeed, Reason and Bradbury (2001) highlight that an emergent developmental form is also a strength of action research that is underpinned by a participatory worldview. Practically, this emergent participatory approach to research allows for the production of culturally and logistically appropriate research, capacity building through the research process, engagement in generative disagreements, as well as increased synergy and alignment of the action/intervention and local system(s) in order to improve sustainability of project outcomes (Jagosh, et. al., 2012). Thus, participatory approaches offer unique insights that are not easily achieved through traditional (post) positivist research. As noted by Frisby and colleagues, PAR approaches “challenge sport management researchers to examine: (a) how knowledge in our field is constructed, (b) how relationships with research subjects are formed, and (c) how research does or does not benefit those being researched” (Frisby, et. al., 1997, p. 10).

Within participatory approaches, there are many ways in which researchers and communities can work together to achieve their desired outcomes. While no two projects may be designed exactly the same, the models of practices employed may involve different forms of advisory councils, employment structures, and community-researcher partnerships (Roche, et al., 2010). For example, Morford and colleagues (2004) described a PAR project where a municipality and research institution each hired one employee to form a team that worked together on the project. Reflected by a shared investment in the project, this employment structure was created in order to ensure that both academic and community interests were considered in the project and both organizations had control and ownership of the process.

Within recreation management, Frisby and colleagues (1997; 2002; 2005) discussed a PAR project where a group of low-income women were engaged as full partners and involved in various ways throughout all phases of the research process. While full and equal partnership may seem to appeal as an ideal option for participatory research, equitable power-sharing throughout a research project is a difficult and often unattainable goal (Israel, et. al., 2003). Rather, it is suggested that researchers should attempt to remain conscious of the power relationships inherent in research partnerships and attempt to shift these power relationships through collaborative and transparent decision making processes (Frisby, et. al., 2005). Therefore it is expected that researchers will drive certain aspects of the project, while communities will assume responsibilities for others throughout the process.

Although PAR approaches provide a strong methodological approach for co-producing research, knowledge, and action with communities, attempting to share power equitably presents several challenges and tensions within academic structures. These challenges are due to a discrepancy between academic expectations and discourses of research (largely situated in positivist traditions) and community expectations and capacities to engage with the research process (Frisby, et. al., 2005; Morford, et. al., 2004). Specifically, tensions arise around the language and discourse of communication in different contexts, the management and allocation of resources (e.g., funding), and ethical issues regarding access to information and data (Frisby, et. al., 2005). With regard to driving social change in the community, researchers are also faced with the conundrum of how to encourage, promote, or facilitate action that should be driven by the community. As noted by Frisby and colleagues

we struggled how much we should direct this [action] or let it emerge from discussions among members of the community-based organization....It became clear, however, that a much wider range of actions were experienced and called by research participants, and that actions were occurring on a number of different levels. (Frisby, et. al., 2005, p. 379)

Therefore navigating the struggle described by these authors requires iterative and reflexive thinking about the roles of the researchers and community members involved in the PAR project. Indeed, while ideally PAR researchers strive to elicit and support systemic change from within the community, it is naive to think that the researchers do not also play a key role in this process.

Agents of Change and Empowerment

Looking more broadly to the literature regarding sport, recreation, and (inter-)community development, researchers and/or development workers are sometimes described as agents of change (Schulenkorf, 2010; 2012). In many ways, parallels can be drawn between the roles of change agents involved in (inter-)community development work and researchers engaged in PAR projects. Change agents are described as community development workers who employ a variety of approaches to engage community members in projects and initiatives with the goal of eliciting social outcomes such as peace building, reconciliation, educational attainment, social inclusion, or cohesion (Schulenkorf, 2012). In the context of international development work, Schulenkorf (2010) identified several roles of change agents working in and through sport events. These roles included fostering community participation, creating networks, facilitating trust building, providing leadership and/or guidance, advocating for social imperatives, developing resources, encouraging innovation, providing financial support, and engaging in long term planning (Schulenkorf, 2010). In many ways, these roles

align quite succinctly with the roles of researchers engaged in community development (Frisby & Millar, 2002) and PAR (Frisby, et. al., 2005; Morford, et. al., 2004). Further, agents of change and researchers involved in community development work share the tasks of navigating complex social, cultural, and political contexts in order to identify and build on the current assets within communities to elicit change or improve social conditions of everyday living (Frisby & Millar, 2002; Israel, et. al., 2003; Misener & Schulenkorf, 2016; Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008). As such, Bolton, Fleming, and Elias (2008) suggest that community sport development (or community development through sport) does not occur as simple top-down or bottom-up processes, but rather is characterized by a nonhierarchical engagement of communities, citizens, and providers in complex and emerging processes of change.

A key concern for agents of change and PAR is the notion of empowerment. Empowerment itself is a contested topic within community development as those working to empower disadvantaged groups are inherently involved in a relationship characterized by an imbalance of power (Lawson, 2005). Similarly, it is well-established that working with communities does not constitute working with all members of the community as equitable sharing of power is idealistic, and certain individuals or groups within communities will likely be represented more prominently than others (Darroch & Giles, 2014; Frisby, et. al., 2005; Israel, et. al., 2003). Considering these tensions, Lawson (2005) discussed the definition of empowerment not as a one-way shift of power understood a finite resource, but rather as a change in the distribution of power and resources in a given context. He suggested that

Empowerment is a voluntary, collaborative process in which power and resources are redistributed and shared with the aim of enhancing individual and collective capacities,

efficacy, and well-being, addressing inequities, and, where poverty is implicated, promoting social and economic justice. (Lawson, 2005, p.147)

In the sport management literature, Schulenkorf (2010) suggested that empowerment should gradually involve a shifting of roles and responsibilities away from the change agent towards members of the communities that the program is intended to affect. Schulenkorf (2010) described a process where a progressively higher degree of control (over the program) is located within communities as initiatives are developed throughout a program (see Figure 3). While this model is helpful in conceptualizing the gradual shift towards the community members controlling all or most of the project, it should not obscure the complexity and potential fluidity of empowerment processes, particularly when a project or partnership is not characterized by a regular/predictable occurrence (e.g., a regularly occurring community sport event). Projects that may involve multiple stakeholders, changing contexts, and fluctuating levels of resources or support, may require more complicated models for understanding the processes of empowerment and the nexus of factors influencing these processes. In the contexts of PAR, navigating processes of empowerment can be facilitated and recorded by researchers and community members through reflexivity and regular engagement with the power relationships at work within the community and research partnership (see chapter five). This is particularly salient given the academic and ethical power structures inherent in the nature of the working in community-academic partnership (see Frisby, et. al., 2005).

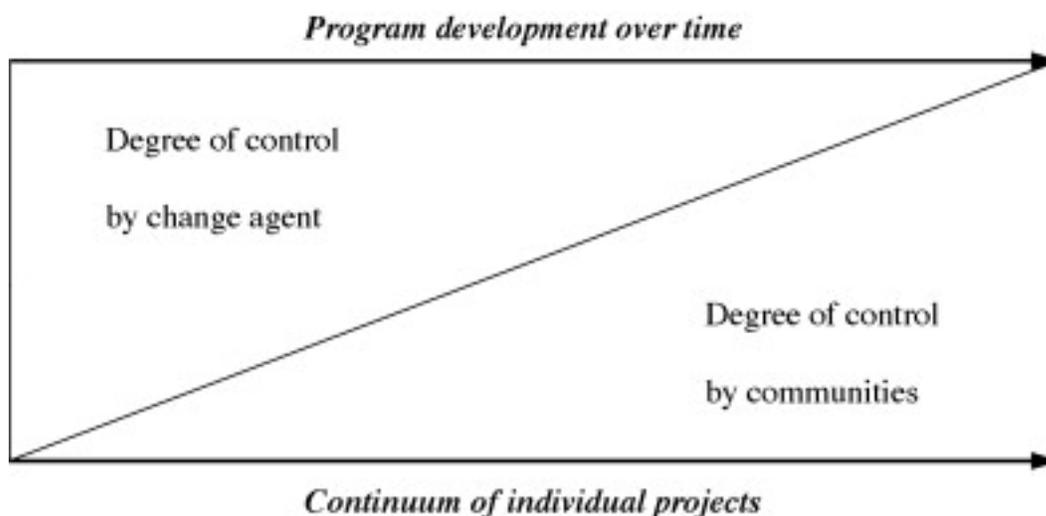


Figure 3. Model for Community Empowerment (Schulenkorf, 2010)

Conceptualizing a PAR Continuum in Sport and Recreation

Although PAR approaches vary in methodological form, these approaches are often traced back to well-known research traditions stemming from the work of Kurt Lewin, Paulo Friere, as well as (more recently) critical feminist theorists (Darroch & Giles, 2014). With regard to the historical and philosophical roots of PAR, Wallerstein and Duran (2003) suggest that approaches might be located on a continuum between the action research of Lewin (1946) and the critical emancipatory pedagogy of Friere (1972), referred to as northern and southern traditions (respectively). While Lewin's work (the northern tradition) involved engaging and satisfying multiple stakeholders in developing their own forms of action, Friere's work (the southern tradition) encouraged the development of a critical consciousness in oppressed populations in order to foster understandings and resistance broadly within populations. Thus, while both traditions sought to affect systemic change, their underlying ideologies and political economies are starkly different (Brown & Tandon, 1983). That is, while Lewin's approach

sought to satisfy all of the stakeholders through the cyclical process of fact finding, action, and evaluation, Friere's approach encouraged resistance among oppressed groups in order to encourage dialogue and acts of revolution against the oppressors or colonizers. Notably, while Lewin's approach sought to develop consensus and solutions from within a given group or organization, Friere's critical pedagogy actively sought to mobilize support and resources acquired outside of oppressed groups or communities (Brown & Tandon, 1983).

As a result of these methodological influences, current approaches to PAR may foster and support action in diverse ways, drawing from resources and support from both inside and outside of the immediate/community context. Brown and Tandon (1983) also noted that these two traditions are not perpetually separated, but rather that they offer distinct approaches with their own strengths and challenges which may be engaged, spliced, or cross-pollinated in diverse research projects - an idea that Wallerstein and Duran (2003) conceptualized as a continuum. Taken together, these two traditions offer a strong philosophical and ideological foundation upon and between which to locate PAR projects.

PAR in Sport and Recreation

Within the context of sport and recreation management, several researchers have undertaken projects reflecting various aspects of both northern and southern traditions of PAR. These projects have unfolded in various contexts (ranging from the organizational structures of national sport organizations to community recreation delivery in and for specific populations) and as such have been written up in various ways highlighting the implications and outcomes for both researchers and communities (see Bradbury Huang, 2010). Notably, the majority of this work has been undertaken in the context of developed countries with strong and established

organizational frameworks for sport and recreation (e.g., Australia and Canada). However, the potential for participatory and/or action research and development approaches have been highlighted for sport and development projects in developing contexts (e.g., see Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013 call for a critical Frierian pedagogical approach within international sport and development initiatives).

In the sport management literature, action research approaches grounded in the tradition of Lewin (1946) have been engaged in the contexts of national and state sport organizations in order to improve governance and strategic management. The approach applied by Ferkins, and colleagues, (2009, 2010) as well as Ferkins and Shilbury (2010, 2015) was described as a four step approach involving: (1) context analysis; (2) issue identification; (3) intervention and action, and; (4) monitoring and evaluation. Despite the much more structured approach applied in these projects, Ferkins and Shilbury (2015) also noted the importance of researcher reflections which allowed them to examine the influences (e.g., vested interests) which were affecting the research and outcome generation process more subtly. Further, the action research approach employed in these projects allowed the researchers to navigate and articulate the complex context of sport which can occur in public, private, and non-profit domains with broad goals of supporting mass participation as well as elite athlete development outcomes (Ferkins, et al., 2010).

A more critical and participatory approach to action research has also been engaged within sport and recreation. As we have outlined in several instances above, Frisby and colleagues (1997; 2002; 2005) utilized a feminist PAR approach with women of low-income in Vancouver, British Columbia. Their research project made respectable attempts to engage women in all phases of the research project including data collection and analysis as well as

outcome generation, and also reported critical reflections on these attempts. This work was foundational in the field of sport and recreation management as it remains one of the few examples in the field to explicitly discuss the tensions and possibilities of participatory research in sport and recreation as well as academic institutional structures.

Recently, researchers have begun to employ various forms of PAR in sport and recreation more frequently. For example, Baker and Giles (2008) employed a Freirian framework to critically discuss the implications of neo-colonial oppression in an through swim programs operating in Nunavut (one of Canada's Northern Territories). These authors suggest that dialogue and engagement with community members allowed for a better understanding of their needs and an incorporation of local and traditional knowledge into program management, a process that effectively represents an attempt to disrupt systems of oppression in and through recreation (Baker & Giles, 2008). Similarly, Hayhurst, Giles, & Radforth (2015) discussed the use of a post-colonial feminist participatory action research (PFPAR) approach in the context of an urban sport program for young Aboriginal women in Vancouver, Canada. The process employed in this study involved photo voice and explored womens' experiences of inequality as well as the ways that they were able to exercise agency in the construction, resistance, and transformation of inequalities in and through the sport program. In the context of sport development, Holt and colleagues (2013) documented a three year PAR project involving an after school program in a low-income neighbourhood in Edmonton, Alberta. The project was designed to provide sport participation opportunities and develop fundamental movement skills in collaboration with local schools. Notably, these researchers provided extensive descriptions of the ways that the program was shaped and adjusted based on reflections of the researchers and their evaluations of

engagement and partnerships with various stakeholders. In this instance, the project involved a change whereby the research team took more responsibility by assuming the role of delivering the program, a task which was initially undertaken by representatives from the provincial (state) sport organization (Holt, et. al., 2013). This work provided important insights into the sport development process by documenting how the resources available through the sport system did not necessarily meet the needs of the community, which resulted in a partnership that was adapted after evaluation revealed that it was not effective.

In each of these cases, attempts were made with communities to develop a critical awareness or understanding of sport and/or recreation systems, as well as their implications for diverse participants. These attempts might be interpreted as an attempt to embrace the participatory roots of PAR in order to more effectively elicit change in and for diverse communities, or groups who are not part of a rigid organizational structure. As such, PAR appears to be emerging as a effective approach to research whereby sport and recreation researchers can engage in partnerships with communities to effect systemic change. Importantly, these partnerships may emerge in many forms that are structured and formalized (e.g., action research in sport organizations) or more participatory and fluid (e.g., feminist and postcolonial participatory research with marginalized groups within communities). Next, we shift our focus to the Municipality of Powassan, and the ways that we engaged in fluid forms of action in order to provide sport and recreation participation opportunities.

Getting Powassan Active

Here, we present three (chronological) phases of the research project and discuss some of the strategies that were employed throughout the development of action initiatives which we

called the Get Active Powassan program. These strategies are discussed with regard to how they may be conceptualized along a continuum of action research approaches before we discuss their perceived effectiveness and potential to promote community ownership and program sustainability. Action initiatives and reflections presented in this section were drawn from the field notes and reflective journal entries of the primary researcher, and as such are both descriptive and critical in nature.

The Context of Change

Prior to 2015, the vast majority of recreational programs in Powassan (aside from seasonal swim programs) were offered through some form of partnerships with local service providers (e.g., by offering a fitness instructor the space in a municipal facility to run programs such as yoga or a boot camp in exchange for a small percentage of the revenues collected by the instructor). As explained by the Recreation and Facilities Manager, his “job is not to compete, but to fill gaps. If others [businesses] want to offer programs, they can” (personal communication, July 14th, 2015). This approach was understood as a win-win or more accurately a “can’t-lose” approach to program delivery. However, this approach also relied heavily on individuals in the municipality taking the initiative to develop programs, seek out the appropriate training, and commit to delivering the program on their own terms and timelines.

During early communications (before the formal research partnership was formed) with the Recreation and Facilities Manager, it was articulated that the Recreation Committee aspired to offer general sport and recreation programming at a low cost through the municipality in order to approve accessibility of sport and recreation opportunities, particularly for children and youths. These discussions indicated that the organization was in fact receptive to change and

interested in developing their capacity to deliver sport and recreation opportunities. This organizational readiness is an important consideration, as it has been identified in the capacity building literature as a factor which influences the process of strengthening or improving an organization's strategies (Casey, Payne, & Eime, 2012; Millar & Doherty, 2016). Subsequently, the action components involved in this project included the development of a summer sport and recreation day camp program as well as the provision of equipment to the general public to support participation in sport and recreation activities. The development of such a program was necessarily accompanied by a set of policies and procedures that regulated the delivery of the program and access to equipment. As discussed in chapter three, the size of the community and the corresponding budget for recreation did not allow for the dedication of resources specifically for the project (e.g., a staff member or task force). Therefore, the research partnership was crafted and largely constituted by a symbiotic relationship between the primary researcher and the Recreation and Facilities Manager. Together, these two individuals assumed the initial roles in managing the action initiatives described below. All activities were reported to the Recreation Committee at monthly meetings in order to solicit direction as well as support (e.g., approval of policies, volunteering to participate as program chaperones, facilitating connections with individuals and groups in the community) on various initiatives.

Acquiring and Managing Resources

From the outset, attempts were made to situate the action component(s) of the project within the community's existing management and organizational structures. As noted by Frisby and colleagues (2005) tensions can arise in the PAR process due to the restrictions placed on control and use of funding and resources accessed through research-based funding bodies and

subsequently controlled through academic institutions - preventing community members from deciding when and how to allocate funds. In this case, we attempted to acquire resources through the community rather than through academic or research-based sources. This is not to say that the project was not facilitated and heavily supported through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Fellowship, however the nature of that funding (a training scholarship awarded to the primary researcher) allowed us to pursue funding for the action initiatives as a municipal organization.

We applied and were successful in obtaining a community sport and recreation grant from the Ontario Sport and Recreation Community Fund. The purpose of this funding source is to improve access to and quality of physical activity through sport and recreation in communities, particularly for individuals and groups who experience barriers to participation or those who are typically less active. Initiatives funded through this program are intended to be underpinned by ideas of physical literacy and engage in attempts to strengthen the community sport and recreation sector through training coaches, youths, and volunteers (Government of Ontario, 2017). As such, the grant is aligned with the broader policy objectives of the federal government as articulated in the *Canadian Sport Policy* (Government of Canada, 2012) and the *Canadian Sport for Life Long-term Athlete Development Model* (Sport for Life, 2017) as well as implicated in the programs offered through the National Coaching Certification Program (Coaching Association of Canada, 2017). While these policy frameworks provided resources to support development of sport and recreation in the municipality (e.g., by providing access to standardized coach training), they also created complex systems to be navigated, which was

particularly difficult in a recreation department with only one full time employee who did not have formal training in grant writing or sport and recreation policy/systems.

There are several insights that may be gained through an examination of the approach we took to acquiring and managing resources in this research partnership. Firstly, the process of preparing the grant application with the community provided an early assessment of the opportunities and challenges of working in the community context, most notably through our attempts to align our program with the policy systems informing the funding allocation. It became clear through this process that the human resources available within the municipality were not equipped to navigate the complex language and policy speak of the granting agency. Indeed, the primary researcher reflected that technical knowledge about concepts such as physical literacy, fundamental movement skills, and capacity building (beyond that which he could recall from his own undergraduate and graduate level education in the field) was required to complete the application. Therefore, in this instance, the primary researcher sought out information and resources to educate and inform community members on the policy systems and programs available through the current sport and recreation system (e.g., the Fundamental Movement Skills Workshop offered through the National Coaching Certification Program). The complexity and lack of understanding of these systems was reinforced when we actually attempted to run the Fundamental Movement Skills Workshop in the municipality. Through the funding, the workshop was offered free of charge on a weekend in hopes of recruiting a variety of community members (e.g., youths, volunteers, community coaches, etc.) involved in sport and recreation. Despite extensive attempts to advertise the opportunity through local organizations, social media, and municipal posting boards, there was a very low number of participants - all of

whom were either required to be there (as they were offered employment in the summer program) or were personally recruited by the primary researcher. Discussions following the poor turnout highlighted that there may be a lack of understanding of what the course provided and a misalignment between what the sport system defines as a coach, and how community members understood their roles.

Korina said the course was great but that there just wasn't any interests from others involved with [her organization]. This had me reflecting on the tensions of "coaching" in a "community" setting and not an elite development club. Perhaps the coaches in the organization really don't see themselves as coaches, so much as chaperones who are there to encourage kids to be active. As [her organization] does not have any competitive teams, perhaps the coaches in the organization are not interested in "coach" training. (Reflective Entry, May 31st, 2015)

The process of working with community members to prepare the grant application and then carry out capacity building initiatives according to the stipulations of the funding provided several points of discussion with regard to PAR approaches. Firstly, navigating the language and structure of the multiple organizations required to access resources provided by sport and recreation systems was closely reflective of a participatory approach or the southern tradition of action research (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003). Particularly as this process involved the primary researcher seeking out information and support from outside of the community (Brown & Tandon, 1983) and then further by engaging in critical discussions with community members and organizers to reflect upon the ways that policy language and systems were not necessarily understood or useful within the constraints of their community context. These processes allowed

both academic and community partners to critically reflect on provincial and national policy structures and the way that the resources they provided were more accessible and/or applicable in certain contexts. Effectively, we reflected on the ways that these systems privilege and marginalize different groups in different ways. In the action research literature, this may be interpreted as part of the process of developing a critical consciousness among community members, which is characteristic of the southern tradition of participatory research (Brown & Tandon, 1983; Freire, 1972).

Accessing resources through the community grant also allowed us to craft the partnership in a way that situated resources within the existing municipal management structure. As a result, the first author was hired as an employee for the municipality rather than controlling funds and resources through the academic institution. This proved useful, as it provided the municipality with the flexibility of allocating their budget according to their priorities (within the confines of the funding requirements) rather than that of the researchers. This approach did however introduce a third party (the granting agency) with their own objectives to the process (as discussed above). As the funding agency required reporting of very specific outcomes (e.g., number of participation opportunities, number of partners engaged, etc.), which in some cases did not align directly with the priorities of the municipality (e.g., purchasing and making equipment accessible), we were able to engage in “very realistic conversations about what ‘needs’ to be done (through reporting, budgeting, etc.) and what ‘will work’ (i.e., what our human resources and interest level will support)” (Reflective Entry, November 25th, 2015). This process allowed us to not only manage resources in line the with expectations of the funding body, but also to incorporate local knowledge and expectations into resource management and

craft a system for managing these resources after our commitments to the funders were complete. As the intention from the outset was to use the acquired funding to develop a program that would continue to operate beyond the two year funding window, consideration of the local context of resource management was crucial. Further, engagement in the research partnership provided additional resources and support in navigating policy systems while acknowledging and responding to local circumstances, effectively developing the skills within the municipality (e.g., partnership development, program development, monitoring/evaluating/reporting, etc.) required to work with this type of government funding agency.

Developing Programs, Policies, and Partnerships

With the primary researcher employed by the municipality, we were also able to intentionally embed principles of PAR within the development of initiatives within the municipality. This occurred by soliciting input from the community members (beyond the Recreation Committee) in the process of developing the program both intentionally (through initiatives embedded in the program) as well as informally through interviews and casual conversation - in many ways drawing from a community development approach (Frisby & Millar, 2002; Misener & Schulenkorf, 2016). While we were constrained (to some extent) by the requirements of the funding, we were still able to shape the program according to discussions with community members and reflections on what was working and what could be improved. From the outset, we planned to develop a sport and recreation day camp program for children that would operate over school holidays along with a series of workshops for seniors regarding nutrition and active living. These initiatives were accompanied by several municipal policies and facilitated through partnerships with existing community groups. However, the development of

programs, policies, and partnerships emerged and evolved in various ways according various forms of input from the community.

Shortly after receiving the funding for the project we hosted a program launch event where community members were invited to visit the Sportsplex to learn about the funding and our plans for the program (e.g., budget projections, plans for program structure, etc.). At this meeting, community members were also invited to provide direction regarding which sports and recreational activities they would like to have offered for children/youth, adults, and seniors. This was undertaken in an effort to direct the funding allocated for equipment purchase towards the activities that community members were interested in trying. While we were required to remain relatively committed to the program structure that we had outlined in the grant application, the activities that we offered (and the corresponding equipment that we purchased) within the program were easily adaptable within the funding structure. As a result, we were able to respond to this input and support different groups within the community who were not represented in the initial grant application.

