

Management Planning for Islands

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From papers presented on the subject and from ensuing discussion, several points of consensus emerged on the role of management planning for islands, as follows:

1. Management planning is widely accepted as an important component of management practice for islands, especially those which are legally protected. Indeed, one can argue that because of the greater management constraints on islands planning is more important for them than for mainland situations.
2. Approaches to management planning throughout Australia and New Zealand, though differing in some procedural details, are essentially similar in practice. Key common elements include a statutory basis for planning; the importance attached to research and monitoring in planning; the value of planning for involving the public in management decision-making; and the dynamic nature of the planning process which incorporates review procedures. A conspicuous exception occurs in Queensland where there is no legal provision for management planning or for public involvement in decision making.
3. Management planning is recognised as providing many benefits including; improving public awareness and education; facilitating assessment of manpower and financial requirements; and contributing to management training and co-ordination needs.

Some important considerations arose for guiding future planning efforts, as follows:

1. Management planning for islands is revealed as being still in its infancy and often neglected by comparison with other management activities.
2. Although greater priority is required for management planning, the constraints imposed

by limited specialist capacity are also obvious. In most agencies, staff responsible for management planning of existing protected areas are also those required to investigate opportunities for adding new areas to the protected area system. Which of these two tasks should have priority? The ranking of islands according to their priority for management was highlighted as one solution.

3. Management planning for islands should not be conducted in isolation, but should take account of the place and role which islands have in their regional, national and international setting.
4. Some regard management planning as having become too detailed, involved and time-consuming. There is also concern that plans are often written with more regard to pedantic planning principles than to ensuring that plans are straightforward, realistic, attainable and readily assimilated by managers.
5. There are several options for improving the efficiency of plan preparation, such as:
 - (a)

Where comprehensive policy statements are prepared as a guide for management, with public consultation (eg, New Zealand's general policy for reserves), there may not be a need for detailed management plans. Implementation plans can be prepared for specific management programs.

(b)

Broad management strategies may be prepared for assemblages of islands, thus avoiding the need for a series of detailed plans for individual islands. This is easier where all protected islands in a group are managed under one authority (eg, New Zealand's maritime

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parks) than where there is divided authority (eg, Dampier Archipelago). There is also a danger that this approach might neglect the real differences in management requirements among islands. However, a major advantage is gained where co-ordinated planning of islands enables a wide range of protection and use options to be provided.

6. While the legal requirements for preparing management plans appear to be being satisfied, there is much less evidence that there is sufficient commitment of resources for effective implementation of plans. There are examples in Western Australia where funding has been guided by policies established in management plans. However, implementation doesn't just involve finance. A real test of planning is the role it plays in problem-solving. In New Zealand, wildlife management on islands is strictly governed by objectives established in management plans. Plans have also been used effectively in New Zealand to resolve conflicts over human access to island reserves, eg, Kapiti

Island Nature Reserve where access is limited to a maximum of 50 persons per day. The Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service uses management plans as a fundamental guide to setting research priorities and implementing operational procedures.

7. The question was raised of what happened to policies when major new developments are proposed, such as oil recovery. It was noted that planning must be able to respond to such situations; as occurred a few years ago in New Zealand when contingency plans were prepared for accommodating the potential needs of offshore oil recovery operations in the vicinity of subantarctic island nature reserves - an operation which has not eventuated. The model provided by Barrow Island reveals that co-ordinated planning between private enterprise and a government land administration can allow potentially destructive developments to co-exist successfully with the requirements for nature conservation.