

ations are far more capable of protecting their own resource bases than are rural communities. For example, there is little illegal cutting of timber or even poaching in Indonesian timber concessions compared to what happened in nature reserves'. To this may be added the large privately owned conservancies of Zimbabwe, whose owners (some of them very wealthy) appear to manage their wildlife efficiently and profitably.

There are at least seven possible types of linkage between PAs and rural communities.

- *Public relations.* Persuading people to appreciate the values of biodiversity and act accordingly, although this may not be easy when their survival depends upon behaving otherwise.
- *Consultation.* Discussion with local people to identify problem areas and a means of addressing them to the benefit of the PA and people.
- *Deriving benefits.* Ways in which local people may derive tangible benefits from nearby PAs are identified and encouraged (for example, small-scale businesses to earn money from tourists or employment by the agency).
- *Revenue sharing.* A proportion of a PA's revenue is shared with local people.
- *Resource harvesting.* Local people are allowed to harvest selected resources from within a PA. This must inevitably affect biodiversity but the extent will depend upon the agency's capacity to plan, monitor and control, and to keep harvesting within sustainable or, at least, acceptable limits. This may be more easily said than done.
- *Participation in management.* Local representatives sit on management boards. Part of the warden's capacity to manage will be eroded. Decisions are more likely to be made on non-technical grounds. Sustained use may be difficult to ensure.
- *Transfer of management.* A PA is handed over to a local community to manage.

In spite of doubts that have been and are being voiced about the values of community participation, I argue that local communities (as one of the stakeholder groups) should *always* be brought into the management planning process for *all* PAs. Their needs can then be taken into account, their local knowledge brought to bear and avoidable conflicts headed off. This includes PAs that may ultimately be managed and policed intensively.

During the planning process, options for linkages between PAs and local people should be evaluated and selected, each case according to its merits. Selected linkages, which may include one or more of those listed above, should then be defined in management plans and provision included, where appropriate, for monitoring.

However, some PAs may exist that harbour unique resources or resources of such fragility or importance that the only effective way to manage them is through firm professional control, with only limited or no local participation and no harvesting rights. A parallel may be drawn between this type of area and national museums or art galleries. These PAs are, in effect, outdoor museums in which unique or otherwise interesting phenomena (species, ecosystems or geomorphological sites) are preserved *in situ* for posterity. Governments may have to take them under full state control as 'jewels in the heritage crown' that have at least national, if not globally, important values.

J. E. Clarke
8 Avondale Road, Exmouth
Devon EX8 2NQ, UK
E-mail: jeclarke@eclipse.co.uk

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Towards consensual park management planning in Africa

In the discussion on park management planning in *Oryx* **33**, Clarke (1999) expressed his concerns on the costs of management plans (MP) in Africa, their poor quality and their lack of application. Although I agreed with most of his individual arguments, I found Clarke's overall conclusions unconvincing as they are only based on a selection of MP failures. The discussion would become more constructive if positive experiences with park management planning ('best practices') were included. And, if they do not exist, would we not be better off without park management planning?

Instead of considering management planning as the production of a (bulky) document, it might be useful to consider it as a process in phases: (1) reaching a consensus on main management issues; (2) formulating the MP, based on this consensus and an analysis on less

controversial management issues; and (3) ensuring the continued commitment of stakeholders during the MP's application. The success of an MP depends on the successful implementation of all three stages.

Given the controversial situation around many African national parks, it is no coincidence that much external support towards park management is accompanied by some form of park planning consensus building (phase 1 of Clarke's (1999) 'preparatory phase'). An example is the formulation of an MP for Hwange National Park (NP) (Zimbabwe), with poor relations between tour operators and park authorities (UNDP, 1998). The formulation of the Waza MP (Cameroon) focused on the interpretation of the 1994 environmental law on people-park relations, i.e. procedures of how to proceed with park exploitations (Scholte *et al.*, 1999; Scholte, in press). But also without external support, an MP may be used to reach a consensus on sensitive issues, such as elephant culling in Kruger NP (South Africa) (Braack, 1997).

In discussions with students at the École de Faune, of whom many are future park wardens, I find much uncertainty on the direction of park management. In particular, the fashionable concept of 'local people's involvement' traps park managers between the 'unrealistic' aspirations of local people, 'rigid' legislation, 'distant' superiors and the 'impossible' demands of donors and pressure groups. In such cases, the park planning process should be aimed at reaching a consensus amongst stakeholders on desired management, resulting in shared responsibilities. Apart from the park management staff, co-ordinating the formulation process, stakeholders may comprise representatives of local people (Waza MP; see Scholte, submitted), tour operators (Hwange MP), local authorities, ministry officials (Waza MP), scientists (Kruger MP) and (international) pressure groups (Kruger MP).

If there is already a consensus on future management (but who finally decides?), the preparation of an MP is an essentially technical process, which should not cost the \$US0.25 million as stated by Clarke (1999). I will not go into detail on the contents of the MP document (phase 2). Apart from the remarks of Clarke (1999), a relevant discussion was recently held in *Tigerpaper* (Parr, 1998; Claridge, 1999).

When discussing the application phase of an MP (phase 3), one has to ask, 'who will use it?' Obviously the warden and his staff, but the other stakeholders involved in the formulation process should also be included. In the Waza MP, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry committed itself to reinforcing the park's staff and guards; it is now 2.5 years later and still nothing has happened. Improvements may possibly be obtained by considering the MP a contract document

instead of a document to be approved by only one of the stakeholders. An efficient distribution amongst its stakeholders may further improve its application. Various options exist, such as reaching a global public through the Internet (Kruger MP; Braack, 1997), attractively produced summary documents, and documents with appropriate explanations by a neutral party in the relevant local language.

Failure in the MP implementation phase cannot always be attributed to the MP, as suggested by Clarke (1999). MPs highlight the weakest links in the conservation chain and I think we should be concerned with the failure of donor-steered conservation efforts in a larger sense. None of the five MP formulation processes in Cameroon costs more than 5 per cent of the total conservation project budget, limiting the financial impact of their failure. However, failure causes major frustration for the local people and private companies who invested their time and energy in the expectation that they would be compensated by forthcoming results. Contrary to most other stakeholders in the planning process (park authorities, scientists, consultants), they do not receive a salary and daily allowances.

I wonder if we have sufficiently prepared the people, i.e. park wardens, to guide such management planning processes? At the École de Faune, we have taught elements of park management planning since the 1980s and updated the course in 1997, although facilitation skills may not have received sufficient attention as yet. We recently developed a park management planning refresher course for former students in park warden posts. More could also be done, as suggested by Clarke (1999), to review the successes and failures of park management planning and to build these experiences into the wildlife training curriculum.

Paul Scholte

École de Faune, BP 271 Garoua, Cameroon and Centre of Environmental Science, University of Leiden, the Netherlands

E-mail: ScholKerst@cs.com

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