There was quite a bit of interest in opportunities for adult programs which is unfortunately not included in the funding. However we did discuss other ways that we could support these types of programs with the funding and otherwise... [For example] there was a lot of interest in Pickle Ball as it has become a popular activity among seniors in the community. (Reflective Entry, November 25, 2014)

As a result of these discussions, we purchased Pickle Ball equipment that was subsequently used by a local group of adults and seniors. In exchange, representatives from the group came and offered a workshop for the camp program participants during the week of the summer dedicated

to racquet sports. The evolution of this partnership was facilitated by engaging community members at various stages of program development as well as attempting to satisfy multiple stakeholders in community recreation. In this case, employing a community development approach within the program (Frisby & Millar, 2002) allowed us to capitalize on the available resources to influence the program that was beneficial for multiple stakeholders. As this process involved engaging community members in an effort to develop strategies to benefit and meet the requirements of multiple groups (e.g., seniors groups, program developers, and funders), it was informed more coherently by a northern approach to action research (Lewin, 1946).

In order to manage the resources and programs that emerged from this project and attempt to facilitate the sustainability of these initiatives, we also created a series of policies and procedures. These included a policy and procedure manual for staff of the sport and recreation day camp program (Appendix G), a lending policy for the equipment that was made available to the public (Appendix F), and eventually a needs assessment (Appendix K) and strategic planning tool to guide the overall direction of the Recreation Committee (Appendix L) as the former *Recreation Action Plan* (dmA Planning & Management Services, 2005) was understood to be outdated and (as discussed in chapter 3) was poorly accepted by residents of the municipality following its initial release. In developing these policies and procedures, we very consciously attempted to locate them within existing organizational structures with specific attention to where and by whom they were to be used (e.g., by youth programmers and municipal staff who may have little knowledge of sport and recreation, with consideration of several communities within the region), as well as to adhere to the standards and requirements of organizations (e.g.,

the Ontario Camps Association) who regulated similar programs in the province (see Ontario Camps Association, 2012).

Developing these policies and procedures also involved the consideration of several previous issues that had arisen within recreation (e.g., misunderstanding expectations of recreation staff, community members borrowing municipal property without approval, equipment being used improperly, etc.). Engagement with these issues and the narratives surrounding how they unfolded allowed us to craft policy and procedure documents that proactively addressed tensions that were expected to arise, and formalize a process for how they should be handled. In most cases, these policies and procedures were drafted by the primary researcher and the Recreation and Facilities Manager and then subsequently passed along to the Recreation Committee (and municipal council when appropriate) for input, feedback, and approval when necessary. Importantly, these policies and procedures were developed as living documents and guidelines in order to emphasize that they should be revised and edited annually. This was emphasized in order to encourage empowerment of community organizers and to allow the policies and procedures to evolve and effectively remain relevant beyond the tenure of the research partnership. This was best illustrated in the strategic planning document that was created to direct the ongoing work of the Recreation Committee (Appendix L). The strategic planning document itself was adapted from a recreation planning tool (Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, n.d.) based on the *National Framework for Recreation in Canada* (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association & Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, 2015). However, with the planning document we also created a needs assessment tool to solicit input from community members on what can and should be considered by recreation policy

makers. The needs assessment tool is essentially a pre-formatted letter that community members can complete and submit outlining what they would like the Recreation Committee to consider, who it will affect, as well as expected costs, outcomes, and impacts. The impetus for the needs assessment tool and strategic plan emerged from a lack of formal channels for recreation participants and staff to communicate feedback, as well as tensions that arose as a result of reactive decisions made by the committee. Without strategic direction and a formal means of collecting and managing feedback, it was noted that the Recreation Committee was more susceptible to being constructed as gatekeepers and power brokers who made decisions based on personal rather than public interests. For example, reflecting on some unfortunate staffing issues with seasonal recreation workers, the following was noted regarding the complexities of navigating standards and requirements for the local pool:

In this context, I am left questioning the capacity of groups in (some) small communities to effectively train and retain qualified staff...stay on top of increasingly complex policies and standards that are incoherent and inconsistent across organizations, and then also make evidenced-based decisions when faced with these sort of issues. As a result, it is not surprising that decisions are often reactive and based on anecdotal claims (at best), as these groups are being asked to navigate systems that are created for organizations with much higher levels of capacity and resources. (Reflective Entry, June 30, 2016)

Certain members of the Recreation Committee were also understood to bring additional resources (e.g., through membership or connections with the municipal council and other community groups) which influenced their ability to sway discussions towards certain interests - a process reflective of what is called advocacy coalitions in larger policy fora (Green &

Houlihan, 2004; Houlihan, 2005). However, just as the public management of sport and recreation at the national level is characterized by the complexity of identifying issues, problems, and outcomes within a sector of competing interests informed by multiple paradigms (Sam, 2009), it is not surprising that local policy making would experience some of the same tensions. Therefore, these tools provided a way in which the general public could formally engage in the policy making process and were intended to assist the committee in making strategic decisions after considering multiple perspectives from the community. The development of these policies and procedures also relied on critical reflections pertaining to several aspects of the Recreation Committees operations, including: their decision making practices, their capacity to effectively manage programs, and the many policy contexts in which they were involved (e.g., the local municipality, provincial and national sport and recreation, as well as the public health sector). Thus, these policies were created in attempt to provide strategic direction while also regulating a process that involved regular engagement with the public and encouragement of reflection and action according to the dynamic nature of the community and the many (changing) contexts involved in the work of the Recreation Committee.

Initiatives in the community also involved developing partnerships with several existing groups. While community groups provided important resources that were integral to the initiatives developed, there were also instances where existing organizations and their bureaucratic practices created difficulties for the GAP program. A notable example of this was a somewhat turbulent partnership with the local school board. Throughout the project, we relied on the local school as a space to run programs. To facilitate this partnership we developed an agreement where the municipality provided pool rental hours to the school in exchange for the

use of the school for our GAP programming. However, as the program developed and we felt the need to adjust our hours of operation to suit the needs of community members, we found the bureaucratic system of the school board difficult to navigate.

We've been told we can't use the school past 3:00pm over the March break, even though we've provided over \$900 worth of pool time scheduled flexibly for them... On the other side, we have the Chairman of the Board telling [the Mayor] how keen he is on partnering with communities. It all seems so contradictory; the professional or bureaucratic system doesn't allow for the flexibility that is necessary to respond to the needs of the community. (Reflective Entry, February 3, 2016)

Following these tensions, we decided to pursue this opportunity to exercise agency and act against the bureaucratic systemic that was affecting our ability to address the needs of the community. Informed by discussions with others who worked in education, we drafted a letter to send to the school board to address our concerns about our partnership and the restrictions on our use of the school space. Although the letter was never sent out (i.e., it underwent several drafts but was not officially sent on behalf of the municipality), the process of attempting to officially articulate these concerns led to advocacy from the municipal council on our behalf (i.e., the Mayor made a personal call to the Chairman to discuss the issue) and eventually the school board accommodating our requests. Although the exercise was time consuming, advocacy by the municipal council brought our concerns to the school board, effectively raising awareness of the constraints imposed by the school booking system and their effects on community user groups. Here, the process of coming together to articulate concerns raised through the education-recreation partnership actually affected change in the bureaucratic system. Therefore, action in

this case took place in the systems that constrained the ways in which the municipality was able to engage in partnerships with stakeholders in the community. This example demonstrates a productive tension and disagreement, which led to active resistance by community members - a process reflective of the participatory tradition of PAR.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Following the development and implementation of programs, policies, and procedures, we also proceeded to monitor and evaluate outcomes of these initiatives. While monitoring and evaluation occurred regularly through the process of reflection, here we discuss the formal monitoring and evaluation of the summer sport and recreation day camp program. Importantly, this represents only a snapshot of early efforts to understand how initiatives were unraveling in the community. As a PAR approach is characterized by longterm commitment to partnerships within the community (Israel, et. al., 2003) we engaged in monitoring and evaluation of initiatives throughout two annual cycles of the program. In reflecting on these activities, we do not intend to report on longterm social and or systemic change. Rather, we reflect on the ways that we engaged in monitoring and evaluation and developed a system that was feasible, effective, and useful for community organizers. Importantly, this was accompanied by a distancing of the primary researcher within the processes of monitoring and evaluation, informed somewhat by Schulenkorf's (2010, 2012) model of community empowerment.

During the first annual cycle of the program, the primary researcher was employed as the program coordinator for the summer sport and recreation day camp program and the monitoring and evaluation measures were driven primarily by the funding body reporting requirements. During the first weeks of the program, the primary researcher worked with four

local youth who were hired to deliver the program. These early weeks focused on establishing a schedule and fine tuning daily and weekly procedures that were effective for staff while maintaining the integrity of the program with regard to maintaining high levels of quality physical activity and instruction in specific sport and recreational activities. For example, the first days of the program we were made aware that some program participants were unable to leave the program with certain family members which resulted in adapting our registration forms and sign-out processes. In the following weeks of the summer, the primary researcher gathered feedback from staff as well as other community partners (e.g., the library, the Recreation Committee, etc.) to evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships and the broader perceptions of the program in the municipality. This allowed us to change the schedule and create more flexibility in the use of pool time based on registration numbers without compromising the integrity of the lessons provided by the swim instructors. Finally, at the end of the summer, program evaluation was conducted cumulatively for all participants in the program. The cumulative evaluation involved an online survey for caregivers who registered participants and involved a series of questions to assess their perceptions of physical activity (e.g., were participants more active as a result of their participation in the program?; did participants improve motor/sport specific/swimming skills as a result of participation in the program?; were participants more motivated to be active following the program?), social (e.g., did participants enjoy the social environment of the program?; were participants able to make friends in/through the program?; were participants able to develop social skills - such as communication and leadership skills - through the program?), and administrative (e.g., how satisfied are you with the registration process?, the friendliness/expertise of staff?, the timing/duration of the program?, etc.) aspects of the program.

Cumulatively, these evaluation procedures allowed us to collect a variety of perspectives of the program, including that of the staff, community partners, and participants (see Appendix H).

Initially, we had identified that the purpose of the second cycle would be to adapt the program to find a model that was both effective for staff and participants, as well as financially viable for the municipality. As a result, in the second cycle of the program, there was a slight increase in registration fees and deliberate attempts to tweak procedures, evaluate outcomes, and assess these changes. During the second cycle of the program, the primary researcher assumed a more supportive role in the delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the program. For this cycle, two of the local youths returning to work in the program assumed the roles previously occupied by the primary researcher/program coordinator. This change allowed these youths to secure four months of employment to set up the program and complete a variety of other tasks (e.g., maintenance, administration, etc.). Together (i.e., the primary researcher, the Recreation and Facilities Manager, and the youth leaders), and without the same stipulations for reporting imposed by the funding body, we developed our own system for monitoring and evaluating the program. We noted that it was important to get feedback from parents regarding the logistics and administration of the program, however the Recreation and Facilities Manager noted that it was also important to get feedback from participants in the program to assess how the program could continue to respond to their experiences and maintain a fun and engaging atmosphere. As a result, we adapted the evaluation survey used during the first cycle of the program (see Appendix I). The adapted satisfaction survey had more open ended questions (e.g., Are there any other activities you would like to see us do at camp? and; do you have any general comments/feedback about the program administration?”, etc.) as well questions to assess the needs of the community

and motivations for registration (e.g., what was your primary motivation for registering?; for you, how important is the ability to sign up for the program on short notice?). Additionally, we developed an arts-based evaluation procedure for participants in the program whereby participants were invited to illustrate and/or describe their most and least enjoyable part of their week. These evaluation activities were loosely based on arts-based methodologies commonly employed in community-based research and PAR approaches (Finley, 2003). Arts-based evaluations completed in the program allowed for regular feedback from participants which were used to contextualize and complement the data collected in the modified satisfaction survey. This was helpful as feedback directly from program participants allowed the program to be adapted to be more effective and enjoyable (see Figure 4). While the satisfaction survey provided feedback on administrative aspects and perceived outcomes of the program, the arts-based participant feedback provided insights into daily experiences in the program which was helpful in shaping

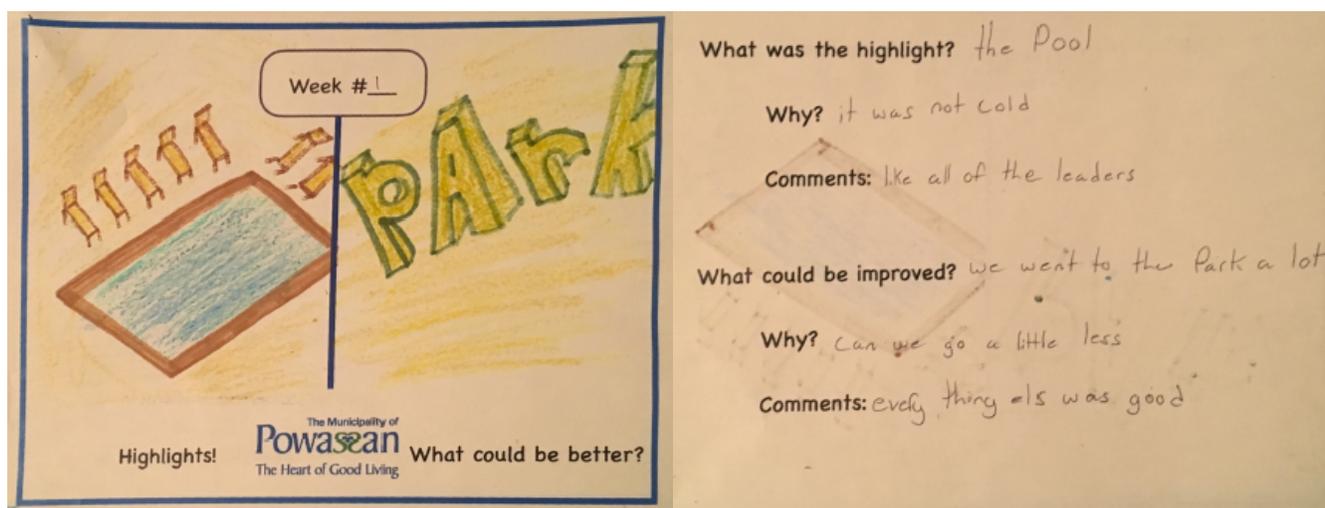


Figure 4. Arts-based Participant Feedback. This image is an example of feedback provided by a participation in the day camp program.

the logistics of the program such as scheduling and activity selection. For example, participants articulated that they enjoyed time and programming offered at the pool, but they felt that there was a lot of time spent at the park where the free play time took place. From this feedback, programmers were able to gauge appropriate amounts of time spent at different activities in order to keep participants active and engaged in programming.

The modified satisfaction survey was distributed to caregivers on a bi-weekly basis and arts-based evaluations were facilitated and collected by the youth leaders weekly. The satisfaction survey was distributed and collected by the primary researcher as he had access to data collection software (Qualtrics) through his institution. Subsequently, the primary researcher met with all staff on a bi-weekly basis to review evaluation data and reflect on the ways that feedback was and was not useful in informing the program structure and procedures. For example, several issues emerged around the age of some participants in the program. At first, the program was advertised for participants aged 6-14 years. This range was originally chosen based on different supervising ratios required for participants under six years of age (Ontario Camps Association, 2012). However, it came to our attention (through social media posts) that people were interested in registering younger children, and in some cases had even lied about their ages on registration forms to register younger children. Further, it came to our attention that older children were feeling treated unfairly “like children” (personal communication, July 25, 2016) as the majority of participants who registered were under 10 years of age. As a result of this feedback, the decision was made to allow younger participants to register for the program at a higher cost than older participants in order to offset the costs of hiring an additional staff member (who had recently finished a diploma in early childhood education) to help supervise and support

these younger participants. Additionally, the decision was made that for the following cycle the maximum age for participants would be 12 years of age as it was too difficult to offer meaningful programming for the older participants and registration numbers of this group were too low to justify alternative options such as separating participants into age groups. The idea of providing a volunteer opportunity (e.g., a councillor in training program) was also discussed as something that might be explored in the future if appropriate candidates were interested.

Collectively, monitoring and evaluation of the program allowed for the the primary researcher and the community organizers to continually adapt the program to become more effective and (hopefully) financially viable. The nature of the partnership was also conceptualized such that the primary researcher assumed a less prominent role in the process as means of attempting to foster empowerment among community organizers (Schulenkorf, 2010, 2012). These processes incorporated many aspects of PAR (e.g., cycles of reflection and action as well as participatory evaluation methods) conducted by the primary researcher and community organizers. The monitoring and evaluating of the program and subsequent adaptations to the administrative and operating procedures also allowed us facilitate a redistribution of power through the research process and engage participatory evaluation methods as an effective means for community organizers to respond and adapt to the needs of community members more broadly.

Activating the Continuum as a Strategy for PAR

In this chapter, we have documented the way that many action initiatives were conceptualized and emerged with regard to our research partnership. In doing so we attempted to operationalize the concept of a PAR continuum (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003) and demonstrate the

ways that we engaged this continuum in and through our partnership. Although we presented these action initiatives in chronological order, we discussed the ways that engaged both historical and philosophical approaches to PAR in various ways throughout the different phases of the research partnership. Thus, we have attempted to demonstrate how our project involved a continuous shifting along this continuum and engaged principles such as satisfying multiple stakeholders and building consensus as well as fostering a critical consciousness and taking collective action in and against the systems that were preventing community organizers from effectively responding to the needs of community members.

Throughout these processes, the idea of community empowerment emerged in many ways. In our partnership we attempted to engage in responsible and reflexive attempts to redistribute power and resources within the community (Lawson, 2005) as part of a broader approach to developing new resources, building capacity for future action, and fostering a critical awareness of the systems implicated in developing and delivering community sport and recreation programs. While, processes of redistributing power and facilitating changes in and with communities are complex processes that cannot be fully evaluated over the short duration of this study, it is our intention that our description of the way we engaged in partnerships and action initiatives might provide the foundation for more critical discussion about PAR in community sport and recreation management.

In summary, this chapter illustrated an operational framework for thinking about participatory action research/practice and particularly the methods and processes (Bradbury Huang, 2010) through which we might engage in this approach. Throughout our partnership, the nature of the project shifted along the conceptual continuum as we engaged in initiatives that

drew from aspects of both northern and southern traditions of PAR (Brown & Tandon, 1983; Wallerstein & Duran, 2003). Therefore, we suggest that this shifting between approaches allowed us to effectively navigate the complex social and political systems involved in developing initiatives in the community which are also implicated in broader policy systems. As sport and recreation are located (in various ways) in the public, private, and non-profit sectors (Ferkins, et al., 2010), our shifting along the PAR continuum allowed us to engage in different forms of action under different circumstances. This was particularly useful in the context of Powassan as a rural bedroom community with extensive sport and recreation infrastructure that enabled and constrained program development and delivery in various ways. Thus, future researchers and communities may consider a PAR continuum in order to conceptualize their approaches to community action; not as a singular and monolithic initiative, but rather as a complex, dynamic, and fluid processes consisting of multiple initiatives which can contribute to strategic planning and the achievement of overall goals and objectives.

Chapter 5: Reflection and Action in Community Sport and Recreation Management⁵

⁵ An earlier version of this chapter was published as:

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Within academic and community based research, PAR approaches have emerged as effective strategies to engage communities in research that addresses pertinent and practical issues in a given community context. Rather than being described as a method or methodology, action oriented approaches are often described as orientations to research that seek to de-centre power relationships inherent in the research process (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). As defined by Bradbury Huang, action research can be described as “an orientation to knowledge creation that arises in a context of practice and requires researchers to work with practitioners” not only to understand processes and phenomena, “but also to effect desired change as a path to generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders” (2010, p. 93). While this definition succinctly defines and describes the purpose of action research, the process of conducting this sort of inquiry may not unfold as eloquently. Indeed, adopting this orientation to research entails a relinquishing of control over the research process which is atypical of conventional research methodologies and ethical procedures. Within the context of sport and recreation management, Frisby and colleagues (2005) discussed the messiness of the approach and how ethical, funding, and academic systems shaped the ways and extent to which community engagement is facilitated in the research process.

The complexity of action research approaches is underpinned by a commitment and sensitivity to the context of community(ies) within which the research takes place. This commitment is partially achieved through reflexivity and recognition of the positionality and assumptions of the researcher or research team, which may or may not align with the understandings and realities of the communities involved. The process of self-study in this context can be referred to as first-person action research (Marshall & Mead, 2005; Torbert,

2001). While reflection is a useful methodological tool for addressing and understanding power relationships in the research process, it can also be transformational in shaping our thinking and understandings of ourselves and the roles that we play in the many contexts of our lives (Humphrey, 2007; Marshall, 2001). In the context of research, Burgess described the “principles, promises, and perils” of action research approaches and how addressing her underlying assumptions through first-person inquiry allowed her to “embrace these tensions of personal transformation and community partnership” (Burgess, 2006, p. 420). In her reflective account, Burgess (2006) illustrated the effective use of first person action inquiry by a graduate student in order to adopt a participatory worldview, navigate power relationships, and better understand the complex processes inherent in action research. Similarly, Humphrey (2007) utilized a first-person approach as a graduate student to examine her dual and changing roles, and understandings of herself as an insider and outsider in the various contexts of her action research project in an organizational setting. Within this work, conducted with self-organizing groups in union settings, Humphrey (2007) explored the complexities of navigating multiple roles, which exist along continuums (of insider and outsider) within multiple contexts. Together, these insights (Burgess, 2006; Humphrey, 2007) demonstrate the messiness and uncertainty of the often turbulent processes involved in first person action inquiry and how reflexivity can be useful in navigating and understanding these processes.

In this chapter, we discuss the first author’s reflexive practice throughout the research process. The purpose of this chapter is to explore and describe the process of employing first-person action inquiry, how it enriched the research processes and outcomes, as well as how it informed our understanding of researchers (ourselves) as agents of change (Bradbury Huang,

2010). In doing this, we respond to Shaw and Hoerber's (2016) call for more diversified methodological approaches as we demonstrate how research informed by diverse paradigms (e.g., a participatory worldview) may be deemed beneficial for providing new perspectives, and how alternative criteria (e.g., reflexivity) may be used by sport management researchers to judge the value of this work. Through the first author's voice we explore both the roles of student as the primary researcher, as well as that of the academic supervisor in overseeing and supporting an action research project in the intersectional realm of rural sport and recreation management. In order to tackle these objectives, we first offer an overview of the research project and how learning about a participatory worldview and action research approaches informed the research process. We draw from processes of reflection and action to discuss the specific ways in which first-person action research was used to enrich the research process: a) by enhancing our awareness, understanding, and interpretation of identities and contexts within the community, and b) by informing emerging methodological considerations to better reflect these community contexts. Through these examples, we demonstrate how self-study served to strengthen the research process methodologically and improved the project by allowing us to coherently understand and articulate the role of the researchers as agents of change within the process. Further, we suggest that this understanding of researchers as agents of change may be useful for understanding the role of practitioners engaged in community sport management and governance. Finally, we reflect more broadly on the procedures and paradigms involved in first-person research and echo the suggestion of Kerwin and Hoerber (2015) that reflection may be a useful and fruitful methodological tool for sport and recreation management researchers.

The Process of Reflection and First-Person Inquiry

Reflexivity is an important part of participatory research approaches. Key thinkers who influenced the development of PAR, such as Lewin (1946) and Freire (1972) emphasized the importance of action-reflection cycles and a critical consciousness respectively (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003). While reflections can take many forms, Torbert (2001) discussed the processes of first, second, and third-person research and practice. First-person inquiry involves “self-study-in-the-midst-of-action” (Torbert, 2001, p. 252) and reflection on the gaps or incongruences within and without of ourselves, our identities, and our social systems. Second and third-person research/practice involve the study of our own interactions with others, and the workings of groups or organizations, respectively (Torbert, 2001). Marshall (2001) described first-person inquiry as a process of iterative cycles that examine personal meaning making, assumptions, questioning, and understandings. She also contended that reflection is not a personal activity but rather a “life process” as it involves examining and understanding your multiple selves in and out of the research process (Marshall, 2001, p. 438). This process can be useful for navigating and documenting personal transformation and power struggles that are often part of conducting research. The first-person inquiry described by Burgess (2006), and the reflections of Humphrey (2007) are illustrative of the processes of transformation undertaken as graduate students conducting participatory research and reconciling roles of researcher-practitioner and insider-outside respectively. As outlined below, these accounts were highly influential in this work and directed reflections and navigation of multiple selves and roles as insiders, outsiders, and agents of change in the community. Further, interactive discussions between the doctoral student as (sometimes) insider and supervisor as outsider provided additional insights into the reflexive

process, allowing particular attention to be paid to assumptions and so-called biases from each perspective. We reflect on these processes below in describing the evolution of our participatory approach.

