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Abstract

Moving along the community researcher continuum towards participatory research in British Columbia

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With initiatives such as forest certification, innovative forest practices agreements, model forests, and community forest pilots, gathering data on social and economic factors relating to natural resource management is likely to be a growing area of social science research in British Columbia. This paper examines expert-driven versus community-driven participatory approaches to social science research. A hypothetical continuum of community involvement and power in the research process is presented that helps to distinguish between these research approaches. Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation also provides a useful guide to discussions about the desired level of community involvement in research. The challenges posed by increasing citizen participation in community research are examined, as is the potential of community-driven methods of social science research in British Columbia.

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