Reflective Research in Sport Management

As much of the sport and recreation management literature focuses on group or organizational analysis (more coherently aligned with third-person research), there is a dearth of inquiry employing first and second person approaches. Some examples of self-study in sport management include work by Hoeber and Kerwin (2013) and Kerwin and Hoeber (2015) who used collaborative self-ethnography to examine their experiences as female sport fans, as well as Kodama, Doherty, and Popovic (2013) and Fleming and Fullagar (2007) who used autoethnography to explore the experience of volunteering at a major sport event and a gendered experience in cricket management, respectively. While PAR approaches have been employed in various ways in the sport management literature (see Ferkins, et al., 2009; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2015; Frisby, et al., 1997; Frisby et al., 2005 Green, 1997; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015; Vail, 2007), few publications have directly addressed the process of reflection within this methodological approach. Throughout this project, the first author employed a first-person research/practice approach in an attempt to better understand the role of the researcher(s) as the research instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), as an insider (and sometimes outsider, Humphrey, 2007), and as an agent of change (Bradbury Huang, 2010) in the context of rural community sport and recreation management. The intention herein is to provide a discussion about the process of reflexivity in community based field work demonstrating how participatory

approaches can be strengthened through methodological and theoretical involvement of the community, specifically in sport and recreation management research.

The Research Project

Broadly, the research project in question used a PAR approach to examine the processes and sociocultural significance of sport and recreation in a rural Canadian community, with an emphasis on developing managerial approaches (e.g., effective program and policy development) to increase participation in sport and recreation. The project was conducted with the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee. Powassan, located about 300 kilometres north of Toronto, was the small town where the lead author spent the first 18 years of his life. After leaving town for the better part of eight years to pursue post-secondary education (including doctoral coursework), a decision was made to return to live, work, and conduct dissertation research. As the basis of the project was about exploring the broad sociocultural significance of sport and recreation in this rural community through an embedded participatory approach, working in close collaboration with the Recreation and Facilities Manager and the Recreation Committee was essential. This collaboration involved the first author participating in grant writing, program design and delivery, staff training, marketing, promotion, event planning, policy making, as well as program delivery and evaluation. Given the nature of participatory design, the project evolved based on working with the committee to focus on the role that sport and recreation played in community development and how the Recreation Committee could support these processes. Specifically, the parties involved agreed that the project should seek to increase opportunities to participate in sport and recreation as well as (and inherently through) understand(ing) the role and significance of sport and recreation for various groups in the community (e.g., newcomers,

youth, community organizations). As the role of the Recreation Committee in the community was understood to be broad and multi-faceted, the scope of the project was adjusted accordingly (e.g., by not focusing solely on one group/demographic; by involving as many related groups/organizations as possible, and; by the researchers participating in a variety of activities with both specific objectives, such as program delivery, as well as those with broader implications, such as municipal policy making).

In approaching the project, the researchers involved (student and advisory committee) discussed the need to consider the context of the community in order understand the role of sport and recreation in community development. Rural Canadian communities are diverse in terms of exposure (or a lack thereof) to global economies, metro-adjacency (or remoteness), stability (or fluctuation) of markets, and varying levels of community capacity (Reimer, 2002), as well as typically very active informal economies (Reimer, 2006a) that work to create diverse rural contexts. Further, authors have highlighted major health disparities experienced by rural populations (DesMeules, et. al., 2006) including cycles of decline involving youth outmigration and aging populations (Senate, 2006). Much of the literature on rurality, and in sport studies more broadly, has failed to consider the importance of cultural and community context. Thus, as part of the initial stages of engaging in the process of field research, it was important to begin to theorize more about sport and recreation in diverse contexts. As it was noted that the community was quite homogenous and the first author identified as a white, cis-gendered male, there were few concerns about social implications related to these positions. However, the first author had grown up in the community, within a working class family, and left through the process of youth outmigration, resulting in a complex social network of past and current friends and family

members both within and outside of sport and recreation. It was acknowledged that the many perceptions and understandings held by the first author were time, place, and circumstantially sensitive and would necessitate consideration moving forward. Accordingly, in order to craft a project that took account of the roles and processes of sport and recreation in this rural community, the work would need to be highly contextualized and explicitly consider the positionality of the researcher within the research process.

Research in community sport management tends to lack contextual information supporting the overarching research processes. Perhaps due to journal restrictions on manuscripts or traditions of empiricism, emphasis has typically been on pragmatism and “filling gaps” (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016) overshadowing discussions about social, cultural, and political systems which are often understood to shape and underpin social experiences of sport and recreation in communities (Dyck, 2000). This is not to say that there is not contextual research published in sport and recreation literature. Indeed, scholarly works such as Atherly (2006), Oncescu and Robertson (2010), Spaaij (2009), and Tonts and Atherly (2005) have all provided useful contextual analyses that served as points of departure for researching rural community sport and recreation management. However, conducting research as an insider inevitably provokes cautions about mitigating so-called biases in order to produce rigorous academic research. Thus, in designing this research project, it was necessary to choose a methodological approach that would allow for contextual and in depth explorations of sport and recreation management in a way that foregrounded context and researcher positionality.

Entering the Field and Considering Reflexive Practice

Preliminary interactions with sport and recreation leaders in the community reinforced a need to develop a project that was both meaningful and useful for the community beyond production of a traditional dissertation report. Thus, the logical inroad was to consider a PAR approach. PAR approaches are underpinned by a post-modern participatory worldview that informs research with potentially emerging designs focusing often on practical issues by mobilizing knowledge in action (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Despite a long history which continues to persist in many institutions of dissuading post-graduate students from undertaking such ‘messy’ approaches to research, action research has more recently received substantial scholarly attention noting the promising potential (rather than risky ambition) of “student-insider researchers” (Coghlan & Holian, 2007, p. 8). While some researchers in sport management, as we have noted, have adopted some processes of PAR, as Chalip (2015) has rightly noted “[a]lthough action research is well established in mainstream social science, the dearth of action research by sport scholars is noteworthy” (p. 400). In the sport and recreation management context, much of the action research conducted has taken place at the state (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015) and national sport organization level (Ferkins, et al., 2009; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015), which required a more distant type of engagement than the current project. At the community level, the feminist PAR of Wendy Frisby and colleagues (1997, 2002, 2005) demonstrated the possibilities and potential of fully embedded approaches in sport and recreation research. In regards to the research described here, Frisby and colleagues’ projects shared contextual commonalities of working with underserved communities in sport and recreation provision. However, as our own project developed, PAR within the community began

to seem an unlikely endeavour because of the potential enormity of the task and the emerging barriers to action-oriented opportunities. Although the contexts of this work and that of Frisby and colleagues shared similarities, community partners for this project were members of a rural community recreation committee who already appeared to be overloaded with commitments and responsibilities, and did not necessarily see a need for change or a desire to add to their workload.

Similar to the experience of Burgess (2006), reflections and discussions on the history and development of participatory approaches helped solidify the appropriate methodological approach for this project within the traditions of PAR (see chapter four). These traditions are often referred to as northern and southern traditions, each with their own theoretical groundings and ideologies (Brown & Tandon, 1983; Wallerstein & Duran, 2003). While both traditions are grounded in participatory and action-oriented values, Brown and Tandon (1983) highlighted the political and ideological nuances of these approaches. As discussed in chapter four, the northern tradition developed from ideologies valuing efficiency and satisfying multiple stakeholders, whereas the southern tradition grew out of ideas of emancipation and the uprooting of systems of oppression and these traditions can be conceptualized along a continuum of PAR, rather than as two distinct approaches (Brown & Tandon, 1983; Wallerstein & Duran, 2003). Such a conceptualization allows for fluidity in situating this work along the continuum, rather than being required to operate solely within the approach of one tradition. Although we were working closely with a pre-established organization, the committee lacked the resources and capacity to effectively manage all of the tasks in its portfolio, let alone plan strategically to adjust or implement new tasks or policies. Thus, our approach often involved supporting the committee,

providing in-kind resources, and helping to facilitate changes in ways that were manageable, community driven, and hopefully sustainable, in line with the southern tradition of PAR. Through this process, we wrestled with negotiating how a graduate student's education and knowledge of sport and recreation management builds up assumptions about best practices and the way things "ought to be done". Exploring these tensions around perceived knowledge in relation to these two research traditions helped to clarify the many processes of education, action, evaluation, and reflection with the community as well as the roles of the researchers as insiders, outsiders, and agents of change.

Reflection and Data Collection

While reflection can be used to generate data in a variety of methodologies (e.g., auto or self-ethnography, action research, narrative analysis, ethnography), the process through which these reflections are conducted and recorded varies. Many researchers who engage in reflection or first-person inquiry utilize various forms of tracking (Marshall, 2001) to record and reflect on their experiences (e.g., field notes, journaling, etc). Some researchers engage in self-study individually, and others through processes involving multiple researchers. For example, Rich and colleagues (2014) used a process of reflection where one author's narrative of participating in a community sport event was recorded and then analyzed by others individually. Subsequently, the authors collectively discussed these experiences and reflected on the various possible perspectives and interpretations to unpack the complexity of the experiences described. In another example, Kerwin and Hoerber (2015) utilized an approach where each author recorded their experiences in a journal and then shared their experiences through discussions and reflections over Skype. These conversations were also recorded, transcribed, and served as data

for their research. Both of these aforementioned approaches tracked experiences, and also drew upon reflections, discussions, and diverse interpretations of experiences in order to provide rich analyses of lived experiences in sport.

For this project, a process of journaling, reflecting, and discussing similar to that of Marshall (2001) and Kerwin and Hoeber (2015) was adopted. During field work with the community over a period of 16 months (November 2014 to March 2016) the lead author kept a journal which included descriptive field notes of events and activities as well as more in depth reflections on participation. In many ways, this approach draws from the method of participant observation (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002) that is common in contemporary ethnographic studies which seek to locate the researcher and their experiences within the research process (Tedlock, 2003). Within these entries, familiarity with the community allowed for deeper reflection on aspects of the local culture, language, existing sport and recreation infrastructure, as well as previous experiences and current participation in these systems. This intricate insider knowledge was balanced with constant reflection and discussion with others including the supervisor, other academics, and community partners. Following these descriptive notes, self-reflections on participation and meaning making within the activity as well as in the systems and processes at work were used, what Marshall (2001) described as inner and outer arcs of attention.

On numerous occasions, these reflective entries were shared with either (or both) the academic supervisor and/or the Recreation and Facilities Manager in the community. In either case, discussions often explored interesting events/activities, methodological issues, and conflicting ideas, in order to gather different perspectives and interpretations (from both the

outside and inside). The discussions shared throughout this process served to provoke reflection and in some cases adjustments to the research approach.

Reflection in Action

As discussed above, the research described in this paper took place with a rural community in Northern Ontario. Following amalgamation of communities across the province of Ontario in the early 2000's (Kushner & Siegel, 2003), the population of this community currently rests at approximately 3,400, dispersed within two (previously distinct) town centres and the outlying township. Located about 35 kilometres outside of a larger centre, Powassan can be described as a "bedroom" or "commuter" community, as many residents are employed in the larger centre, but commute back and forth daily. Formerly based in agriculture and forestry, much of the local economy now involves the trades and labour work to service the surrounding area. Residents of the community are predominantly settler or non-indigenous Canadians; however, it is a socio-economically diverse community. Powassan boasts extensive sport and recreational infrastructure for its size, including two arenas, three baseball diamonds (one which has been repurposed to serve as two small soccer pitches, and another serving the dual purpose of outdoor skating rink in the winter), a seasonal outdoor pool, and a curling club, as well as two playground structures, a fair ground (which hosts events like a rodeo, truck pulls, equine events, a motorcycle rally in 2017 etc.), a public beach, and a trail system that are maintained by the municipality and community groups. Through the research process, it became clear that a variety of community organizations/facilities including two local Lions Clubs⁶, community centre

⁶ Lions Clubs are community groups that do local humanitarian work in over 200 hundred countries around the world (Lions Clubs International, 2016).

boards/booster clubs, several seniors groups, the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion⁷, two local public schools, and the local library also played important roles in sport and recreation delivery within the community. As the reflections and discussions that follow are messy and touch on many social and political systems, it is important to consider these context(s) in which they took place.

Throughout the process of reflection, discussions explored many aspects of the community in multiple, overlapping, and sometimes uncoordinated ways. As action research is underpinned by a participatory worldview, Bradbury-Huang (2010) noted that we might judge this type of research according to alternative criteria, one of which is reflexivity or the extent to which the researchers effectively locate themselves within systems and as agents of change. Thus, through reflexivity, the first author's positions as a white, cis-gendered, closeted sexual minority, considered insider, former athlete, and current sport/recreation professional were engaged in various intersectional ways within diverse community contexts. Further, we explored the tensions, so-called biases, processes of meaning-making, and action generation that emerged as a result of these roles and identities engaging with the sociocultural contexts of the rural community. In order to do this, while writing reflective entries, previous reflections were often re-read in order to compare thoughts over time and identify common trends and themes. In some cases, additional reflections were added to previous entries to link ideas and commonalities. These notes were dated and noted separately to remain distinct from the original. Reflecting on trends and patterns allowed for exploration into the nature of these trends and what influenced

⁷ The Royal Canadian Legion is an ex-service non-profit organization that has branches in many Canadian communities.

the reflecting that was happening (as well as what was possibly being overlooked). For example, during a period while the first author was writing a book chapter on sexual rights and sport diplomacy, it was noted that reflections increasingly discussed understandings of sexual orientation and gender identity within the community and the implications of these understandings on lived experiences (particularly within sport and recreation activities). In many ways, these reflections allowed for adjustments to the way research was approached and interpreted as well as how we came to navigate and understand the role of the researchers as agents of change within the community, and the limitations of these roles. In the following section, some of these reflections will be unpacked and discussed with the goal of describing how the process of first-person inquiry served to enrich the research by giving attention to contextual factors and also by addressing power relationships in sport, recreation, and the research process in and with the community. Thus, herein the first author describes, through his own voice, the self-reflexive process undertaken in the rural community based research project.

Reflexive Methodological Practice

Within the context of community based action research, first-person inquiry emerged as an important methodological tool in the process of doing participatory research. Here, I outline how reflexive practice allowed me: 1) to achieve a much greater understanding of self and other identities within contexts of the community including reconciling my own insider and outsider statuses; 2) to adjust the methodological approach to be more effective in and for the community; and 3) how I came to understand, theorize, and articulate my own role as an agent of change within the community. As these reflections are based on participating in sport and recreation governance and provision of services at the community level, the discussion below has

implications not only for researchers, but also for community sport and recreation managers. The following excerpts from my reflective entries demonstrate the value of this process for the research and emphasize the relationship between the research approach, methodological considerations, and implications for the practice of sport and recreation management at the community level. Indeed, as I was working in close collaboration with and in some cases as a practitioner, many of these reflections may provide useful considerations for practitioners working in community sport and recreation management.

Entering the Game: Locating my Place in the Field

Throughout the process of my initial research, I often used the term “community” in the spatial sense to refer to the geographic community with which the research was conducted. However, through participating in this research project, I came to understand the term “community” as much more complex. Indeed, the literature on participatory research provides ample discussion of the difficulties in accurately defining and delimiting a community. This process is a complex one, skewed by power relationships, as researchers’ attempts to share power can never be fully realized with an entire “community” (Israel, et. al., 2003). One of the most prominent contributions that first-person inquiry made to the research process in this case was allowing for an acute awareness and detailed discussion of the diversity within the community and its many contexts. In the newly amalgamated geographic community, local identity politics were prominently discussed and a concern for representation of the former communities in policy making activities as well as an articulated need to “pull the community together” (Reflective Entry, January 7th, 2016) was expressed. These issues added a layer of complexity to many municipal activities, especially those involving the allocation of already

scarce resources. Throughout the research process with the community, I was able to reflect on the complexity of multiple identities within numerous contexts, and how they became apparent in sport and recreation. In one entry, I noted that I was “paying increased attention to the importance of intersectionality in everything that I do/see/interpret. Within this, I’ve stopped reducing experiences to a single circumstance/context/interpretation/understanding, and I’m trying to stop seeing and describing [them] as such” (Reflective Entry, August 16, 2015). As I will discuss in detail below, this became particularly evident in my reflections about gender, social class, and engagement in sport and recreation by community members. Rather than simply reflecting on gendered experiences in sport and recreation, I also began to interrogate circumstances more broadly including considerations of socioeconomic status, which former community participants identified with, as well as how participants viewed and incorporated family histories and narratives of tradition into their understandings of sport and recreation participation, as well as my own. Indeed, through my own “clashes and incongruencies of cultures, contexts, and identities” (Reflective Entry, August 6th, 2015) I came to understand the community in a broader sense as complex systems of social, cultural, and political contexts, rather than a unit of geographic classification. Importantly, this also led to a more thorough understanding and interpretation of municipal policy making activities, which came through more clearly following discussions with my supervisor. While observing and participating in policy making discussions (e.g., creating policy documents, participating in budget discussions), I also reflected on how tradition and perceived social values influenced decision making (e.g., the autonomy offered to some community groups in regards to facility management and rental agreements). My awareness of these values and traditions enabled me to both articulate the

complex role of sport and recreation in the community as well as sensitively formulate questions about these decisions both in public meetings as well as in private interviews (i.e., data collection). Consequently, I believe that this process not only allowed me to collect more rich and descriptive data, but also allowed me to more effectively engage with my role as an agent of change within the community and these policy making activities. Furthermore, these descriptions also provided important insights regarding social dynamics and processes of municipal sport governance, which are important considerations for community sport practitioners.

Tensions surrounding identities were also highlighted through my own struggle to reconcile my insider and outsider statuses, and locating the field as such. Similar to the experiences shared by Humphrey (2007), this process allowed me to understand and value my insider and outsider roles as productive. Perhaps the clearest illustration of this experience occurred one weekend while I was playing “Oldtimer’s” ice hockey at one of the local arenas (located in the smaller of the two former communities). While I had participated semi-regularly with the group, one particular experience stood out:

On the bench one of the guys asked me what my name was. Even though I’ve been playing regularly, and have known this guy (or thought I had) for a long time, I guess I’m not really “one of the boys.” This had me thinking about how I can be an insider in some contexts and not in others. Later, in the dressing room, I heard this guy ask my uncle “what does Kyle do?” My uncle responded with a laugh - somewhat condescendingly - saying “he’s *still* going to university.” This was somewhat rattling. It wasn’t that I felt excluded, more so devalued. It seemed that in this situation, the path that I had taken - to pursue higher education and do research - wasn’t necessarily valued

or considered legitimate, *even by members of my own family*. Based on what I know of the group and my uncle, this is likely linked to ideas of masculinity and expectations about work ethic and what is considered a normal lifestyle for a 26-year old from this community. That is, what is expected and required to be a productive and valuable member of a community. (Reflective Entry, November 9, 2015)

Through this reflection, I began to reconcile the terms of my own status as an insider in some contexts within the community but as an outsider in others. Although I had grown up in the community and was familiar with many community members, I would never share the same experiences, understandings, and values of the older men in the community who simply grew up at a different time and, for the most part, shared different experiences and values, particularly in regards to education and employment. These reflections also enriched my understanding of the social and cultural systems and structures (e.g., of class and gender) in the community and how different individuals relate and interact within them.

These experiences also led me to consider other aspects of myself that I chose to disclose and conceal in certain contexts within and outside of the community. Just as Humphrey (2007) described the process of coming to terms with her closets and dungeons, I also had to come to terms with my own identities, to tell the full story of myself and the community. For example, I noted that I would often participate in conversations that were underpinned by (and sometimes openly expressed) racist, classist, and homophobic beliefs. While I contributed in ways that appeared to be appropriate in these situations, I often censored myself in order to remain accepted in the conversation. Rather than expressing my opinions and passing judgment on others, I would sometimes offer alternative perspectives and other times not contribute at all.

After a trip to a hunt camp (a remote cabin used for land-based activities such as hunting, fishing, and trapping) with a group of male family members and friends, I reflected on how that experience “emphasized my different approaches, and knowing when to contribute and when to observe. Sometimes I feel as though the conversation would shut down if I were to express certain perspectives” (Reflective Entry, November 15, 2015). Indeed, in many instances I reflected on the tensions that arose with my own closet(s) and the concealment of my own (more fluid) sexuality (which I struggled to define myself during this period of my life) and how I might be perceived and treated differently if this aspect of my identity were made public in different contexts such as Oldtimers ice hockey, within the children’s day camp program, or at the hunt camp. These experiences led me to consider the research process and questions of how I functioned as a research instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985):

Is not being myself (whatever that is) corrupting the research process? Does overthinking my own position sabotage the way I (genuinely) interact with others? Is it ethical to hide identities in this process? Why is it considered unethical to hide your status as a “researcher” but not your other identities? How does this affect what others share with and conceal from me? (Reflective Entry, November 15, 2015)

Often these tensions would fuel conversations with my supervisor about the research and my role(s) within the community. As she was quite aware and informed of my many identities and the contexts in which I was operating, we would often discuss these experiences openly. Engaging in reflexive discussions (i.e., not censored as my interactions with community members were), in an open and iterative process, was an integral part of coming to terms with myself and the community through reflexive practice. Similarly, she also encouraged me to

reflect on the role of outmigration in the construction of my position within the community, and on how the process of leaving and returning after (or in this case as part of) studying may engender certain feelings, interpretations, and understandings about me. These understandings undoubtedly influenced who engaged with the project and the discussions that I had with community members throughout my time there. These discussions and reflections were crucial in helping me understand myself as a research instrument and my role as an agent of change in the community, by bringing my 'new' understandings of community, sport, and recreation to the forefront of my consciousness.

By coupling the self/instrument reflections with other data collection activities (semi-structured interviews and participant observation) I was able to develop a deeper understanding of sport and recreation and their management in the community as well as the power relationships inherent in these processes. For example, my reflections on gender, class, and cultural capital in my own participation in sport and recreation mapped directly onto observations in organizational practices of other leaders/managers in the community, an outcome that I might not have been attentive to without this reflexive practice. This is clearly illustrated in the organization of the annual family ice hockey tournament which takes place in the community each year:

The tournament is rife with symbolism concerning the family unit, gender roles, and the community. The ongoing joke (at least in my family), when daughters introduce new boyfriends to the family is an overwhelming concern with how good of a hockey player he is, as he needs to contribute to the team in the family tournament... While the women's teams aren't restricted by the same family factions, the team is still clearly an

important unit of identity that is carried on year after year. Interestingly, in/exclusion from these units have social ramifications, particularly for newcomers to the community who may be excluded from participating based on the foundational idea of the tournament. (Reflective Entry, January 20, 2015)

The experience of participating in and observing sport and recreational activities in the community was crucial in helping me understand the complex systems and contexts involved. Reflecting on these experiences and observations allowed me to formulate deeper understandings and analyses of these activities and the implications of my own actions and identities within the research process and outcomes; effectively how I was writing myself into the research (Fleming & Fullagar, 2007). Further, as these reflections were formulated based on my participation in the work undertaken by local sport and recreation managers, I would also argue that reflexive practice may be a useful tool for community practitioners to move beyond service provision and better understand and consider the social, cultural, and political antecedents and implications of their work. Taken as a whole, the process of self-reflection enabled me to harness the opportunity of community based research which is fluid and evolves as the field is considered, altered, and negotiated in order to understand my roles of insider, outsider, and an agent of change in and through the research process.

Finding a Strategy: Methodological Fluidity

Throughout the participatory research process, tracking my reflections proved to be useful not only for understanding the community contexts and my role as an instrument of research, but also in directing the project methodologically. While methodological practices are typically complex in participatory approaches, my own reflexive practice allowed me to not only

identify non-traditional approaches, but also to adjust these approaches based on the successes, shortcomings, and observations of the project as it evolved within the community context.

Furthermore, this process also allowed me to record and discuss action items with the community that occurred through participation in the research process rather than as a planned outcome. For example, I was often required to explain to potential participants why their perspective would be of value to the project and how it could help improve sport and recreation management in and for the community. By explaining to potential participants the importance of their contribution, I believe that I was able to stimulate discussions and develop understandings about the broader implications of sport and recreation in the community. An example of this explanation was clearly illustrated in an email conversation I had with a municipal councillor and board member of a community group:

He wrote: "I was never one to get involved in organized sports. My interests were geared more to hunting and fishing and building forts and go carts. I never joined a hockey team or baseball team. I am probably not your best choice as a resource for this project. (Reflective Entry, September 9, 2015)

Although this community member was involved in leadership positions municipally and in a prominent community group that is clearly involved in sport and recreation programming, he didn't perceive himself as a "resource" for this "sport"-oriented project. Having a conversation with this individual allowed me to assure him that not only his position on the board, but also his experiences participating in other recreational activities in the community actually made him an ideal participant who could offer a diverse perspective on sport and recreation. As Misener and Schulenkorf (2016) have noted, often community members do not locate themselves as assets in

the community even when they are in positions of authority. My reflections on conversations and personal connections within the community were undoubtedly an important factor in securing diverse participants within sport and recreation management and consequently achieving a rich and more holistic representation from the data collected. Throughout this process, discussions with my supervisor assured me that often recruitment and participation in the research process occurs in non-linear, undefined ways, but that this is rarely discussed in the process of producing outputs.

Furthermore, these reflections allowed me to document action items that were achieved through the research process and were not a strategic aim of the project. A clear example of this occurred through my discussions with the local library regarding their role in sport and recreation provision (they host a variety of activity groups, weekly programs, and information sessions on a various recreational activities from quilting and knitting to yoga and health and fitness more broadly, as well as a youth summer program with a significant physical activity component). Within these discussions, I casually questioned why library representatives did not attend and participate in Recreation Committee activities, as it was an open forum and it appeared to be a likely place to connect and engage with other programs and organizations in the community? Following these discussions, I shared meeting information with them and noted that library representatives began attending and participating in the meetings regularly (Reflective Entry, January 7th, 2016). In this case, participation in the research project motivated an unplanned outcome (a community group regularly engaging in local policy making), and my reflexive practice allowed me to document and track this outcome, where I might otherwise have missed this nuance.

Executing the Plays: Flexible Participatory Methods

Following my experience of recruitment in the community, my reflections also allowed me to consider the overall flexibility necessary for data collection and analysis if I was to effectively manage my role as a change agent. Eventually, I began to take note of the experiences shared and others withheld during the interviews. I reflected on “interviewing people that you are already familiar with... [and being] familiar with things that they were and weren’t always mentioning” (Reflective Entry, August 18, 2015). As a participant in the sport and recreation community, I was quite aware of many organizations and initiatives, which also made me attentive to what participants were selecting to disclose and discuss, and also what they were not. These reflections forced me to question the underlying reasons why participants did or did not share stories: “was it because they assumed I already knew? because my question wasn’t clear? or because they don’t perceive/understand their role as one of a manager or community builder?” (Reflective Entry, August 18, 2015). The most notable example emerged in my reflections about gender and the process of collecting data:

My last two board member interviews have been with women and it is noticeably difficult for me to talk or relate to them about gender (surprise!). For example, the younger of the two brought up the experience of being a younger woman on a board with a bunch of old(er) people who were mostly men. When I tried to probe and ask about the experience, she just responded with “Oh, it was fine.” However, I suspect that there is more that I wasn’t able to get into. The older participant had been a board member for many years and also worked as a teacher in the community, so I asked her about her role as woman in a position of leadership in the community throughout the

years. She quite literally dodged the question with “I just love this community, everyone here is wonderful.” Again, I suspect there is much more to talk about, however, I am not the right person for the discussion. (Reflective Entry, September 21, 2015)

My reflections on these specific interviews enabled me to explore my own position, as a young male researcher (and/or community member), who had left the community and returned to work in sport and recreation, and the impact that this identity has on the research process. This also led to additional discussions with my supervisor about her understanding of the gendered aspects in the community, her own positionality in the process and how my own preconceptions might be influencing the process. Further, I also noted that “gender is likely not the only topic that I am not going to be able to tackle effectively”, that “these interactions illustrate the importance of power, discourse, and positionality in the research process” (Reflective Entry, September 21, 2015) and how these social forces influenced the data that I am able to collect. Thus, I faced another challenge in the research process that may have been overlooked had these reflections not been shared openly with my supervisor.

In these instances, reflecting and discussing these limitations with my supervisor and community contacts led us to explore different models of peer research such as those described by The Wellesley Institute (Flicker, et al., 2010; Guta, et al., 2010; Roche, et al., 2010). As I was beginning to conceptualize my research more closely with the southern tradition or approach to PAR, I considered the different ways of incorporating community members in all parts of the research process. Although I had intended for my project to utilize a partner model where community members are involved in shared decision making processes in “active and equitable role[s] across all phases of research” (Roche, et al., 2010, p. 13), my reflections demonstrated

quite clearly that this was not taking place. Based on my reflections discussed above regarding a lack of time and resources for the Recreation Committee to fully engage in the process, the project thus far had more accurately employed an advisory model (Roche, et al., 2010) where the committee had been aware of the project and helped to direct it, however had not been implicit or engaged in much of the actual research process (e.g., recruitment, data collection, analysis, dissemination, etc.). At this stage, reflections on how the community had been engaged in the project as well as how I was ill-suited as a research instrument to collect data that would paint a holistic picture of sport and recreation management in the community, suggested that the current approach was less than ideal, and that alternatives should be explored.

Roche and colleagues (2010) also described a third model of practice for peer research; the employment model. After discussing ethical implications with my supervisor (who was also a member of the University REB), and logistical implications with the community contact, we determined that it would be beneficial to explore this option:

The idea of using research assistants in the community appears to be where we will have to go. I likely should have considered this sooner but obviously resources become a question/issue. I also had hesitations about ethics but I was assured that I was covered under the emergent design I had described in my application. (Reflective Entry, September 21, 2015)

Following these reflections, I circulated a posting (through community outlets and the local employment agency) for some casual help with a research project in the community. With the help of my supervisor, I was able to allocate a small budget to offer honoraria to research assistants who participated. Through the Recreation Committee and word of mouth, we were

able to find two youths (a male and a female) who were interested in being research assistants, as well as the support of two members of the Recreation Committee (both women) to offered to help with data collection. In this case, reflecting on the research process allowed me to adjust my approach to (hopefully) collect more holistic data that will be useful for myself as well as the community as we move forward with the project.

The two youths were also actively involved in data analysis. Given logistical constraints involved with physically meeting, we developed a strategy for the research assistants to be involved without the burden of attending meetings. They each worked on transcribing interviews and actively commenting and reflecting on them. These comments and reflections served as an additional source of data to fuel my own reflections and as points of discussion in interviews and data analysis (e.g., with the Recreation Committee in an advisory capacity). For example, I noted:

I am really impressed with their reflections! For example, Sherry discussed her own biases in regard to sport and rec activities but noted that they often forget to consider that they (and others) aren't always engaged or benefit from these activities. She considered that her own past history of being shy and somewhat disengaged might drive their desire to get as many kids engaged now as they can. (Reflective Entries, January 11, 2015)

Using these reflections from multiple individuals is similar to the reflection and discussion processes described above (see Kerwin & Hoerber, 2015; Rich et al., 2014). Furthermore, this process also begins to address the potential downfalls of single data sources identified in self-

study research (Holt, 2003) and struggles to de-centre power in the research process (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003).

While the research process to that point involved flexibility and methodological fluidity in response to community contexts, cycles of reflection and action in the community have provided very useful insights into the processes of community sport and recreation management and doing participatory research in a rural context. More specifically, by engaging in first-person inquiry I was able to examine and adjust the approach to be more effective and methodologically sound. As the project evolved, these reflections continued to direct the project both conceptually and methodologically. Additionally, the process of self-study was extremely helpful as a graduate student conducting PAR, as it also helped me to navigate and document the complex processes of reconciling identities and engaging in community partnership (Burgess, 2006; Humphrey, 2007), as well as understanding and articulating my role as an agent of change (Bradbury Huang, 2010) both in and through the research process.

Untangling Reflexivity and Accountability of Knowledge

One of the often-cited drawbacks of self-study approaches is a lack of framework or criteria upon which to judge research. Furthermore, PAR tends to lack a coherent theoretical orientation to inform peer review and assessments of quality (Darroch & Giles, 2014). Indeed, action research paradigms involve a (sometimes uncomfortable) shift in thinking about research, not as an endeavour that generates knowledge, but rather as a process that engages in discovery through partnership and participation (Bradbury-Huang, 2010). Within this process, reflexivity or self-study can be a very useful tool for understanding and enriching the research process. Indeed, self-study approaches can “push other scholars towards the recognition that no matter the

method, the research, the researched, and the research process always remain intertwined” (Giles & Williams, 2007, p. 192). This is further enhanced by the ongoing discussions about the concepts, processes, and paradigms between insiders conducting the research and outsiders supporting the research efforts. However, these approaches also face criticism in comparison to dominant research paradigms as there is no way to verify findings or make generalizations from a single source of data (Holt, 2003). Yet, in shifting away from dominant approaches to research, the opportunity for new and exciting research activities, as well as new ways of judging quality or rigour are plentiful. Bradbury-Huang (2010) outlined several “choicepoints” for determining the quality of action research (based on the criteria utilized by the editorial team of the *Action Research Journal*), one of which is reflexivity, or “the extent to which the authors explicitly locate themselves as change agents” (Bradbury-Huang, 2010, p. 103). It is this perspective that we have taken up in this chapter, in hopes of beginning to unpack some of the insights that might be derived from self-study approaches in sport and recreation management, and how these approaches can enrich the process and outcomes of research. Further, we have highlighted the importance of ongoing dialogue about underlying assumptions, tensions, and paradigms in research, as this practice can be extremely beneficial for scholars locating themselves within the field.

By taking up Kerwin and Hoerber’s (2015) call for more sport management researchers to engage in reflection in their research, we have attempted to summarize the reflexive practices undertaken, and explore some of the ways in which first-person inquiry has enriched our processes of community-based research. Through the process of reflection, it was possible to gain more depth of understanding of some of the many contexts within the community as well as

the role of the researchers as instruments of research and agents of change. For example, our discussion about the issue of gender and power in the community has turned out to be a critical perspective that may otherwise have been overlooked had this process not been used. As Shaw and Frisby (2006) noted in their contribution on gender in sport management research, by destabilizing our traditional theoretical perspectives and formalized ‘armchair’ approaches to research, “avenues for alternative views, policies, and practices may be developed” (p. 506). We argue that increased reflexivity could help sport and recreation management researchers and practitioners to be more attentive to the power relations inherent in the research processes and delivery of sport and recreation within communities. Empirical and methodological insights such as those discussed in this paper, demonstrate the potential of reflexive practice to enrich the research process and generate not only meaningful academic dialogue but also actionable changes for communities as well as sport and recreation organizations. Additionally, in considering the potential of unplanned/unintended outcomes (such as those described in this paper), we urge researchers to consider the possibility of the research process as a driver of change. Furthermore, the insights generated through these reflections may also highlight the potential of reflexive practice to be used by sport and recreation managers who may benefit from a holistic understanding of the complex contexts and communities in which they work, as well as their own (in)abilities to engage and relate to diverse community members.

In the introduction to the 1997 special issue of the *Journal of Sport Management*, Chalip suggested that action research is “about more than change. [It is] about the ways in which the knowledge we produce as sport management scholars affects the ways in which we construct the practice of sport management” (Chalip, 1997, p. 3). In reflecting on the experiences shared in

this paper, this quote is particularly resonant. The process of self-reflection coupled with ongoing scholarly dialogue is reflective of a new perspective on rigorous academic sport and recreation management research. All too often scholars disengage themselves from these processes and miss out on the construction of practices that are directly affected by the contexts in which they take place. In addition, as academic supervisors and other members of the academy often dissuade graduate students from taking on projects that create messiness in the process, we may be missing out on enriching experiences and promoting intellectual autonomy to derive creative new ways of understanding our field. Moving forward, we echo Kerwin and Hoerber's (2015) call for more researchers to incorporate reflexive practices in their research design and examine the ways in which these practices can enrich the research process and outcomes. We further extend the call to challenge sport and recreation management researchers to move beyond traditional paradigms within qualitative approaches to inform their reflections and the products of their research. As aptly put by Bradbury-Huang (2010, p. 104):

we must also acknowledge that confusion and disdain will always arise when we insistently evaluate one paradigm using the standards of the other. In simple terms we cannot compare apples and oranges, or, more properly as we are reflecting on paradigmatic difference, we cannot compare apples and blue.

Indeed, looking inward rather than solely outward is just one approach of many that may be useful for sport management researchers and practitioners (see Shaw & Hoerber, 2016). Allowing and encouraging new and emerging forms of research that consider the importance of context may offer new insights to the field of sport and recreation management, including discussions from different, multiple, and overlapping perspectives that we never knew we were missing.

Chapter 6: Reflections, Implications, and Opportunities

The research conducted for this dissertation sought to explore and contribute to the theoretical, empirical, and methodological peripheries of community sport and recreation management. While the implications of rural contexts for sport and recreation managers are largely unexplored in the literature, so are discussions of how management practices influence and intersect with theoretical discussions of community and collective ways of knowing. Furthermore, PAR approaches to research which engage communities as partners, co-creators of knowledge, and co-authors of research also remain peripheral methodological approaches in sport and recreation research (Chalip, 2015). Through this research, I engaged a PAR approach and elaborated on these ideas. Additionally, I have made a contribution to academic discussions about rural community sport and recreation management, as well as how we can engage diverse theoretical and methodological approaches to sport and recreation management research in order to uncover new forms of knowledge that can effect social change in different ways (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016). In this final chapter, I review the contributions that are made through this work, suggest a living framework for thinking about PAR in sport and recreation management, and identify some future considerations for researchers and communities thinking about engaging in sport and recreation management research and action to facilitate community outcomes.

Sport, Recreation, and Rural Communities

Firstly, this research provided an exploration of experiences in and with managing sport and recreation for a rural community. Given the complex policy systems inherent in the Canadian sport and recreation systems, and the lack of literature examining the ways that community organizers navigate these systems (if at all), this exploration provided insights into the understandings and processes of community sport and recreation management. Sport policy

makers are continuing their attempts to reconcile the wicked problems associated with sport policy (Sam, 2009) - particularly with regard to competing priorities of mass participation and elite athlete development (Green, 2007) - as evidenced by the renewal of the *Canadian Sport Policy* and the development of the *Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015*. Priorities of access, inclusion, and capacity building have been articulated for recreation (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association & Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, 2015). Similarly, the *Canadian Sport Policy* (Government of Canada, 2012) has now formally acknowledged the development of social outcomes through sport and their close partnership with the recreation sector. As such, insights from community organizers are a crucial component of understanding the outcomes of these policies and the effectiveness of their implementation. As highlighted through this work, increasingly professional, complex, and technocratic policy contexts may be rendering these sport and recreation systems inaccessible and exclusive. Rural communities may be particularly marginalized through these processes as they may lack the skills, knowledge, and resources in their sport and recreation sectors to keep up with increasingly complex policy structures and systems. Moving forward, there is a need for policy makers to not only direct sport and recreation development for communities, but also to recognize diverse community contexts and support the development of sport and recreation opportunities within these contexts.

As this research project engaged community members to identify their own priorities (attracting and retaining residents, promoting community development, and engaging in unstructured and outdoor activities), the analysis elucidated some of the ways in which the community's priorities do and do not align with those of national level sport and recreation policy. For example, while sport and recreation were discussed as important activities for

creating and maintaining social relationships (particularly with regard to family unit), it was also noted that community members in Powassan were hesitant to participate in capacity building activities such as coach training, possibly due to a misalignment of values inherent in community and policy contexts. By problematizing understandings of community in sport and recreation, some of the complex power dynamics implicated in the management of sport and recreation at the community level were highlighted. As rural communities rely on strong informal economies and large contributions of volunteers (Reimer, 2006a) to create and maintain sport and recreation opportunities in dynamic community settings (Oncescue & Robertson, 2010), tensions may arise in the context of a more technocratic and professionalized sport and recreation system. As such, highlighting these community processes is particularly important for understanding the diverse outcomes of sport and recreation in diverse (rural) community contexts. Further, community level sport and recreation organizers might consider the way they value (and evaluate) the outcomes of their work. As demonstrated through this project, rural sport and recreation management is inherently political and there exists the possibility that organizers can take action to resist and change structures which marginalize or devalue their important work (e.g., through urban-centric policy systems or notions of tradition and patriarchal social practices).

Finally, an important issue remains with the question of the capacity of rural community organizers (Reimer, 2002) to engage with policy frameworks and access resources provided within the current sport and recreation systems. Faced with increased complexity and professionalization in sport and recreation, rural community organizers may be considered policy entrepreneurs (Houlihan, 2005) as they exercise agency and mobilize community resources in order to navigate the sector (Balfour, et al., 2008). Further, while community sport organizations

are amongst the most celebrated and supported organizations in rural communities (Tonts, 2005), they may also be those that are the least likely to change and adapt their organizations practices to align with the decisions of policy makers at the community, provincial, or national level.

While a reluctance to change may be done in some respects as acts of resistance to policy making that does not suit the needs of the community, it may also be due to a lack of available resources and capacity for change. Although we did not intentionally set out to explore issues of capacity and readiness for change (Casey, et al., 2012; Millar & Doherty, 2016), in several ways it became a recurring theme in this research project. It was noted in this research that certain groups were resistant to change while others were actively seeking ways to try new strategies, adopt unorthodox and/or innovative practices, and even adapt their core activities to survive and emerge as important community organizations. Importantly, there were also many groups in the community (e.g., fraternal organizations such as the Lion's Club or service organizations such as the Royal Canadian Legion) who were both directly and indirectly involved in sport and recreation in the community. Future research may explore the context, motivations, stakeholders, and processes of innovation and readiness for change in diverse rural communities and community organizations. As discussed in various ways throughout this document, clubs/ organizations were not individually responsible for social outcomes of sport and recreation. Rather, they were implicated in broader webs of affect-laden relationships that are understood as a community. A more robust understanding of these processes will be critical in understanding how policy making at the municipal, provincial, and national level can support the work of community organizers in and for rural communities. Further, more contextual discussions about the processes of sport and recreation management in diverse rural contexts may solidify

relationships within and between the fields of community/economic development, community planning, and tourism.

Pushing Boundaries Through Community Partnership

Conducting a PAR project involves a commitment to partnerships and the engagement of community members in various stages of the research process (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). In doing this, research objectives, design, methodological approaches, and outcomes may emerge and develop in accordance with the findings and direction provided (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Through this project, the objectives that emerged involved providing a critical theoretical discussion about the management of sport and recreation in the rural community context, as well as exploring the use of PAR approaches and community partnerships in community sport and recreation management.

In order to understand the significance of sport and recreation for community members as well as the social processes involved in the management of sport and recreation in Powassan, a critical understanding of community was required. By engaging a critical communitarian perspective (Young, 1995), this research served to problematize understandings of community in order to critically explore the social context of sport and recreation in Powassan. While discussions of communitarian theory and social action (e.g., Arai & Pedlar, 2003; Etzioni, 2004, 2014) are scarce in the sport and recreation literature (and even fewer in sport and recreation management research), this research provided a novel discussion by critically assessing understandings of community and pluralistic obligations within the context of community sport and recreation. By engaging community members in various ways throughout this process (e.g., by identifying key focus areas and in the analysis process) the approach employed in this project

also sought to engender productive discussions within the community and reflect on the ways that the Recreation Committee might better achieve its goals of supporting and delivering recreation opportunities for all members of the community. Taken together, this research attempted to foreground the community both pragmatically in the research process as well as theoretically in the discussions stemming from this work. Consequently, this research challenges sport and recreation researchers and practitioners to think more critically about their understandings of community as well as who is (and is not) implicated in and affected by their work.

In this document, I also explored the many ways that PAR emerged as a useful methodological approach for engaging communities, developing novel insights, and supporting/facilitating social change. By conceptualizing sport and recreation development initiatives along a continuum of PAR (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003), I discussed the way we were able to navigate complex social and political systems of these initiatives and also attempt to build capacity within the community to engage in critical reflections and actions to improve systemic conditions that constrained community organizers' abilities to respond to the needs of community members. Additionally, by engaging in first person action inquiry (Torbert, 2001) as a researcher, I was able to navigate the important roles of both insiders and outsiders within the research process (Humphrey, 2007). Navigating and understanding these roles was crucial to fully understanding the complex power dynamics involved in sport and recreation, community partnership, and PAR more broadly (Elliott, et al., 2015).

Collectively, this research engaged a participatory world view (Reason & Bradbury, 2001) in an attempt to responsibly engage community members throughout the research process.

These attempts were made as part of the process of redistributing power inherent in the research process (Lawson, 2005) and engaging in diverse forms of knowledge production informed by diverse (i.e., not post/positivist) ideologies (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016). With regard to qualitative research in sport, exercise, and health, Giardina (2017) described the current moment as a “methodologically contested present,” meaning that “qualitative inquiry itself is an open-ended project moving in many directions at once, which leads to a perpetual resistance against attempts to impose a single, umbrella-like paradigm over the entire project” (p. 259). The research described in the document is interdisciplinary and therefore contributes to methodological and empirical discussions regarding rurality, community, and sport and recreation management research and practice. As many important insights about the processes of community sport and recreation management as well as the process of employing PAR in and with communities were drawn from this project, it contributes to the ongoing discussions (see Shaw & Hoerber, 2016, 2017) pertaining to diverse methodological and theoretical approaches, informed by diverse ideologies and worldviews. It is my hope that this contribution encourages further discussion and debate about the the way we understand the field of sport and recreation management as an academic discipline and a social practice.

A Living Framework For PAR

Throughout the many iterative cycles of action and reflection involved in this research process, it became increasingly evident that I lacked a way of conceptualizing a PAR project that involved several moving parts and shifting identities. While a community development approach (Frisby & Millar, 2002; Misener & Schulenkorf, 2016) and the historical and philosophical traditions (Brown & Tandon, 1983; Wallerstein & Duran, 2003) of PAR were helpful in directing

the project, it was a constant struggle to conceptualize and articulate the web of relationships involved in my own multiple identities, the action initiatives unfolding in the community, the individuals and groups involved in developing and organizing these initiatives, as well as the broader community and all of its social and political contexts. As a result, much of the work in the project evolved into a discussion of how these aspects of the project could be understood and adequately articulated, particularly in the context of community sport and recreation. Therefore, in summary, I offer a framework for depicting the PAR approach based on the experiences reflected on in this project. The framework is not intended to be exhaustive and incorporate detailed aspects and the critical issues of PAR (see Israel, et. al., 2003). Rather, the framework is a simple depiction of how researchers and community members may conceptualize the process of PAR. It is my hope that it may encourage other researchers to explore and reflect on their own processes of inquiry and action.

Discussions and themes that emerged throughout this PAR process may be organized within three main constituents: the community context(s), the action initiatives, and the roles of the researchers. Community contexts involve many social, historical, and political aspects of individual lived experiences as well as organizational climates. As such, we came to understand and discuss community context not as a singular dimension, but as a complex web of contexts, informed by Etzioni's (2004) conceptualization of community. Action initiatives in this PAR project were also not singular and easily delimited. These initiatives involved overlapping and interconnected activities such as program development, policy making, advocacy, and collective action. These initiatives were conceptualized along a continuum of PAR (see chapter four; Wallerstein & Duran, 2003) in order to understand processes of action within the community as

fluidly shifting back and forth between the historical and philosophical traditions of the approach. Finally, understanding the role of the researchers (both academic and community partners) emerged as a critical third piece in navigating and articulating the PAR process. This understanding involved acknowledging when and how research partners (and community members) were able to engage both insider and outsider roles in order to contribute to the overall goals of the project (Trussell, 2014). Further, these insider and outsider roles were intersectional and constantly involved in the many processes of action in the community. Thus, insider and outsider roles were both productive (Humphrey, 2007), and continually engaged in participatory and/or action initiatives within and outside of the community contexts.

Importantly, this framework was not conceptualized as a static one to be articulated at the outset or in the final stages of a PAR project. Rather, the framework is intended to reflect the living, moving, and dynamic processes of engaging in community partnership and conducting PAR. Just as Marshall (2001) described first person action inquiry as a life process, I too came to understand PAR as such: not an individual and singular activity, but constant processes of interacting, reflecting, learning, and changing. Pragmatically, action initiatives unfold in various ways and researchers might expect to engage both insider and outsider identities and leverage the resources available to them in these roles. In some cases, researchers may engage insider roles to conduct research that is more reflective the (northern) action research tradition, and other times insider roles may be engaged conducting research that is more participatory and critical, reflective of the southern traditions of PAR. Further, while considering the community contexts are integral to PAR processes, researchers may also travel outside of these contexts to others which can provide important resources (physical, intellectual, emotional) that also shape action

and reflection within the process. As the movement and interactions of these roles, actions, and contexts cannot be illustrated in a single image or figure, they might be considered as constantly in motion. In presenting this framework, I engage the idea of iterative cycles of action and reflection (Israel, et. al., 2003; Marshall, 2001), rather than oversimplifying the process as linear or static in nature.

The framework described above emerged from the experiences conducting PAR in community sport and recreation. Throughout this document I have illustrated the process through which it emerged and the insights that were gained through its development. As this framework involves a variety of positionalities (e.g., insiders working with participatory approach, outsiders working with action research approaches, etc.) there are many diverse situations and issues that may occur. Indeed, I understood my own role(s) as occupying all of these positionalities at some point throughout the research project. In order to navigate these positionalities, researchers should also consider the implications of a fluid understanding of roles and action initiatives within the research process and how shifting within and between these positionalities can be productive.

As a starting point to reflecting on the multiple roles of researchers as instruments of research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) within PAR approaches in sport and recreation management, I offer up four of these positionalities and points of reflection for each. These points of reflection are drawn from my own reflective methodological practice within PAR and as such are not exhaustive. Insiders working with participatory approaches are characterized by insider researchers working to engage in critical pedagogy or to foster critical reflections with community members who may be marginalized, oppressed, or disadvantaged in various ways.

Faced with the tasks of reflecting on systems of power (which they may or may not be aware of), in this positionality researchers may consider who in the community influences (and has influenced) their own perceptions and what groups in the community they are (and are not) familiar with and connected to. In this project, this positionality was engaged as I worked with local organizers and attempted to facilitate a critical understanding of the ways that (sport, recreation, bureaucratic) systems were ineffective in and for the community (see chapter four). Conversely, we can consider the positionality of outsiders working with participatory approaches. Of particular importance here is understanding the local contexts and how an outsider researcher can not only develop and understand, but also facilitate an awareness and critical understanding of these contexts with community members. Researchers working in this positionality should do so with a constant awareness of who they are speaking with and for in various fora, and consider what social and cultural contexts influence diverse community members lived experiences, who are (and are not) engaged in sport, recreation, and the research process, as well as how the role(s) of the researcher influences the way they are received by community members and consequently what they are (and are not) able to communicate and facilitate. Within my work in Powassan, this was demonstrated in my reflections pertaining to gender and class and how I was an ill-suited instrument of research and agent of change within certain groups in the community (see chapter five).

Working with action research approaches - grounded in building consensus, learning by doing, and mobilizing resources from multiple stakeholders within the community in order to develop solutions for issues - constitutes another important part of the framework. Insider researchers working with this approach may consider what groups or stakeholders might have

interests in the project but are not currently represented as well as how (diverse) members of the community can be engaged in determining how they are included in all phases of the research process. Additionally, researchers might consider how their own understandings and assumptions influence the way that they perceive positive or progressive change. In Powassan, I engaged this positionality by attempting to solicit input from a variety of community sources in the development of the Get Active Powassan program (see chapter four) and I attempted to articulate and address my own assumptions and so-called biases through reflexive practice (see chapter five). Finally, outsiders working with action research approaches might consider how they can become sensitized to the unique social/cultural/political contexts of the community, how they can gain insights into not only the social networks in the community, but also the affective nature and intensity of these relationships, as well as how they might come to define “community” in a responsible, just, and equitable way. In this project, I engaged this positionality by engaging my identity as a researcher in order to work with the local library (as it was a context and social group with whom I was not familiar) and attempting to develop a more formal and reciprocal relationship with the Recreation Committee in order to better serve the community as a collective.

In summary, the framework provided and discussed here represents a more holistic way of conceptualizing the roles and actions of researchers and community members engaged in PAR. The points of reflection and examples outlined above are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a starting point to think about the diverse and fluid positionalities that might be engaged throughout the research process. As this framework was developed based on a partnership with the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee, it may be engaged, challenged, and

critiqued in other community or systemic contexts. As rural communities (and urban city spaces) embody many diverse and interconnected (social, cultural, physical, etc.) characteristics, there are many opportunities for future empirical research in the field. For example, this research did not delve into the implications of inter-community conflict and the ways that sport, recreation, and tourism shape understandings within and between rural communities (e.g., see Michels, 2017). Furthermore, while capacity emerged as an important issue for rural sport and recreation managers in Powassan, this research did not provide an exhaustive discussion of the capacity issues that are likely to arise given the diversity of resources and characteristics of rural communities. An exploration of these issues will be critical in understanding how sport and recreation systems can be adapted to better serve rural sport and recreation managers and organizations working in diverse community contexts. Finally, given the geographical location of Powassan and the relative homogeneity of ethnic identities, this project did not explore tensions of intercultural conflict stemming from increased migration and or colonial histories of conflict with indigenous populations. Both of these represent prominent issues for many rural regions and subsequently influence experiences in and with sport and recreation in those communities. As such, the framework presented here is not intended to conclude the conversation on PAR in rural sport and recreation management, but rather to summarize this project and to stimulate further discussion on the insights that can be derived working in the empirical, theoretical and methodological peripheries of the field.

Concluding Thoughts

In the very late stages of preparing this document, a story was shared with me that highlighted the importance of partnership with community and the scope of outcomes that may

emerge from PAR approaches. The story helped me to grasp some of the more particular and interpersonal outcomes of working in and with the community, and the impacts that researchers and community sport and recreation professionals can have in local contexts. I share the story here to highlight the dynamic, multi-faceted, and sometimes unexpected outcomes of working in and with communities.

Early on in the research partnership, I had worked quite regularly at the local pool filling in when they were short staffed and teaching advanced courses that they did not have the human resources (i.e., qualified staff) to offer. In this role, I interacted with many local youths in various capacities as a lifeguard, instructor, and examiner. I was familiar with many of these youths from previous activities or from working at the pool many years earlier when I was only a teenager myself. As one would expect, my own approach (to teaching and interacting with youths) and identity have changed and developed just as much as these young people with whom I was interacting nearly a decade later.

The story that was shared involved one of these youths. Recently, the individual was required to write a paper for a high school course in which they were enrolled. In the paper they referred to meeting someone in a local recreation program who offered encouragement and suggested that they had great potential and should consider further leadership training and the possibility of employment in recreation. As the story goes, they referred to those interactions as an integral experience in their own development as a person and as an experience that helped them develop self-confidence and the determination to pursue these opportunities. It was the mother of this individual who shared this story with my own mother, and asked her to thank me for being a positive and formative influence for her child at an important time in their life.

Several weeks later on an impromptu visit to the local arena, I spoke about this individual with the Recreation and Facilities Manager. He was discussing the applications he had received for the upcoming cycle of the summer program, including one from the youth discussed above. In regards to this individual's application, it was noted that the Recreation and Facilities Manager would likely take them before the others as, on several occasions, this individual had demonstrated their positive attitude and willingness to learn and support the summer programs. For me, this demonstrated the way that a commitment to community (or pluralistic obligations) can have many, sometimes indirect, outcomes.

Throughout this project, many aspects of individual and group interactions were explored in the form narrative, reflections, and formal feedback. However, this story was particularly salient for me as it emerged completely unexpectedly. While the majority of my experiences in sport, recreation, and research have trained me to mitigate biases and excavate objective or generalizable truths rather than affective abstractions, this story helped me refocus and appreciate the social nature of community sport and recreation, and subsequently the immense potential of researchers to influence practice in the field and broader community outcomes. I am extremely thankful that this story was shared with me as it reinforced both the formative role of sport and recreation in and for community, as well as the individual and broader social outcomes that can be facilitated by working in and with the communities we hope to influence.

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Appendices

Appendix A:
Ethics Approval Form



**Western University Health Science Research Ethics Board
NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice**

Principal Investigator: Dr. Laura Misener
Department & Institution: Health Sciences/Kinesiology, Western University

NMREB File Number: 106792
Study Title: Sport and Recreation in Powassan, Ontario
Sponsor: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

NMREB Initial Approval Date: July 30, 2015
NMREB Expiry Date: July 30, 2016

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Recruitment Items		2015/06/11
Instruments		2015/06/11
Recruitment Items		2015/06/11
Recruitment Items		2015/06/11
Western University Protocol		2015/06/11
Revised Letter of Information & Consent	Interviews	2015/07/29
Revised Letter of Information & Consent	Focus Groups	2015/07/29

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 000009412

Appendix B:
Community Consultation Agenda & Worksheet

Sport and Recreation in Powassan

Initial Community Consultation Workshop Protocol

1. Introductions

- 1.1. Researchers and broad goals/approach to the research project
- 1.2. Community member/organization introductions
- 1.3. Explanation of how the workshop will unfold

2. Issue Identification

- 2.1. Community leaders will identify and rank issues that are most important to their organization and provide a brief explanation.
- 2.2. The group will be given a chance to discuss and explore these issues
- 2.3. A final list of central issues will be decided upon to guide the research process

3. Research Process Identification

- 3.1. Based on the central issues already identifies, identify the central focus of the project and specific research questions to be addressed
- 3.2. Identify most productive means of knowledge translation or research output for the community and community leaders
- 3.3. Based on these foci/questions, identify the most prominent sites for data collection (e.g., programs, events, public spaces, municipal buildings, etc.)
- 3.4. Determine most appropriate data collection methods and participants (if applicable)

4. Synthesis, Wrap Up, and Thank You

- 4.1. Provide details for follow up and ways to stay involved

Name: _____

Current involvement in Community Sport/Rec:

Previous involvement in Community Sport/Rec:

Please take a moment to identify the following:

Your Organization	Powassan Sport/Rec in General
Strengths, Highlights, Redeeming Qualities	

Challenges, Issues, Concerns moving forward	
In your opinion, what do you need, or what could be done to improve future/current situation?	

Other Comments:

Appendix C:
Community Consultation Summary

Community Consultation Summary

1. General

1. Attendance

(anonymized) - Recreation/Facilities Manager

(anonymized) - Soccer Coordinator & Recreation Committee,

(anonymized) - Recreation Committee, Seniors Activities, Agriculture Society,
Fish Derby

2. Procedure

We began by reviewing the Recreation Action Plan as it provided a wealth of information and background research on sport/recreation in Powassan and area. Following that, each participant jotted down notes pertaining to what they thought the strengths, weaknesses, and future directions were/ought to be from both the perspective of their organization as well as the community in general. From there, we discussed each of these and how they were similar and/or different among individuals and organizations.

2. Discussion

1. Main Themes

1. Geography/Location of the community - Powassan was identified as a rural, bedroom, and small (population) community which provided opportunities as well as limitations.
2. The nature of Sport/Recreation Opportunities - competitive vs recreational, independence or affiliation with other organizations (e.g., soccer vs. figure skating) was an important point of consideration.

3. Reliance on Volunteers - the sport/recreation community is largely dependant on significant contributions from volunteers. This important resource is at or near the point of being maxed out.
4. Difficulty through amalgamation - the process of combining Powassan and Trout Creek was difficult and has not yet been fully realized in the sport/recreation department.

2. Other Points

1. Powassan Eagles not identified as an important aspect of the sport/recreation community as it is largely segregated and operated outside of community level.
2. Community gatherings important for sport/recreation (e.g., Maple Syrup Festival, Fall Fair, Family Fun Day, etc.)
3. Change (population/demographic, popular interest, etc.) was evident and concerning for sport/recreation groups as they threatened their sustainability.
4. Many facilities/resources available in the community but it lacks the capacity and resources to utilize them effectively.
5. While there is a lot of good information in the Recreation Action Plan, it is not all up to date and it is not widely accepted by community leaders. It provides a good overview and foundational information for the research, but the recommendations have not been accepted and do not appear to be appropriate based on the communities needs and expectations.

3. Research Process Identification

1. After discussing the themes from initial discussions, the following topics/questions were identified as appropriate sites for interrogation.
 1. The role of sport and recreation in the attraction and retention of people to the community (seasonally or permanently). That is, does sport and recreation make Powassan more than a bedroom community?
 2. The relationship between sport development and community development. It was noted that sport/recreation groups rely heavily on the community to be sustainable and it was suggested that the community also may rely on sport/recreation to be sustainable/cohesive/etc.
 3. Unstructured sport/recreation opportunities, particularly outdoor activities, are apparently important activities within the community. So how then might these activities also be important to the development of of community and sport within the community?
2. In order to address these topics, a qualitative approach was suggested involving the following:
 1. Methods - individual and focus group interviews as well as participation and informal discussions with participants.
 2. Participants - sport/recreation programmers, coordinators, administrators; community leaders including mayor and councillors; longtime as well as new community members; sport/recreation participants in a variety of programs (e.g., youth and seniors).

3. In terms of outcomes of the study for the community, the following outputs were requested:
 1. Recommendations for how the community Recreation Committee should proceed in directing sport/recreation within the community.
 2. Compare findings from the study with the current Recreation Action Plan
 3. (if appropriate) update information/recommendations in the Recreation Action Plan and present in a way that is accessible and useful for Recreation Committee.

Appendix D:
Letter of Information

Project Title: Sport and Recreation in Powassan, Ontario

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Laura Misener, School of Kinesiology, Western University

Co-Investigator:

Kyle Rich, School of Kinesiology, Western University

Letter of Information

1. Invitation to Participate

You are being invited to participate in this research study because you may be able to offer insight into the role of sport and recreation in Powassan, Ontario. We are seeking community members and visitors to participate in our study investigating sport and recreation practices in rural Canadian communities.

2. Purpose of the Letter

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information required for you to make an informed decision regarding participation in this research.

3. Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to examine participation in sport and recreation in Powassan. The research process has been guided by community members and broadly aims to assess sport and recreation participation, as well as how rural community members understand and value sport and recreation participation. More specifically, the research objectives seek to understand the role of different types of sport/recreation (clubs, organizations, practices) in attracting and retaining community members, in its relationship to community development, and understandings of sport/recreation in the rural context.

4. Inclusion Criteria

As noted above, you have been invited to participate in this study as you have been identified as having knowledge and/or experience of/in the community of Powassan, Ontario. All participants must currently or previously have been a resident or visitor to the community and at least 14 years of age to be eligible to participate in this study.

5. Exclusion Criteria

Individuals who are less than 14 years of age, and those who have not resided or visited Powassan, Ontario, are not eligible to participate in this phase of the study.

6. Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, where we will discuss topics pertaining to sport and recreation in Powassan (including barriers, opportunities, practices, management, etc.) as well as your personal experience in sport and recreation. It is anticipated that the entire task will take between 1-2 hours, and it is only a one-time commitment. The interview will be audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Should you request that your participation not be recorded for this session, this will be accommodated and the researcher will simply take detailed notes throughout the inter-

view. Requesting to not be recorded will not affect your eligibility to participate in this study. Interviews will be conducted at a location that is convenient for you, most likely the local restaurant, recreation facility, or municipal office. There will be approximately 50 participants in this phase of the research project.

7. Possible Risks and Harms

There are no known or anticipated physical risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study. Some social discomfort may occur if participants are not comfortable discussing issues regarding sport and recreation in their community (based on past experiences or otherwise).

8. Possible Benefits

By participating in this study, you have the chance to contribute to our understanding of rural sport and recreation. The information collected through this process may also be used to improve management practices of sport and recreation opportunities in your (and other) rural community(ies). Furthermore, this research project may help to inform the production of sport and recreation policies that can better serve the needs of rural communities.

9. Compensation

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

10. Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no negative implications. Following the interview, should you request that some or all of your participation be removed from the study, this can be done by contacting the researchers listed in this letter.

11. Confidentiality

All data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to the investigators of this study. If the results are published, your name will not be used. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all transcribed materials and publications. The only information that will be included will be the generic role of the participant in the community (e.g., sport participant, coach, club president, etc.). If you choose to withdraw from this study at any time, your data will be removed, destroyed from our database, and not used in any resulting publications.

12. Contacts for Further Information

If you require any further information regarding this research project or your participation in the study you may contact Kyle Rich by phone (removed) or email (removed) or The Office of Research Ethics at Western University (removed), email: (removed)

13.Publication

If the results of the study are published, your name will not be used. If you would like to receive a copy of any potential study results, please contact Kyle Rich at the coordinates listed above.

14.Consent

By signing the attached consent form, you indicate that you have read this letter, that you have had the nature of the study explained to you, that you agree to participate in this study, and that you have had all of your questions answered to your satisfaction.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Appendix E:
Interview Guide

Interview Guide - Rural Sport Participants

General Questions:

1. How long and in what capacity have you been:
 - Familiar with Powassan?
 - Involved in sport and recreation in Powassan?
2. Can you describe your typical participation (all activities both sporting and recreational)?
 - Probe for changes in participation, motivations for participation and reasons for change?
3. Why do you participate in sport and recreation?
 - Probe for friends, family, social, exercise, health, etc.
4. What are usually your highlights of participation, and why?
 - Probe for stories, anecdotes, etc.
5. Can you describe the people you participate with (family, friends, neighbours, etc.)?
6. How does participation influence your relationships with these people (individually or collectively)?
 - Probe for trust, socializing, cohesion, resource sharing, strengthening, etc.
7. How does participation affect your impression/understanding of your community?
 - Probe for networking, pride, cohesion, family, etc.
8. How does your community influence what sport/recreation you participate in? and why?
 - Probe for contextual factors: rural, outdoors, facilities, programs, support systems, etc.
9. How do you think sport and recreation benefit, contribute to, or disadvantage your community?
 - Probe for why and examples/anecdotes.
10. Who do you think sport and recreation benefit the most (and the least), and why?
10. Why is sport/recreation (if at all) important to you? To the community?

11. How would you imagine your community changing if there were no sport/recreation clubs?
12. What makes sport and recreation organizations/clubs successful in your community and why?
13. What are the most important things that you would want someone who was organizing sport and recreation in your community to consider?
14. How, if at all, do you think the rural context of Powassan influences sport/recreation participation? and experiences in sport and recreation?

Target Specific Questions:

- For New(er) Community Members:
 - What were your first encounters/impressions with sport and recreation in Powassan?
 - How, if at all, did sport and recreation influence your impression/ideas about Powassan?
 - How, if at all, did sport and recreation factor into your adjustment and settlement into the community?
 - What were your best and worst experiences in sport and/or recreation in the community?
- For Sport Leaders:
 - Why did you chose to become involved in sport/recreation in Powassan?
 - How would you describe the relationship between your sport/recreation group/organization/club and your community?
 - Probe for relationships, positives/negatives, examples/anecdotes.
 - What were key aspects of your organizations/clubs that made them successful?
 - What are some of the difficulties and opportunities for sport/recreation clubs/organizations operating in Powassan?
 - What advice would you offer for other sport leaders if they are working in small communities such as Powassan?

- Trout Creek Community Centre Board Members
 - How would you describe the role of the community centre in the community?
 - Probe for examples/anecdotes of how this is accomplished.
 - How, if at all, has the role of the community centre changed? Specifically in the context of other changes in the community?
 - How has the board changed or responded to the changes?
 - What are the immediate and long term plans for the community centre?
 - What are the biggest successes/challenges faced by the board?
 - What are your long term goals and aspirations for the community centre/board?

Appendix F:

Participant Pseudonyms and Role(s)/Identity(ies) in the Municipality

Pseudonym	Role(s)/Identity(ies) within the Community
Alana	Parent, Grandparent, Volunteer
Allen	Parent, Community Centre Board Member, Volunteer,
Alvin	Recreation Committee Member, Member of Municipal Council, Parent
Angela	Parent, Grandparent, Volunteer, Community Centre Board Member, Retired Teacher
Ben	Youth, Recreation Worker
Blaze	Youth, Volunteer, Identifies as Having a Disability,
Carlyn	Mother, Recreation Committee Member, Volunteer,
Carrie	Mother, Municipal Employee, Volunteer,
Chip	Festival Organizer, Recreation Committee Member, Farmer, Highland Games Competitor
Christine	Recreation Worker
Debbie	Mother, Recreation Committee Member, Volunteer
Elyssia	Youth, Recreation Worker, Newcomer to the Community
Erik	Youth, Community Centre Board Member, Volunteer,
Erin	Recreation Programmer, Volunteer,
Jean	Former Recreation Worker, Parent,
Jess	Recreation Committee Member, Former Member of Municipal Council, Business Owner
Jim	Parent, Community Centre Board Member, Volunteer,
Jocelyn	Recreation Worker
Jody	Parent, Volunteer,
Justin	Community Centre Board Member, Volunteer
Katie	Mother, Volunteer, Business Owner, Coach,
Ken	Hockey Coach, Minor Sport Organizer, Parent, Newcomer to the Community

Korina	Parent, Minor Sport Organizer,
Layla	Youth, Recreation Worker
Linda	Mother, Lesbian, Community Development Worker
Lucas	Youth, Volunteer,
Margo	(Single) Parent, Volunteer, Newcomer to the Community
Matt	Business Owner, Newcomer to the Community, Club President,
Melanie	Youth, Recreation Worker, Newcomer to the Community
Morgan	Mother, Community Centre Board Member, Volunteer
Myriam	Mother, Teacher, Volunteer,
Natasha	Recreation Worker, Youth, Newcomer to the Community
Pat	Mother, Teacher, Newcomer to the Community
Patti	Tournament Organizer, Girl Guide Leader,
Rhonda	Recreation Committee Member, Club Member, Volunteer
Rita	Parent, Minor Sport Organizer, Newcomer to the Community
Serena	Youth, Recreation Worker
Sherry	Youth, Recreation Worker, Volunteer
Steevie	Youth, Recreation Worker
Twyla	Youth, Former Recreation Worker

Appendix G:

Municipal Recreation Equipment Loan Policy

Municipality of Powassan Recreation Equipment Loan Policy

Approved, 2015

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Equipment Loan Policy

The Municipality of Powassan will make sport and recreation equipment available, through the equipment loan initiative, to individuals and groups based in the Municipality.

This availability will be made with the provision that there is no additional cost to Municipality of Powassan. The loan of such equipment should not impact the regular sport/recreation programs or the security/maintenance of its properties. All Municipal events and programs will have priority over equipment loans.

The equipment available for loan is outlined in appendix A.

Procedure

1. Nature of Equipment Loan Initiative

The purpose of the equipment loan initiative is:

- To increase the number of opportunities for individuals to participate in sport, recreation, and community-minded social events.
- To support the development and operation of community groups in the municipality.
- To increase the number of individuals with healthy active lifestyles in the municipality by allowing them to participate in a variety of sport and recreation activities.

2. Loan Requests

- Equipment loans will be arranged through the Recreation and Facilities Manager.
- All individuals and organizations must complete an equipment loan contract for submission and review.
- Requests by for-profit groups will be considered but the programming should not be dependant on regular use of the equipment.
- Requests by community/non-profit groups and individuals will be given priority over for-profit groups.
- All requests will be evaluated and reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the municipality reserves the right to refuse a loan at their discretion.

3. Loan Procedure

- An "Equipment Loan Contract" and "Liability Waiver" must be completed by all parties involved in the loan.
- All use of equipment must be recorded with the appropriate forms to ensure accurate tracking of equipment (i.e. equipment loan contract).
- Individuals and groups borrowing equipment do so at their own risk, any injury or property

damage occurring as a result of using the equipment is the responsibility of the user.

-All monies (where applicable) shall be exchanged prior to receiving equipment.

-Borrowers will be required to arrange their own transportation of equipment within the agreed upon timeframes.

-A "late fee" (up to the full value of the borrowed equipment) may be charged to users who fail to return the equipment on the agreed upon date.

4. Payment

Sport/Recreation equipment will be provided for loan free of charge. Larger equipment and that which requires maintenance or replenishing (e.g., BBQ tanks) will incur costs as appropriate.

The Municipality may elect to waive the rental fee for certain user groups as part of partnerships or other extenuating circumstances. Final fees and prices are ultimately at the discretion of the Municipality.

5. Losses or Damages

The loan contract will include the obligation of the borrower or his/her representative to be responsible to report and be financially responsible for 100% of the replacement cost (including shipping and taxes) of all losses and 100% of the cost for all damage to property and equipment that occur during, or as a result of, the loan.

Approximate prices of equipment (prices may vary based on taxes and shipping) are included in Appendix E.

Appendix A - Equipment Inventory

Sports Equipment

Item	Quantity	Notes
Dodgeball (black)	12	
Hard Foam Balls (red)	12	
Basketballs (size 6)	10	
Basketballs (size 7)	10	
Basket Ball Net (portable)	2	
Flag Football Set	2	Includes flags, ball, and cones
Frisbee	24	
Tennis Racquet (small)	15	
Tennis Racquet (medium)	15	
Tennis Racquet (large)	15	
Tennis Balls	100	
Tennis Net (portable)	4	
Baseball	36	
Baseball Gloves	20	Catcher (2), Small Right (7), Small Left (2), Large Right (7), Large Left (2)
Pickle Ball Set	2	Includes paddles, net, and balls.
Badminton Set	6	Includes self-supported net, racquets (4), and birdies.
Badminton Racquet	10	
Badminton Birdies/Shuttles	36	
Bocce Set	1	
Horseshoe Set	1	
Yoga/Exercise Mats		
Parachute	1	

Mesh Carry Bags	6	
Nutrition Pack (K-Grade 5)	1	
Nutrition Pack (Grade 5-8)	1	
Lacrosse Sticks Team Set (Small)	1	
Lacrosse Sticks Team Set (Large)	1	
Lacrosse Pop Up Nets	2	
Snowshoes Small (15")		
Snowshoes Medium (19")		
Snowshoes Large (22")		
Snowshoes Adult (25")		

Other Equipment

Item	Quantity	Notes
Large BBQ	1	
Bleachers	2	

Appendix B - Equipment Loan Contract

Date: _____

Name of Borrower (print): _____

Name of Lender (print): _____

Items Borrowed:

Item	Quantity	Notes/Cost

I _____, have received the _____ items above in good condition and agree to return them as such. I agree that any damages incurred beyond typical wear (at the discretion of the municipality) on equipment is my responsibility and I will be responsible for the cost of equipment (as outlined in the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Equipment Loan Policy).

All equipment will be returned by _____.
(Date)

(Borrower Signature)

(Date)

Section to be filled out ***upon return***:

Items returned on: _____
(Date)

Items returned by:

(Print)

(Sign)

Items received by:

(Print)

Upon inspection, the _____ items listed above appear to be returned in
satisfactory condition _____*
(Y/N)

(Sign)

(Date)

*Notes:

Appendix C -Equipment Prices

Sports Equipment

Item	Price per Unit (plus tax/shipping)
Dodgeball (black)	\$13.00
Hard Foam Balls (red)	\$7.75
Basketballs (size 6)	\$37.75
Basketballs (size 7)	\$37.75
Basket Ball Net (portable)	\$773.50
Flag Football Set	\$69.95
Frisbee Set	\$48.25
Tennis Racquet Set (small)	\$201.50
Tennis Racquet Set (medium)	\$217.25
Tennis Racquet Set (large)	\$279.50
Tennis Ball Bucket (48)	\$91.00
Tennis Ball (3 Pak)	\$23.75
Tennis Net (portable)	\$141.75
Soft Balls (Set of 18)	\$110.50
Baseball Gloves Team Set (Small)	\$154.75
Baseball Gloves Team Set (Large)	\$193.75
Pickle Ball Set	\$279.50
Badminton Set	\$91.00
Badminton Racquet	\$7.50
Badminton Birdies/Shuttles (Pack of 6)	\$27.50
Mesh Carry Bags	\$9.25
Nutrition Pack (K-Grade 5)	\$437.50
Nutrition Pack (Grade 5-8)	\$357.50

Lacrosse Sticks Team Set (Small)	\$376.50
Lacrosse Sticks Team Set (Large)	\$571.50
Lacrosse Pop Up Nets	\$169.00
Bocce Set	\$107.25
Horseshoe Set	\$48.25
Yoga/Exercise Mats	\$24.75
Parachute	\$260.00
Snowshoes Small (15")	\$44.99
Snowshoes Medium (19")	\$54.99
Snowshoes Large (22")	\$64.99
Snowshoes Adult (25")	\$74.99

Other Equipment

Item	Price (plus tax/shipping)
Large BBQ	
Bleachers	

Appendix H:

Get Active Powassan Policy and Procedures Manual

Get Active Powassan Day

Camp Program

Policy and Procedures Manual

Updated - January 30, 2016



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Get Active Powassan Day Camp Program Policy and Procedures Manual

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Introduction

Get Active Powassan (GAP) was initially funded in 2014 through the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund (OSCRF). The program was intended to increase physical literacy, access to sport and recreation opportunities, and health and fitness across the lifespan. This policy and procedures manual outlines the operations of the program for programmers offering the program.

How to Read this Manual

The following manual is written to provide camp staff and administrators with guideline to follow in order to for camp program to run smoothly. The document was prepared in accordance with official guidelines set out by organizations such as the Ontario Camps Association and the District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board. While the program may grow and evolved differently in subsequent years, the camp operation should remain as closely reflective of these official policies and procedures as possible. That is, while programmatic aspects such as sports, creative activities, partnerships, and field trips may change with each season, policies regarding conduct and documentation must be followed in all cases.

With each passing season, program coordinators will prepare a yearly report to document the successes, challenges, and suggestions for ways to improve the program. Accordingly, this manual may be updated to reflect these changes. In an effort to grow and evolve with the community, this document (as well as the program in general) should remain flexible and adaptable.

Program Overview

The GAP program was designed to promote and encourage a healthy and active community. The program strives to achieve this by providing access to sport and recreational equipment, providing affordable opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity, providing leadership training for youths and community members involved in sport and recreation in the community, creating an awareness of the importance of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle, as well as facilitating the development of partnerships and other sources of capacity within the local sport and recreation sector. The GAP summer program is an integral part of this process as it is a means through which all of these goals may be achieved.

Guiding Principles

There are several important principles that underpin the GAP program. Each of these principles are outlined below.

Accessibility

In order for members of a community to live healthy active lifestyles, they must have access to meaningful and enjoyable sport, recreation, and physical activity. This involves access to the proper materials and equipment, proper spaces to participate (e.g., fields, courts, surfaces, etc.), as well as proper instruction and leadership in a given activity. Access may also refer to the affordability of opportunities, the physical or intellectual ability required to participate, as well as the distance required to travel to and participate in sport, recreation, and physical activity.

The GAP program attempts to improve access to sport and recreation by providing a variety of sport and recreation equipment to members of the community, by training local youths and volunteers to instruct different sport and recreational activities, as well as by providing community members with the opportunity to participate in a variety of sport and recreational activities through its programming.

Healthy Active Living Through Sport, Recreation, and Physical Activity

Healthy active living may be achieved in many ways. While some community members prefer to engage in competitive sports, other prefer recreational activities such as hiking or dancing, and still others prefer purposeful exercises such as lifting weights or distance running. These different activities are all very valuable ways of encouraging health promoting activity in different populations.

The GAP program recognizes exercise, sport, and recreation as important ways of promoting healthy active lifestyles. The program seeks to promote all three types of activities through its programming in order to increase participation of community members in the activity(ies) that are most meaningful and enjoyable for them.

Capacity

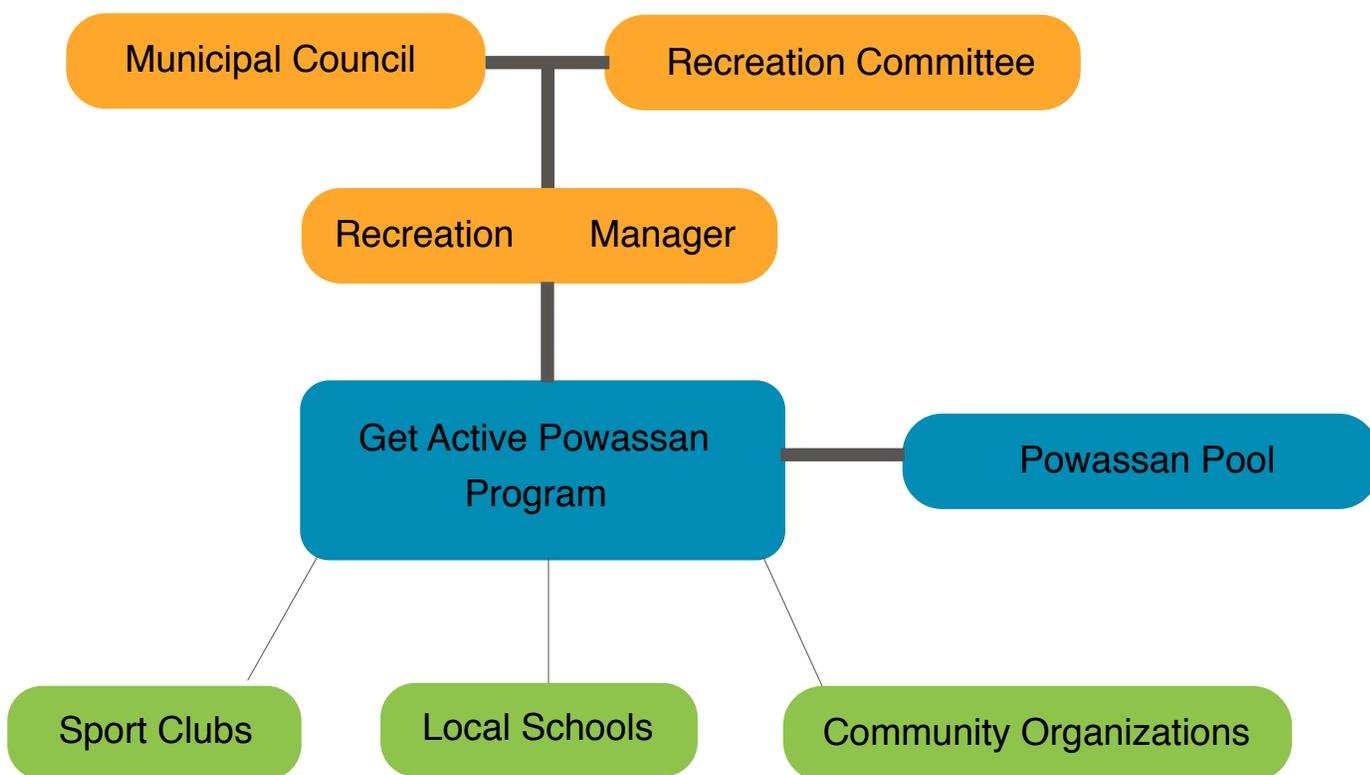
Capacity involves several components that allow individuals or a community to undertake or complete a given or desired task. Capacity involves the skills that people possess, the facilities and equipment available, the policies or systems in place, as well as resources (economic, social, cultural, etc.) that are available.

The GAP program seeks to build capacity in the community in several ways. Firstly, the program seeks to improve skills by training local youths and volunteers in established leadership programs. Secondly, the program provides equipment to all members of the community which they may use freely. Finally, the program specifically seeks to build and establish partnerships with individuals and organizations in and around the community.

With these guiding principles in mind, the GAP program aims to provide accessible, affordable, meaningful, and enjoyable sport and recreation opportunities for community members across the lifespan. Accessible programming is provided by making equipment, spaces, and opportunities to participate available, as well as through training community members in sport, recreation, and leadership programs.

Roles and Responsibilities

The GAP program operates within the broader recreation programming in the municipality of Powassan. Therefore the program is involved and accountable to the local recreation committee and municipal council. The GAP program also has links to many local sport clubs as well as recreation and community organizations. From this exciting location, it is important that program staff and managers assume and accomplish several roles and responsibilities in order to serve the interests of these many groups.



Program Management

The GAP program will be coordinated by a **Program Coordinator** who works closely with the **Recreation Manager** to ensure a smooth delivery of the program. While these two individuals will work closely and share many tasks and responsibilities, program coordinator is more generally responsible for the program implementation and

the recreation manager will typically take care of the finances, staffing, and equipment/facilities. More specific duties and responsibilities are outlined below.

Program coordinator duties:

- Oversee scheduling of staff and activities
- Facilitate registration
- Record keeping (registration, incident reports, sign out sheet, etc.)
- Program delivery.

Recreation manager Duties:

- Keep the online registration and website updated with all the relevant information
- Manage all the finances
- Replace and inventory equipment as necessary
- Book facilities and transportation where applicable.

Program Instructors

The GAP program will be delivered by program instructors. These instructors are the heart of the program as they are responsible for its delivery and the positive experiences of all participants. Instructors should be familiar with the guidelines, policies, and procedures of the program and should be enthusiastic, professional, and positive role models for participants. Further, instructors should be trained in the fundamental movement skills, standard first aid and CPR-C, as well as other relevant courses (W.H.M.I.S., concussion awareness, etc.).

Program Instructor Duties:

- Arrive on time and prepared to work
- Be dressed professionally and appropriately for the weather and activity
- Ensure that all scheduled shifts are covered and ratios maintained
- Participate in program development (e.g., making games, drills, and activities)
- Encourage and engage in active participation in all program activities
- Facilitate games and activities that develop fundamental movement skills as well as sport specific skills for a variety of participants.
- Uphold and promote the principles of positive space in all GAP programming.
- Complete basic cleaning and maintenance tasks as assigned / appropriate.

General Policies

In order to ensure that the program runs smoothly and safely, there are several policies that must be followed. The following section will outline the general procedures that should always be followed in order for the program to run.

Conduct

The following rules should be followed and enforced by staff and participants at all times:

1 - Alcohol, Tobacco, & Drugs. No person, under any circumstance should possess or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while involved in GAP programming. Tobacco use should be confined to appropriate areas (i.e., not within 9 metres of any facility entrance/exit and not within 20 metres of the Lion's Park area).

2 - Positive Space. Everyone participating in GAP programming should strive to create a positive and safe space for participation. Positive spaces are those where participants respect and encourage each other. They are free from negative comments or put-downs and are respectful of social, intellectual, physical, and sexual diversity. Under no circumstances are bullying, harassment, foul language, or negative conduct permissible during GAP programming.

3 - Supervision and Participation. During all activities, staff should ensure that adequate supervision of participants is a priority. Therefore, no participants should be left unattended or instructed to leave the area without supervision. Staff should not be in a position where the participant to staff ratio is less than 10:1 (with 6-14 year old participants) or 6:1 (for 5 year old participants). During activities, staff should be actively supervising and participating as appropriate. There should be no time during camp programming when all staff are passively sitting to the side or disengaged while the participants are active.

4 - Transportation. Staff should not transport participants in their personal vehicles unless previously arranged with the municipality. Insurance may be arranged in advance for transportation to off-site activities, however it is the staff's responsibility to ensure that this is provided in writing before transportation.

5 - Facility/Space Usage. The GAP program has access to the Lion's Park, the arena, the baseball field, and the pool facility. The use of these spaces must be scheduled in

advance in order to ensure that adequate staffing is provided. All staff and participants should avoid the water/creek area behind the park at all times. The pool may not be used without the adequate supervision of lifeguards/pool staff. Unless they are adequately qualified, GAP staff are not able to supervise activities in the pool. When using the pool area, staff and participants must follow all pool rules and the direction of pool staff.

6 - General Health and Safety. During GAP program hours, staff are responsible for program participants and should effectively behave in a way that sets a positive example for everyone in the program. This includes encouraging participants to eat and drink appropriately for their level of activity and wear sun screen/block or appropriate protection (hat, shirts, etc). Water breaks should be taken as often as necessary and snacks will be encouraged and provided in the case that they are unavailable to participants.

7 - Clothing. Staff are required to wear appropriate clothing and sun protection at all times. Staff should be dressed appropriately for the respective activity and weather, wearing athletic clothing and footwear. During all activities, staff should wear clothing that appears professional and appropriate for the activity. No clothing with profanity, inappropriate sayings/slogans, or drug/alcohol references will be permitted.

8 - Communication. All official communication with caregivers should be facilitated through the program coordinator. All program related calls/inquiries can be directed to the phone that will be used specifically for the summer program. No staff are required to give out personal contact information for the purposes of the program.

Documentation

In order to record and track all appropriate information, the appropriate documents must be filled out and filed. In order to respect the privacy of participants, forms with personal information should not be left unattended. All forms will be completed and filed on the appropriate day and stored in the secure storage space provided.

1 - Registration Forms. All participants must have a registration form that is completed and signed by a caregiver. No one will be permitted to participate in the GAP programming without this document which includes relevant information such as

emergency contact, medical information, departure information, and risk acknowledgement waiver.

2 - Incident Reports. Any time that a participant is removed from programming for a period of time, the responsible staff must fill out an incident report form. Reasons for removal may include medical or behavioural issues as well as refusal to participate. Participants requesting to sit out of activities to rest does not require an incident report to be filled out.

3 - Sign Out Sheets. At the end of each day, as participants leave with caregivers or walks home, they must be signed out of the program. Sign out sheets allow us to track who is authorized to pick up participants and which participants are allowed to walk. These are also our official record of when we defer responsibility of participants to their caregivers. Each day, each participant must be signed out by a staff or authorized person (according to the information provided on the registration form. The program coordinator is responsible for creating and maintaining the sign out sheets.

4 - Weekly Maintenance Duties Tracker. In order to keep the facilities clean, tidy, and in proper condition, there are a variety of weekly tasks that should be completed. Duties like cleaning bathrooms, sweeping floors, and maintaining sports equipment should be completed daily and as necessary. Other tasks like sweeping courts and cleaning the kitchen may be completed on a weekly basis. Any major maintenance requirements should be reported to the program coordinator and recreation manager as necessary.

Weekly Operations

The following section outlines the weekly operations and procedures that will be followed by the GAP program. In any case where the weekly or daily procedures will change (e.g., in the case of an off-site activity), ad-hoc procedures will be discussed and confirmed between program staff, the program coordinator, and the recreation manager.

Weekly Procedure

Each week of the GAP program will follow roughly the same schedule allowing for some flexibility due to facility availability and weather conditions. The following points and attached schedule will outline the general weekly procedure.

Daily - Each day, core programming will run from 9:00am to 4:00pm. The program will have one staff available from 8:00am to 5:00pm for early drop-off and late arrival. Should this staff require assistance, pool staff will also be on site at this time to assist. Drop off and pick up will happen at the arena where staff and participants will be able to store their lunches in the fridges upstairs. Each day affords participants the ability to develop fundamental movement skills through general fitness and play activities, swimming lessons, as well as sport specific skills in the theme/activity of the week. Participants will also receive a half hour swimming lesson each day of the program.

First Day - Registration and check in will take place on the first day. Staff will confirm with each parent that registration forms are complete and accurate (particularly early/late drop off, sign out, and medical information). Information letters will be sent home with parents outlining the weeks activities and schedule as well as what equipment/supplies the should send for camp activities. The first day will involve welcome activities that will allow participants and staff the opportunity learn names and expectations for the week.

Mid-Week - Throughout the week, participants will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities. While the weekly theme/activity will be the focus of the programming, many activities will be offered. Notably, participants will receive a half hour swim lesson each day and the opportunity to participate in public swimming on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Staff will have a lunch break during their as-

signed group's swimming lesson where they are off but must remain on site in case their assistance is required or in case of emergency.

Final Day - The final day of each week will be themed and geared towards celebrating a successful week and showcasing the skills that participants have developed. The final day will include a simulated competition where participants will have the opportunity to demonstrate the theme/activity of the week. As a final activity of the week, we will have a campfire with songs and skits as well as a chance for participants to showcase other talents or skills they may want to share. This final activity should be fun, engaging, and celebratory in order for participants to leave with a great final experience in the program. Further, should parents wish to observe or participate in this final activity, they are more than welcome to do so.

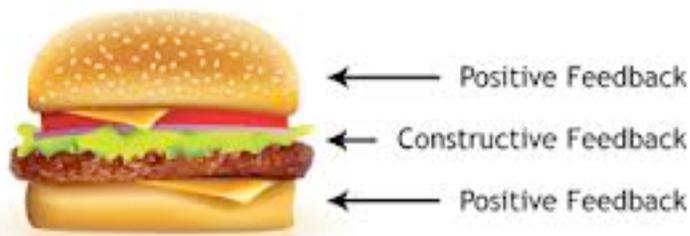
Weekly Itinerary

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30am	Early Drop Off				
8:30-9:00am	Attendance, Introductions, and Warm Up Games/Activities				
9:00-9:45am	Sport Specific Training	General Conditioning Activities (FMS)	Sport Specific Training	General Conditioning Activities (FMS)	Sport Specific Training
9:45-10:30am	General Conditioning Activities (FMS)	Sport Specific Training	General Conditioning Activities (FMS)	Sport Specific Training	General Conditioning Activities (FMS)
10:30-11:00am	Snack Break				
11:00-11:45am	Trust Games	LOG's	Archery	LOG's	Group Choice
11:45-12:30pm	LOG's	Orienteering	LOG's	Geocaching	LOG's
12:30-1:00pm	Snack Break				
1:00-1:30pm		Swim Lesson		Swim Lesson	
1:30-2:00pm	Swim Lesson	Nutrition Activity	Swim Lesson	Nutrition Activity	Swim Lesson
2:00-2:45pm	Art/Music Activity	Public Swim	Art/Music Activity	Public Swim	Simulated Game
2:45-3:30pm	Sport Specific Training		Sport Specific Training		Farewell "Campfire"
3:30-4:00pm	Wrap Up		LOG's		
4:00-4:30pm	Late Pick Ups				

Participant Reports

At the end of each week, participants will receive a letter from their instructors outlining their highlights of the week and what they can continue to work on in the future. These weekly reports will be personalized and encouraging. They will provide parents with some feedback and hopefully encourage future participation in sport, recreation, and physical activity.

Instructors will be provided with the reports mid week and able to write them out during the swimming time on Thursday afternoon. Reports should use the “feedback sandwich” approach, providing an item of constructive feedback between two items of positive feedback or encouragement. These reports are important as they are a means through which instructors can communicate with parents, improve rapport within the community, and hopefully have more concrete/lasting impact on the participants fundamental movement skills and sport, recreation, and physical activity practices.



Participant reports will be given to participants on the final day of the program each week. Participants will also receive a progress report from their swimming instructor at this time.

Emergency Procedures

As the GAP program involves active play in a variety of sports and recreation, there is inherent risks involved in these activities and thus emergency plans have been established. All staff will be familiar with these plans and required to comply with them at all times. It should be noted that most GAP programming will take place in the vicinity of the Lion's Park/ Arena and therefore in close proximity to the Pool. Pool staff and equipment are therefore available and should be utilized for assistance whenever necessary.

Minor Incidents

A minor incident is an event that requires attention, however it can be dealt with on site by our own staff. Examples of minor incidents include first aid incidents such as cuts, scrapes, falls, etc. as well as interpersonal issues such as fighting or bullying. In all cases where people are treated or taken out of their daily activity for an extended period of time, this will be considered a minor incident.

Minor incidents will be recorded using an incident report form. This form will be filled out by the GAP staff who attended to the participant or group of participants involved in the incident. Incident reports will be filed with the program coordinator and kept for the remainder of the season in order to inform any further correspondence with caregivers or other organizations.

Major Incidents

Major incidents are those that require assistance by external people/ organizations to be dealt with. Examples of major incidents include those requiring Emergency Medical Services, cases of suspected child maltreatment, as well as outbreaks of communicable diseases.

First Aid Incident

All staff of the GAP program will be required to have current Standard First Aid and CPR-C training. At all times, staff will respond to first aid emergencies as they have been trained in their relevant courses. A basic first aid kit will travel with staff at all

times and more equipped kits will be available at the pool and arena. Spinal boards are also located at both the pool and arena and AED units are available at the arena and curling club.

Concussion

Concussions typically occur following a jarring or sudden hit to the head. Signs and symptoms can vary from mild feelings on being unwell to severe headaches, vomiting, dizziness, or memory and vision problems. Signs and symptoms may vary with individuals and may not appear immediately. All staff are to deal with concussions as they have been instructed in their Standard First Aid training. Importantly, staff will not be required, nor expected to diagnose a concussion. However, the following preventative and responsive procedures should be followed at all times.

Preventative

- All staff will be trained in Standard First Aid (which includes information on both concussion and compression injuries).
- Emergency procedures (e.g., regarding supervision, emergency phone, other resources) will be communicated through this manual and reviewed with all new staff at the beginning of each season.
- All activities will be designed to minimize the risk of contact.
- Whenever possible, participants will be divided into groups based on age, size, and/or enthusiasm in accordance with the activity they will be participating in.
- Equipment will be stored properly, inspected regularly, and participants will be instructed on the proper use of all equipment prior to use.

Responsive

- Any time a staff witnesses or hears a report of a fall or hit to the head, the participant will be removed from the activity.
- Staff will respond according to their Standard First Aid training (including whether or not to contact Emergency Medical Services).
- Staff will complete an incident report for any and all incidents involving a hit to the head.
- Any incident will be reported to the parent or guardian and they will be advised to seek the appropriate medical attention. If it is clear to staff that the partici-

pant has experienced a head injury, they may suggest that the participant provided clearance and instructions from a physician regarding their return to activity.

- Parents/Guardians will also be instructed to seek out appropriate information regarding concussions and guidelines for returning to play from Parachute Canada (<http://www.parachutecanada.org/thinkfirstcanada>).

Structural Incident

In the case of an emergency involving one of the facilities (e.g., a fire, equipment failure, etc.), all staff and participants will be directed to evacuate the facility and take refuge in the nearest municipal facility. As most programming will take place in the Lion's park area, these facilities will likely include the arena, curling club, pool area, Lion's Park, or baseball diamond. Should any of these facilities not be available, staff and participants may be evacuated to the Municipal Office/Fire Hall at 433 Main Street, Powassan.

Inclement Weather

In the case of severe weather (e.g., heavy rain, thunder/lightning, or extreme winds), the GAP program will move inside the arena. Staff and participants should not leave the vicinity of the Lion's Park on days when weather may become severe (according to predictions). Should staff and participants find themselves away from the Lion's Park and caught in inclement weather, they should take shelter in the nearest public building (e.g., store, municipal office, etc.) and contact the program coordinator.

Partnerships

Partnerships are a crucial aspect of the GAP program. As the goals of the program include building capacity and increasing opportunities to participate in sport, recreation, and physical activity throughout the community, partnerships are an important part of this approach. Partnerships necessarily involve two or more parties who contribute resources (financial, human, in kind, etc.) in pursuit of a common goal. Thus, the GAP program should seek to share and distribute resources accordingly. This may take the form of free weeks in the program, staff labour, equipment use, etc. The program coordinator and recreation manager should consider all partnership opportunities, however decisions on where/ho to allocate resources should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Possible Partnership Opportunities

There are many individuals, groups, and organizations in the community who represent potential partnership opportunities. Below is a list of previous partners that may be considered. This list, however, is not exhaustive and should be updated yearly. New partnerships with new community groups are an asset and critical for keeping the program relevant and growing with the community.

Partner	GAP/Municipal Contribution	Partner Contribution
Pool	Group Supervision	Lessons Admission
Yoga	Group Supervision	Free classes in the park on Tuesday
Judo	Group Supervision Equipment storage	Instruction/Lessons

Trout Creek Lions Club	New nets for the park	Services/ Assistance for future
Powassan Soccer	Free Week	Use of Soccer balls for Week 2
Spirit Point	Group Supervision Local advertising HR/Staff Sharing	Discounted Group Rate
Trout Creek Seniors	Pickle Ball Equipment	Pickle Ball Programming
Mapleridge	Volleyball net Use of Municipal Pool	Use of gym space
Hockey Opportunity Camp	Local advertising/connections	Use of outdoor equipment (compasses & GPS)
Powassan and District Union Library	Weekly sport activity	Weekly craft activity
Agricultural Society	Kids Games Facilitator/ Equipment	
Powassan Curling Club	Group Supervision Equipment Contribution	Curling Programming
District of Parry Sound Social Services Admin	Subsidized Childcare Spaces	Training Programs Quest Evaluations
Golden Sunshine Club	Equipment/ Activity Resources	Space for Programming

Resources

There are many groups and organizations that offer resources that may be useful for GAP programming. Below, some of the resources are listed with links to their websites.

Training and Certification

National Coaching Certification Program (Fundamental Movement Skills Information)

www.coach.ca

Coaches of Ontario (Fundamental Movement Skills Training)

www.coachesontario.ca/

Lifesaving/Lifeguarding/First Aid

www.lifesavingsociety.com/

Swimming and Water Safety/First Aid

www.redcross.ca/

Concussion Awareness

www.cattonline.com/

<http://www.parachutecanada.org/>

HighFive Principles of Healthy Childhood Development

www.highfive.org/ (Information)

www.prontario.org/ (Training)

District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board (Quest)

www.psdssab.org/

Programs and Activities

Ultimate Camp Resource

<http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activities/camp-games.html>

Brock University

http://kumu.brocku.ca/gamesofloworganization/Main_Page

Pinterest

<https://www.pinterest.com/>

OPHEA

<https://www.ophea.net/>

PHE Canada

www.phecanada.ca/

Truesport

www.truesportpur.ca/

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport

www.caaws.ca/

Positive Space in Sport

<http://www.caaws-homophobiainsport.ca/e/>

Near North District School Board

<https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/>

Yearly Reports

2015 - Submitted by Kyle Rich

2016 - Submitted by (anonymized) and (anonymized)

Get Active Powassan 2015 Yearly Report

October 5th, 2015

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Overview

This brief report will outline the activities of the Get Active Powassan (GAP) program to date. After nearly a year of programming the program is progressing well toward many of the goals established at the outset. This report will include quantitative data regarding participation and funding of the program as well as qualitative reporting of the outcomes produced through the program.

Program Overview

The GAP program was funded to promote accessibility, physical literacy, and capacity in the municipality. Each of these principles are briefly outlined below:

- **Accessibility** - Realistic and realizable opportunities to participate. The GAP program attempts to improve access to sport and recreation by providing a variety of sport and recreation equipment to members of the community, by training local youths and volunteers to instruct different sport and recreational activities, as well as by providing community members with the opportunity to participate in a variety of sport and recreational activities through its programming.

- **Physical Literacy** - The basic skills and competencies, as well as the motivation and ability to participate in lifelong physical activity. The GAP program promotes physical literacy by training local sport and recreation people in Fundamental Movement Skills (NCCP) training as well as providing programming that promotes positive spaces to participate for all participants.

- **Capacity** - The infrastructure, equipment, skills, policies, resources, and relationships necessary to carry out sustainable sport and recreation programming and activities. The GAP program builds capacity by training local youths and volunteers in established leadership programs, by providing equipment to all members of the community, and by building and establishing partnerships with individuals and organizations in and around the community.

This report will provide an overview of the GAP program and how it has addressed each of these principles, as well as future directions, opportunities, and challenges which might be considered for the future of the program. The report will be organized based on the GAP program activities and will provide an overview of participation numbers, qualitative reporting on the activity, as well as future considerations.

P.A. Day/March Break Camps

Participation

Date	Participants
November 2014	23
January 2015	34
March 2015	24
March Break	M - 14 T - 12 W - 13 T - 13 F - 14
April 2015	21
June 2015	22
October 2015	12

Qualitative Report

- Overall well-attended and enthusiastic participation
- Mostly repeat participants
- Many 'drop-ins' who did not pre-register
- Free participation appreciated but also contributor to drop-in
- Significant drop in participation with (\$10) cost added to PA day camp (also hockey camp competition - may be one off).

Future Considerations

- Timing is very appropriate and contributed to success and high participation numbers
- Consider use of school vs arena
- Scheduling/staffing difficult to foresee without solid registration numbers

Summer Sports Program

Participation

Week	Participants
1	21
2	23
3	32
4	31
5	25
6	16
7	35
8	34
9	41

Qualitative Report

- Overall well-received and resoundingly positive feedback
- Numbers fairly consistent with expected high and low weeks
- Visible improvements and anecdotal success regarding FMS and Physical Literacy
- Benefitted greatly from partnerships with community members/organizations
- Very beneficial to have well-rounded staffing team with diverse skills

Future Considerations

- Cost of running program vs cost of participation
- Staffing needs for future

Professional Development

Participation

Course	Number of Participants	Source of Participants
Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS)	9	4 - GAP Program 1 - Pool 1 - Library 1 - Soccer 2 - Other
Standard First Aid (SFA)	27	4 - GAP Program 1 - Pool 2 - Other Municipal 2 - Library 7 - Local Business/Org 9 - Other

Qualitative Report

- Overall positive feedback from all that attended
- Some courses more appealing/valued than others
- Possibly untapped groups that could be reached through more involved advertising (e.g., visiting meetings, promoting through individuals, clearly explaining benefits of training, etc.)

Future Considerations

- Consider costs/benefits of subsidizing courses
- Explore possibilities of running courses as partnerships

Partnerships

Created

Partner	GAP/Municipal Contribution	Partner Contribution
Pool	Group Supervision	Lessons Admission
Yoga	Group Supervision	Free classes in the park on Tuesday
Judo	Group Supervision Equipment storage	Instruction/Lessons
Trout Creek Lions	New nets for the park	Services/Assistance for future
Powassan Soccer	Free Week	Use of Soccer balls for Week 2
Spirit Point	Group Supervision Local advertising HR/Staff Sharing	Discounted Group Rate
Trout Creek Seniors	Pickle Ball Equipment	Pickle Ball Programming
Mapleridge	Volleyball net	Use of gym space
Hockey Op- portunity Camp	Local advertising/connections	Use of outdoor equipment (compasses & GPS)
Library	Weekly sport activity	Weekly craft activity
Agricultural Society	Kids Games Facilitator/ Equipment	

Qualitative Report

- Resounding success in creating partnerships with local groups/individuals
- Useful network created bringing together many community groups who may not otherwise interact

Future Considerations

- Consider how to maximize benefits of partnerships in both directions (e.g., through consulting with stakeholders about needs/wishes).
- Potential to use program to bring together many groups in the community

Budget/Funding Use

The Get Active Powassan was funded through an Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund grant. The following section will outline financial aspects of the program to date.

In total, the project was awarded \$54,759. Additionally, the municipality pledged to contribute 20% of total expenditures, amounting to a total budget of \$68,450 for the program over two years. Below is a breakdown of expenditures thus far.

Item			Total
Staffing			\$25,328.94
P.D. Courses			\$1328.07
Program Expenses			\$18,011.51
Other (e.g., phone)			\$85.75
Total			\$44,754.27

Total Expenditures = \$44,754.27

Total Percentage of Budget = %65.

Remaining Budget = \$22,695.73

Given the added features of the programming (e.g., trips offsite, swimming programming, early drop off and late pick ups, etc.) as well as a means of building value and creating a sustainable program, income was also collected from the program during the summer portion. Below is a breakdown of all income collected from the program to date.

Course Name	Income
FMS Course	\$0.00
Standard First Aid & CPR - C	\$0.00
November PD	\$0.00
March 13th PD	\$0.00
April 13th PD	\$0.00
June 5 PD Day Camp	\$0.00
Badminton/Basketball Camp	\$120.00
Summer Camp Week 1	\$660.00
Summer Camp Week 2	\$914.00
Summer Camp Week 3	\$1,274.00
Summer Camp Week 4	\$1,346.00
Summer Camp Week 5	\$1,042.00
Summer Camp Week 6	\$604.00
Summer Camp Week 7	\$1,282.00
Summer Camp Week 8	\$1,136.00
Summer Camp Week 9	\$1,394.00
March Break Camp	\$0.00
Subtotal	\$9,882
Total	\$9,882

Participant Reporting

Following the summer program, a satisfaction and feedback survey was conducted to gather feedback from participants. The survey included questions about:

- Physical activity and physical literacy outcomes of participants
- Social aspects of the program (atmosphere, motivation, enjoyment, etc.)
- Organization (registration, staffing, program, etc.)
- Pricing/costs

Overall results were overwhelmingly positive. Participants were very satisfied with the program in all respects. Qualitative reports suggested that participants appreciated an affordable summer programming option that was run locally rather than in North Bay. Further, while reports suggested that the program allowed for meaningful active engagement in sport and recreation, it was also noted to be important as an affordable childcare option.

Full results of the survey are provided in a separate document “Illustrated Results GAP Survey”.

Projections, Goals, and Future Directions

In brief, the Get Active Powassan appears to have sufficient funds to operate with similar staffing, structure, and pricing for the following year. However, it is suggested that pricing be introduced to the free components of the program in order to transition effectively to a more sustainable pricing model. The remaining funding will allow the program to be fully-staffed even when numbers don't warrant it, while allowing us to set effective price points to maximize available spots in the program while keeping it affordable for participants.

Other options for generating revenue and participants may also be explored. For example, creating a partnership with Social Services may allow for a number of spots that are guaranteed to be filled and subsidized. While this may change the demographic of participants (i.e., to those less interested in the sport components of the program), it should not impact structure or program activities. This option should be explored further.

Based on the strategy adopted, other professional development opportunities should also be offered with the remaining funding. For next season, we should pursue training staff in concussion awareness (as outline in the funding proposal. In addition, if a partnership is pursued with Social Services is pursued, it is likely that a percentage of staff will need to be trained in the Hi5 program (principles of healthy childhood development). As the standard first aid course was also very popular, this may be considered as a regular opportunity to be offered in the community.

Further, in the upcoming year, a more concerted effort to reach seniors in the community should be made in order to fulfill the proposed program in the funding. While some connections were made with seniors through the pickle ball activity, this relationship should be built on and other groups should be targeted and engaged.

Get Active Powassan 2016 Yearly Report

Submitted September 7, 2016

2016 Changes

Participant reports were taken out because it was found that they were not working out; copies were left behind or some children only came for one day/did not attend on Fridays to receive them. We stopped going to the library on Mondays because we found it more beneficial for the library kids than it was for our kids. We added the feedback drawings in on Thursdays, where the kids illustrated their favourite parts of the week and something that could be improved. We also added parent surveys for feedback based on the child's and parent's experiences with camp. This helps us improve the GAP program. We stopped attending Judo at the Golden Sunshine Club mainly due to lack of communication. We branched away from the strictly one sport per week idea and added in more different athletic activities along with the focus sport. An example of this is mixing in a hike, yoga time, or themed days (Olympic day) throughout the week. This brought more excitement to everyday camp and the kids were more likely to stay focused on the actual focus sport of the week when we gave them equal time with other activities such as these. When planning the week to weeks, be sure to plan the last few weeks with outdoor sports due to the ice going in in mid-august.

Appendix I:

Get Active Powassan Cumulative Evaluation Tool:

Cycle 1 (2015)

GAP Evaluation

Q1 Thank you for participating in our Get Active Powassan survey. Your feedback is important as it will help shape the program in the future. Please answer the questions as clearly and honestly as possible. You will have space to elaborate on any responses at the end of the survey should you require it. Please do not hesitate to contact us at the coordinates below if you have any other questions, comments, or concerns.

(anonymized)

Q2 In which Get Active Powassan program did your child/ward/participant take part?

- P.A. Day Camp (1)
- Summer Program (2)

Q3 Describe the participants you registered

	Gender (1)	Age (2)	Approximate number of days participated (3)
Participant 1 (1)			
Participant 2 (2)			
Participant 3 (3)			
Participant 4 (4)			
Participant 5 (5)			

Q4 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
Participant(s) was/were more active as a result of the program. (1)					
Participant(s) tried activities they would not otherwise have had the opportunity to try in the program. (2)					
Participant(s) is/are more motivated to be active following the program. (3)					
Participant(s) physical/motor skills improved as a result of participation. (4)					
Participant(s) sport specific skills improved as a result of participation. (5)					
Participant(s) swimming skills improved as a result of participation. (6)					

Q5 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
Participant(s) enjoyed the social environment of the program. (1)					
Participant(s) was/were able to make new friends at the program. (2)					
Participant(s) is/are better able to socialize while playing sports/games as a result of the program. (3)					
Participant(s) enjoyed creative activities (e.g., art, crafts, music) in the program. (4)					
Participant(s) was/were able to develop social skills (e.g., leadership, communication, etc.) through the program. (5)					

Q6 How satisfied are you with the following components of the program?

	Very Satisfied (1)	Satisfied (2)	Neutral (3)	Dissatisfied (4)	Very Dissatisfied (5)
The registration process (1)					
The quality of programming (2)					
The friendliness of staff (3)					
The expertise of staff (4)					
The diversity of activities offered (5)					
The timing/duration of the program (6)					
Overall organization of the program (7)					

Q7 How likely are you to do the following?

	Very Likely (1)	Likely (2)	Undecided (3)	Unlikely (4)	Very Unlikely (5)
Register for the Get Active Powassan program in the future? (1)					
Recommend the Get Active Powassan Program to a friend/colleague? (2)					
Seek out similar programming elsewhere? (3)					

Q8 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
The program provided good value for the price. (1)					
The program is reasonably priced. (2)					
The program is affordable. (3)					
Compared to similar programs/alternatives, the program provided a quality service at a reasonable price. (4)					

Q9 For this type of programming, I would pay:

_____ Daily (1)

_____ Weekly (2)

Q10 Thank you for taking the time to fill out our survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated! As indicated above, please do not hesitate to contact us at the coordinates below if you have any other questions, comments, or concerns.

(anonymized)

Q11 Please use the space below for any other comments about the program.

Appendix J:

Get Active Powassan Satisfaction Evaluation Tool:

Cycle 2 (2016)

Welcome to the Get Active Powassan Summer Program feedback survey! Your feedback and opinion are important to us as it will help us in our continuing efforts to improve the program. Please answer questions as honestly as possible and feel free to clarify or elaborate in the comment boxes provided. All responses are recorded anonymously.

Please answer the following questions regarding the Get Active Powassan Program and activities.

Q1 Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly agree (1)	Some-what agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Some-what disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
Participants improved their existing skills in the program. (1)					
Participants learned new skills in the program. (2)					
Participants are likely to attend the program if it didn't offer a sport/physical activity focus (e.g., if it were an art/music camp). (3)					

Q2 What other activities would you like to see (more of) offered at the camp?

Q3 General comments/feedback about the program/activities:

Please answer the following questions regarding participants' experiences in the Get Active Powassan Program.

Q5 Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Some-what disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
Participants enjoyed the social environment of the program. (1)					
Participants were able to make new friends in the program. (2)					
Participants would say they had fun and ask to come back. (3)					

Q6 What could we do to improve the social experience of the program for participants?

Q7 General comments/feedback about participants experience in the program:

Q8 Please answer the following questions regarding the program, its administration, and staff.

Q9 Indicate how satisfied you are with each of the following.

	Extremely satisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)	Somewhat dissatisfied (4)	Extremely dissatisfied (5)
The ease of finding information about the program. (1)					
The registration process. (2)					
The cost of the program. (3)					
The timing/duration of the program. (4)					

Q10 General comments/feedback about the program administration:

Q11 Indicate how satisfied you are with each of the following.

	Extremely satisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)	Somewhat dissatisfied (4)	Extremely dissatisfied (5)
The friendliness of staff. (1)					
The expertise of staff. (2)					
The pick up/drop off procedure. (3)					
The professionalism of staff. (4)					

Q12 General comments/feedback about the program staff:

Q13 Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience in the Get Activity Powassan program?

- Extremely satisfied (1)
- Somewhat satisfied (2)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)
- Somewhat dissatisfied (4)
- Extremely dissatisfied (5)

Q14 Comments/feedback:

Almost finished! Please tell us a bit about yourself:

Q15 How many days did you register your participant/week?

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)

Q16 What was your primary reason for registering?

- Learn a new sport/activity (1)
- A social opportunity (2)
- Childcare option (3)
- A day out of the house/something new (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q17 How did you hear about the program?

- Municipal website (1)
- Social media (2)
- Word of mouth (3)
- Poster or advertisement (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q18 How many weeks have you previously registered for the Get Active Powassan Program?

- None - this was my first experience (1)
- 1-2 weeks - I'm a casual user (2)
- 3-5 weeks - Fairly often (3)
- 5+ weeks - I'm a regular! (4)

Q19 Are you likely to register a participant again?

- Yes, for a whole week (1)
- Yes, for a single day (2)
- Maybe (3)
- Probably not (4)

Q20 When I register for the program, I am likely to do so:

- Well in advance (1)
- The week before (2)
- The day before/last minute (3)

Q21 For you, how important is the ability to sign up for the program on short notice:

- Very important (1)
- Moderately important (2)
- Slightly important (3)
- Not at all important (4)
- Unsure (5)

Q21 Any other comments/feedback:

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete our survey. We hope you had a great experience with the Get Active Powassan Program and we hope to see you again soon!

Appendix K:

Community Recreation Forum Data Collection Tool

Thank you for coming to the Municipality of Powassan Community Recreation Forum! This survey has a few questions to get your thoughts and feedback about the information provided on the infographic. Feel free to answer (or skip) any of the questions, and be sure to enter your contact information at the end for a chance to win a door prize!

Q1 Use the slider to indicate how much you agree with each statement.

Would you rather:

3 - 2 - 1 - 0 - 1 - 2 - 3

Have many options for recreation that come and go whenever a volunteer steps up to organize it

Have fewer recreation options, offered at a set fee, that are consistently and reliably offered?

Q2 Thoughts, reasons, or comments:

Q3 Use the slider to indicate how much you agree with each statement.

Would you rather:

3 - 2 - 1 - 0 - 1 - 2 - 3

Have many municipal facilities that are easy to access with few programs and activities happening

Have a few central hubs where spaces are well-used as many activities take place there

Q4 Thoughts, reasons, or comments:

Q5 Use the slider to indicate how much you agree with each statement.
Would you rather:

3 - 2 - 1 - 0 - 1 - 2 - 3

Continue to run the same programs and activities we always have because they are deeply important for the community and the way we have always come together

Break from traditions and try different initiatives (even if they fail) in an effort to provide more/ diverse recreation opportunities that appeal to different groups.

Q6 Thoughts, reasons, or comments:

Let us know what you think:

Q7 What is your vision for recreation in Powassan?

Q8 What would you like us to consider when making decisions about providing recreation in the community?

Q9 What can we do to better support recreation in the community?

Q10 What did you learn from this infographic?

Q11 What did we miss?

Q12 Any other thoughts, comments, feedback, or ideas?

Thank you so much for your participation! Please put your contact information in the boxes below for a chance to win a door prize!

Appendix L:
Recreation Needs Assessment Tool

Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee Community Needs Assessment Tool

This resource is intended to be used by community members and organizations to document current and future items and/or issues for the Recreation Committee to consider in their strategic planning and budgeting.

To use the resource, please complete the letter template attached and return to the municipal office or the recreation and facilities manager.

Please note that if more information is provided in the letter, the committee will be better able to consider the item/issue in their planning. Consider providing a clear description of the following:

- The item/issue to be considered
- The timeline within which it should be considered
- The group, organization, or demographic that it affects

If you require any assistance in using this resource, please do not hesitate to contact the recreation and facilities manager.

Attn: Recreation Committee
c/o: (anonymized) , Recreation and Facilities Manager

Date: _____

This request pertains to:

Facility/Infrastructure

Equipment

Program/Staff

This request should be considered:

Immediately

This Season/Year

Next Season/Year

Future

Name of Requester:

On behalf of (group/organization - if applicable):

Brief description of item/issue:

Details (use back/additional sheets if necessary):

Additional questions:

Who/Approximately how many people does this item/issue pertain to most?

Are there costs/resources associated with the request? If so please provide a description/estimate?

Have public/private resources already been invested in this item/issue?

Other details/comments:

Appendix M:

Municipality of Powassan Recreation Strategic Plan



Municipality of Powassan Recreation Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan offers a simple overview of the the plans for recreation in the Municipality of Powassan. The plan is organized within the context of the National Recreation Framework in order to align with potential funding and growth opportunities.

Overview:

The first sheet provides the purpose and values of the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee.

The final sheet provides an itemized list of all of the initiatives that are currently being considered and worked on within recreation, including those which do not require longterm/strategic planning.

The following five sheets provide the strategic plans for major recreation initiatives within the Municipality. These plans are organized according to the goals of the National Recreation Framework.

Our Purpose

The Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee does its best to organize and/or support recreational programming opportunities that are brought forth and emphasize community involvement and work with various associations to ensure that the programs they deliver are done so successfully.

Our Values

We Value:

Public Good - Quality recreation is available to all paid for by a combination of taxes and user fees which take into account economic circumstances.

Inclusion & Equity - All individuals are welcomed and valued. Access to resources, opportunities and experiences is fair - particularly across the former municipalities.

Sustainability - Our recreation system is sustainable in terms of human resources, economics and the environment.

Lifelong Participation - Everyone benefits from early childhood to old age.

Partnership - Groups and organizations working together to provide opportunities and maximize the benefits of resources in the community.

Recreation Items Considered		
Short Term (12 month)	Medium Term (2 years)	Long Term (5 years)
Minor Items (Not requiring strategic consideration)		
Fix railing/staircase on Pines Trail	(Re-)Certification course for NCCP	Gazebo in Lion's Park
Trout Creek Ball Field Rpairs		
Major Items (Considered in Strategic Plan)		
Canada 150 Celebration	Summer programs management structure	Review and maintain committee structure
Begin moving into new Community Hub	Accessibility (AODA) of pool/park area	Love Lake trails
Pool deck upgrades	Completely centralize recreation through new Community Hub	Hydro Pond Facilities
Arena lobby renovations		

Active Living				
Goal: Foster active living through physical recreation				
Decription of Key Initiatives	What key actions are required?	Who is responsible for each key action?	Who else is involved?	Date to be accomplished?
Canada 150 Celebration	Develop sub/organizing-committee to plan details of celebration	Recreation Committee		
	Apply for funding	Rec Manager & Organizing Committee		
	Coordinate activities	Rec Manager & Organizing Committee		
	Promote event	Rec Manager & Organizing Committee		Spring 2017
	Evaluate event	Recreation Committee		Summer 2017
	Produce report	Recreation Committee		Summer 2017
Centralize recreation in new municipal Community Hub	Facility upgrades	Municipality		
	Assess resources in facility	Rec Manager	Municipality	Winter 2017
	Move equipment/resources	Rec Manager	Municipality	
	Determine policies/procedures/staffing (particularly fitness centre)	Recreation Committee	Municipality	Spring 2017

	Move programming	Rec Manager	Municipality	
	Grand opening celebration	Rec Manager	Municipality	Summer 2017
	Close/repurpose other facilities	Municipality		

Inclusion & Access

Goal: Increase inclusion and access to recreation for population that face constraints to participation.

Description of Key Initiatives	What key actions are required?	Who is responsible for each key action?	Who else is involved?	Date to be accomplished?
Improve accessibility (AODA) of pool/park area	Determine required upgrades	Recreation Committee		
	Contract upgrades	Recreation Committee		

Connecting People and Nature

Goal: Help people connect to nature through recreation

Description of Key Initiatives	What key actions are required?	Who is responsible for each key action?	Who else is involved?	Date to be accomplished?
Love Lake Trails	Map out trail system	Recreation Committee	Volunteers	
	Clear trails	Recreation Committee	Volunteers	
	Create usage materials (e.g., promotional, signage, etc.)	Recreation Committee		
	Promote all trail systems	Recreation Committee		
	Launch/Kick off trail opening.	Recreation Committee		
Hydro Pond Facilities	Determine status and function of facilities	Recreation Committee		
	Establish required fixes/upgrades	Recreation Committee		
	Amend necessary bi-laws	Recreation Committee		
	Create promotional/advertisement material	Recreation Committee		
	Launch/promote use	Recreation Committee		

Supportive Environments

Goal: Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and help to build strong, caring communities

Decription of Key Initiatives	What key actions are required?	Who is responsible for each key action?	Who else is involved?	Date to be accomplished?
Pool up-grades	Assess current status of pool facility and required upgrades.		Outside consultant	Spring 2017
	Set budget for up-grades and fundraising requirements.	Recreation Committee		Spring 2017
	Establish saving/ fundraising plan.	Recreation Committee		Spring 2017
	Contract/Complete upgrades to pool deck	Recreation Committee		Fall 2017
Arena lobby renovations	Finalize plan	Recreation Committee		
	Obtain plans/drawings	Recreation Committee	Consultant/ Engineer	
	Contract work	Recreation Committee		Summer 2017

Recreation Capacity

Goal: Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field

Description of Key Initiatives	What key actions are required?	Who is responsible for each key action?	Who else is involved?	Date to be accomplished?
Review and maintain structure and strategic plan of recreation committee (annually).	Assess the status of facilities and programs.	Recreation Committee		January (annually)
	Determine 1/2/5 year items.	Recreation Committee		January (annually)
	Adjust strategic plan accordingly.	Recreation Committee		January (annually)
	Assess committee makeup & identify groups lacking representation.	Recreation Committee		January (annually)
	Send general and targeting invitation for new members.	Recreation Committee		January (annually)

Curriculum Vitae

Kyle Rich, MA, CPT
PhD Candidate, Western University

Education

PhD (Kinesiology), Western University, London, Ontario, Current

Research and coursework focus on social and cultural significance of rural community sport and recreation management.

Master's of Arts (Human Kinetics), University of Ottawa, Ontario, 2013

Research and coursework focus on social and cultural influences affecting health and physical activity of select populations.

Bachelor of Science (Human Kinetics, Honours) University of Ottawa, Ontario, 2011

Course concentration in psycho-social aspects of sport and physical activity. Degree completed through the French Immersion program.

Languages

- English - Fluent
- French - Fluent

Professional Certifications

CPT (Certified Personal Trainer), 2010

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology

Peer Reviewed Publications

Rich, K. A., & Misener, L. (2017). Insiders, Outsiders, and Agents of Change: First Person Action Inquiry in Community Sport Management. *Sport Management Review*, 20(1), 8-19.

Rich, K., & Giles, A. R. (2015). Managing Diversity to Provide Culturally Safe Sport Programming: A Case Study of the Canadian Red Cross' Swim Program. *Journal of Sport Management*, 29(3), 305-317.

Rich, K., Misener, L., & Dubeau, D. (2015). Community Cup, We are a Big Family: Examining the Social Inclusion and Acculturation of Newcomers to Canada Through a Participatory Sport Event. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 129-141.

Rich, K., & Bean, C., & Apramian, Z. (2014). Boozing, brawling, and community building: Sport-facilitated community development in a rural Ontario community. *Leisure/Loisir*, 38(1), 73-92.

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Golob, M., Giles, A. R., & Rich, K. (2013). Identifying promising practices for enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of water safety education for ethnic and cultural minorities. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, 7(1), 39-55.

Rich, K., & Giles, A. R. (2013). Contextually appropriate aquatics programming in Canada's North: The Shallow Water Pool Lifeguard Certification. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 33(1).

Book Chapters

Rich, K. A., Misener, L., & The Trout Creek Community Centre Board (2017). Community centres as spaces for sport, recreation, and resiliency: The Case of the Trout Creek Community Centre. In L. Brinklow & R. Gibson (Eds.), *Building Community Resilience: From Black Horses to White Steeds*. Charlottetown, PE: Island Studies Press.

Rich, K. A. & Misener, L. (2017). From Canada with Love: Human Rights, Soft Power, and the Pridehouse Movement. In C. Esherick, B. Baker, S. Jackson, & M. Sam (Eds.), *Case Studies in Sport Diplomacy*. Morgantown, WV: Fit Publishing.

Misener, L. & Rich, K. A., (in press). Urban Sport in Canada. In K. Gilbert & K. McPherson, *Urban Sports Development*. Commonground Publishing.

Doherty, A. & Rich, K. A. (2015). Sport for Community Development. In M. Bowers & M. Dixon (Eds.), *Sport Management: An Exploration of the Field and its Value*. Sagamore.

Published Reviews

Minnaert, L. (2012). An Olympic Legacy for all? The Non-Infrastructural legacies of the Olympic Games for Socially Excluded Groups (Atlanta 1996-Beijing 2008).

Tourism Management, 33(2), 361-370. Reviewed by Rich, K. A., for *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies*, 22(1).

Scholarly Presentations

Rich, K. A., Randle, E., Nicholson, M., Staley, K., O'Halloran, P., Belski, R., Kappelides, P., & Donaldson, A. (2017). Leisure Constraints as a Generative and Analytical Framework for Community Sport Development: A Case Study of Stand Up Paddle Boarding for Regional Women. Presented Paper at the Leisure Studies Association Conference, Leeds, UK.

Rich, K. A., Misener, L., & The Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee (2017). Contextualizing Rural Community Recreation: Insights from Powassan, Ontario. Presented Paper at the Canadian Congress on Leisure Research, Kitchener, ON.

Rich, K. A., & Misener, L. (2016). From Canada with Love: Sexual Rights, Soft Power, and the Pridehouse Movement. Presented Paper at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Conference, Tampa, FL.

Rich, K. A., Misener, L., & the Municipality of Powassan Recreation Committee (2016). Locating Sport and Recreation in Rural Community Development. Presented Paper at the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference, Guelph, ON.

Rich, K. A. & Misener, L. (2016). Sport, Recreation, and Rural Youth in Context. Presented Paper at the Rural Sociological Society Conference, Toronto, ON.

Rich, K. A. & Misener, L. (2016). Cheers and Queers: Leveraging Sport Events for LGBTQ Communities. Presented Paper at the North American Society for Sport Management Conference, Orlando, FL.

Rich, K. A., Misener, L., & the Trout Creek Community Centre Board (2015). The Trout Creek Community Centre: A Space for Sport, Recreation, and Resiliency. Presented Paper at the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference, Summerside, PE.

Rich, K. A., Braimoh, F., & Misener, L. (2015). Locating Sport and Recreation Policy in Rural Community Development. Presented Paper at the North American Society for Sport Management Conference, Ottawa, ON.

Rich, K. A. & Misener, L. (2014). Social Impacts of Large Scale Multi-Sport Events for Rural Non-Host Communities: A Preliminary Investigation. Presented Paper at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Conference, Portland, OR.

Rich, K. A. & Misener, L. (2014). A Preliminary Framework for Understanding the Role of Sport and Recreation in Rural Canadian Communities. Presented Paper at the Leisure Studies Association Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, UK.

Rich, K. A. & Misener, L. (2014). Examining the Complexities of Managing Local Sport for Development. Presented Paper at the North American Society for Sport Management Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.

Paradis, K. F., Misener, L., Rich, K. A., McPherson, G., McGillivray, D., & Legg, D. (2014). Separate but equal? An assessment of awareness and attitudes toward disability and para sport at the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Presented Paper at the Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology Conference, London, ON.

Rich, K. A., Misener, L., & Giles, A.R. (2014). Inclusive Sport in the Canadian Context. Presented Paper at the Tri-University Conference, Western University, London, ON.

Rich, K. A. & Misener, L. (2013). Examining the Integrative Potential of a Participatory Sport Events for Newcomers to Canada. Presented Paper at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Conference, Quebec City, QC.

Rich, K. A. (2013). Symposium Synthesis and Wrap Up Discussant. New Rural Economy Research Symposium hosted by the Rural Development Institute at the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference in Thunder Bay, ON.

Rich, K. A., & Bean, C., & Apramian, Z. (2013). Boozing, brawling, and community building: Sport-facilitated community development in a rural Ontario community. Presented at the International Society for the Sociology of Sport Conference, Vancouver, BC.

Rich, K. A. & Giles, A. R. (2013). Bridging Waters of Sport Management and Critical Whiteness to Examine Cultural Safety Training for Instructors of the Canadian Red Cross' Swimming and Water Safety Program. Presented at the Canadian Sociology Association Conference at Congress, Victoria, BC.

Human Kinetics Graduate Students' Association Conference (2013). Conference Chair and Lead Organizer, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON

Rich, K. & Giles, A. R. (2012). Cultural sensitivity in aquatics programming. Presented at the Human Kinetics Graduate Students' Association Conference, Ottawa, ON.

Rich, K. & Giles, A. R. (2012). *Examining culture in the Canadian Red Cross' Swimming and Water Safety Program*. Presented at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Panel/Symposia

Chalip, L., Green, B., Misener, R., Taks, M., & Rich, K. A. (2017). Getting Some Action: Building Sport Management Theory and Practice through Action Research. Symposium at the North American Society for Sport Management Conference, Denver, CO.

Singer, J. N., Shaw, S., Hoerber, L., Walker, N., Rich, K. A., & Agyemang, K. (2017). Critical Conversations About Qualitative Research in Sport Management. Symposium at the North American Society for Sport Management Conference, Denver, CO.

Musser, A., Smith, N., Rich, K. A. & Wasser, K. (2016). Moving from Research Idea to Research Agenda: How to Develop Your Research Road Map as a Graduate Student. Symposium at the North American Society for Sport Management Conference, Orlando, FL.

Research Experience

2016-Present: Program Evaluation for VicHealth Investments in Participation and Health Through Sport

- Working with the Centre for Sport and Social Impact at La Trobe University.
- Part of a larger team evaluating over 100 sport projects across Victoria.
- Participated in the evaluation of a regional women's sport programs in Victoria.
- Analyzed and delivered results to steering committee and project funders.

2013-Present: Sport and Recreation in Rural Canadian Communities

- Participatory research project with the Municipality of Powassan.
- Examining the relationships between sport, recreation, community development, and rural identities.
- Awarded SSHRC Joseph-Armand Bombardier CGS Doctoral Scholarship.

2013-Present: Leveraging Parasport Events for Sustainable Community Participation

- Case study exploring the leveraging of integrated (Commonwealth Games - Glasgow 2014) and separated (Para PanAmerican Games - Toronto 2015) large scale sporting events for parasport communities.
- Qualitative and Quantitative components evaluating multiple stakeholders (organizers, spectators, community sports organizations, etc.).

- Awarded SSHRC Sport Participation Research Initiative (\$140,000)
- P.I.s: Dr. Laura Misener; Dr. David Legg; Collaborator: Dr. Gayle McPherson

2013-2015: The Impact of Recreational and Participatory Sporting Events on the Adaptation of Newcomers to Canada

- Case study examination of the Community Cup Program in Ottawa, Ontario.
- Examining the complexities of using sport events for integration of newcomers.
- Collaborators: Dr. Laura Misener, The Community Cup

2011-2013: Red Cross Water Safety Instructor Cultural Sensitivity Module

- \$10, 000 University of Ottawa Internal Interdisciplinary Grant competition
- Collaborators: Dr. Audrey Giles, Matias Golob, Dr. Pat Palulis, Dr. Shaelyn Strachan, Canadian Red Cross
- Examined Eurocanadian discourses in current water safety programming
- Developed, implemented, and evaluated cultural safety training for current and future water safety instructors

2013: Analytical Report on Promising Drowning Prevention Outreach Methods for Aboriginal Populations in Canada

- Funded by Public Health Agency of Canada
- Co-P.I.s: Peter Baars, Shelley Dalke, Audrey Giles
- Amount Awarded: \$9,000

2010-2011: Shallow Water Pool Lifeguard Program Evaluation

- Fourth year research project
- Portion of larger SSHRC-funded research project
- Supervisor: Dr. Audrey Giles
- Evaluated the Shallow Water Pool Lifeguard Certification

2009-2010: Psychological Strategies Utilized by Elite Level Adventure Racers

- Research Assistant
- Exploratory research into the psychological tools used in this high performance, complex sporting context
- Collaborators: Brittany Glynn, James Galipeau, Nicole Dubuc

Teaching Experience

Instructor

Brock University, St Catharines, Ontario, 2016-Present

- **RECL 3M01 Leisure Theory and Reflective Practise**

Reflection and critical examination of various historical and contemporary leisure theories in selected social psychological and sociological domains. (Note: Course offered in blended format)

- **RECL 3M25 Community Development, Diversity, and Recreation**

Community development and responsiveness to diversity in recreation service delivery, emphasizing inclusive theory and practice. (Note: Course offered in blended format)

Teaching Assistant Training Program Instructor

Western University, London, Ontario, 2015-2016

Delivered professional development sessions to new and returning Teaching Assistants in all faculties (e.g., professional conduct, teaching strategies, laboratory facilitation, grading practices, etc.). Facilitated micro-teaching sessions and peer feedback circles.

Teaching Assistant

Western University, London, Ontario, 2014

- **KIN 3510 Sport in Development**

Evaluated student projects, coordinated working groups and international discussions with students from Edgehill University (U.K.) and the University of Ghana (Accra, Ghana).

University of Ottawa, Ontario, 2011-2013

- **APA 3381 Measurement and data analysis in human kinetics**

Marked assignments, proctored and marked exams.

- **APA 1161 Introduction to the biophysical aspects of human movement.**

Facilitated laboratories in motor control, biomechanics and physiology, graded papers and provided guidance and feedback to students.

- **APA 1122 Health: A global context.**

Developed marking schemes, graded papers and provided guidance and feedback to students.

Guest Lectures

“Career Pathways in Kinesiology” **KIN 3090 - Field Placement I**, Dr. Leila Kelleher, University of Guelph-Humber, February 1, 2017

“Community Sport, and Recreation” **APA 5316 - Seminar: Current Research in Sport and Physical Activity**, Mike Naraine, University of Ottawa, November 4, 2015

“Social Theory, Sport, and Recreation” **PE 4046 - Contemporary Issues in Sport and Physical Activity**, Dr. D. Hay, Nipissing University, September 22 & 24, 2015

“Sport and Recreation Policy and Canadian Communities” **MKTG 3206 - Sport Marketing**, Dr. D. Lafrance-Horning, Nipissing University, September 21, 2015.

“Sport Events and Social Change” **KIN 3510 - Sport in Development**, Dr. L. Misener, Western University, March 25, 2015.

“Culture and Whiteness in Sport and Recreation” **APA 4104 - Anthropology of Sport and Leisure**, Dr. A. R. Giles, University of Ottawa, February 4, 2015.

“Race, Ethnicity, and Culture in Sport and Recreation” **KIN 2250 - Social Foundations of Sport and Physical Activity**, Dr. K. Paradis, Western University, October 27, 2014.

“Sport Events and Social Change” **KIN 3510 - Sport in Development**, Dr. L. Misener, Western University, March 18, 2014.

“The Business of Sport for Development” **KIN 3510 - Sport in Development**, Dr. L. Misener, Western University, March 11, 2014.

"Graduate School: What its all about" **APA 2180 - Research methods in Human Kinetics**, Dr. T. Forneris, University of Ottawa, March 28, 2013.

"Bracketing Interviews" **APA 6100 - Qualitative data analysis**, Dr. A. Giles, University of Ottawa, January 28, 2013.

“What can I do with a degree in Kinesiology: Professional associations and qualifications” **APA 1161 - Introduction to the biophysical aspects of human movement**, Professor M. Dumont, University of Ottawa, November 29, 2011.

Professional Experience

Lecturer, Brock University, St Catharines, Ontario Canada, 2016-Present

Responsible for teaching, research, and service activities within the Department of Recreation and Leisure studies.

Teaching Assistant Training Program Instructor, Western University, London, Ontario, 2015-2016 (see details above).

Teaching Assistant, Western University, London, Ontario, 2014 (see details above).

Program Co-ordinator, Get Active Powassan Program, Municipality of Powassan, Ontario Canada, 2014-2015

Accessed funding through the Ontario Sport and Recreation Community Fund to develop a municipal initiative to increase physical literacy of community members. Developed programs and policies to provide access to opportunities to participate in sport and recreation as well as physical literacy programming. Participated in strategic planning, budgeting, program development, staffing, and evaluation activities.

Proprietor, Kyle Rich Sport and Recreation Services, 2011-Present

Offered personal training, team training, lifeguarding, swimming/first aid/lifesaving instructional and examination services.

Race Director/Event Chair, Community Cup Chase Urban Adventure Race, Ottawa, Ontario, 2012-2013. **Runner-up in the 2013 TrueSport Giveback Challenge**

Oversaw implementation of entire race from inception, including fundraising; volunteer recruitment; partnership recruitment and maintenance; event planning and development. Promoted and reinforced the values of integration, community building, and the fostering of connections through participation in sports and volunteering.

Physiotherapy Assistant, *Martel & Mitchell Physiotherapy*, Powassan, Ontario, 2011

Provided support to physiotherapists in the clinical and long term care setting. Implemented programs, documented delivered therapy and prepared and submitted RAI and MOH statistics.

Personal Trainer, *Goodlife Fitness*, North Bay, Ontario, 2010-2011

Prepared, presented, sold and implemented personal training packages for a variety of clients.

Senior Administrative Coordinator, *Hockey Opportunity Camp*, South River, Ontario, Summer 2010

Supervised all (over 80) camp staff in a variety of capacities (counselling, camp program delivery, program coordination and staff supervision). Provided administrative support to the camp directors as needed.

Supervisor, Lifeguard, Swimming/Lifesaving Instructor/Examiner, *Soloway Jewish Community Centre*, Ottawa, Ontario, 2008-2013

Developed and implemented staff training. Supervised and mentored (up to 30) new and returning staff members. Supervised a variety of pool activities. Prepared and delivered short and long range lesson plans through the Red Cross and Lifesaving Society swim and lifesaving programs.

Program Coordinator, *Hockey Opportunity Camp*, South River, Ontario, 2008-2009

Responsible for the coordination, scheduling, supervision and evaluation of (20) staff delivering camp based land and water programs. Also participated in staff hiring and dismissal.

Community Advisor, Residence Life, University of Ottawa, Ontario, 2008-2009

Provided resources and programming for 120 students living in Brooks (apartment style) residence. Attended weekly meetings and provided support for all members of the larger team as required.

Academic Service

- 2016-Present - North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) Student Board President and Representative on the Executive Council

- 2015-2016 - Chair, Kinesiology Graduate Student Association (Western University, London, Ontario)
- 2015-2016 - NASSM Student Board Member
- 2014 - 2015 - President, Kinesiology Graduate Board/Student representative on School, Faculty, and Student Leader Committees (Western University)
- 2014-2015 - NASSM Conference Committee Student Representative
- 2013-2014— Western University Consult the Experts Series Volunteer
- 2012-2013 - Human Kinetics Graduate Student Association - VP Academic
- 2012-2013 - Developed and implemented the Human Kinetics Graduate Student Professional Development Program (Workshop series and academic conference)

Editorial Service

- Reviewer - Leisure/Loisir (Total of 1 submission reviewed)
- Reviewer - Cogent Social Sciences (Total of 1 submission reviewed)
- Reviewer - Sport Management Review (Total of 4 submissions reviewed)
- Reviewer - Teaching Innovation Projects Journal (Total of 6 submissions reviewed)
- Reviewer - European Sports Management Quarterly (Total of 1 submission reviewed)

Awards Received

- 2016 - Ontario Graduate Scholarship (\$15,000 - declined)
- 2016 - Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement, SSHRC (\$6,000)
- 2014 - Earle F. Zeigler Award, Kinesiology, Western University (\$1,000)
- 2014 - Sport Canada Research Initiative Doctoral Research Stipend (\$10,000)
- 2013 - Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Joseph Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship Doctoral (\$105,000)
- 2012 - Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Joseph Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Masters Scholarship (\$17,500)
- 2012 - University of Ottawa Excellence Scholarship (\$7,500)
- 2012 - Research Centre for Sport in Canadian Society & Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies Conference Presentation Travel Grant (Total \$1000)
- 2011 - University of Ottawa Graduate Admission Scholarship (\$15,000)
- 2010 - University of Ottawa Financial Aid Bursary (\$2,000)
- 2009 - University of Ottawa Bursary (\$500)
- 2009 - Staff Appreciation Award - Peer Elected Coordinator (\$50)
- 2008 - Staff Appreciation Award - Peer Elected Coordinator (\$50)
- 2008 - Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Scholarship (\$50)
- 2007- Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Scholarship (\$50)
- 2007 - Staff Appreciation Award - Peer Elected Program Staff (\$50)
- 2007 - University of Ottawa Admission Scholarship (\$2,000)
- 2008 - Bourse d'étude en Immersion (\$1,500)
- 2007 - Immersion Study Scholarship (\$1,000)
- 2007 - Millennium Excellence Award - local (\$4,000)

Community Service

- 2015 (January) - Minor Official - Special Olympics Ontario Winter Games (North Bay, Ontario)
- 2014 - 2015 - Inclusion Ambassador, PrideHouseTO
- 2013 (December) - 2014 (January) - Announcer & Minor Official - World Ringette Championship, North Bay, Ontario
- 2013 (April) - Media Statistician - IIHF Women's World Cup (Ottawa, ON)
- 2012-2013 - CUPE local 2626 - Human Kinetics Steward
- 2011-2015 - Community Cup Ottawa - Volunteer & workshop coordinator
- 2010-Leadership Ottawa's 3i Summit - Event Management Assistant
- 2008-2014 - Woodroffe High School General Learning Program - Chaperone, Event Volunteer, Physical activity and community service leader.

Current Certifications

- Instructional Skills Workshop (Teaching Support Centre, Western University)
- National Lifeguard Service, Swim Instructor, Lifesaving Instructor, Advanced Instructor, N.L.S. Instructor, First Aid Instructor, Instructor Trainer, Exam Standards Clinic, Bronze Cross Examiner, N.L.S. Examiner, First Aid Examiner, Aquatic Supervisor Training (Lifesaving Society)
- Water Safety Instructor, Water Safety Instructor Trainer (Red Cross)
- Certificate of Bilingualism (University of Ottawa)
- NCCP Introduction to Competition & Competition Development (Trained)
- Pleasure Craft Operator's Card
- Smart Serve
- Safe Talk Suicide Prevention Training
- University of Ottawa Diversity and Positive Space Training and Pride Centre Ally Program Workshop
- Class G Ontario Driver's License