

Horse SA

Recreational Trails in Natural Areas – Managing for All

Summary of the Master Class conducted by Dr Simon Cubit

Friday July 29th, 2007 Adelaide Showground

(Held in conjunction with the “Horses: Our Living Heritage” Black Tie Dinner)

Notes prepared by J Fiedler. Aug 1st, 2007

Protected areas are a cultural response to perceived threats to nature. Because society is constantly changing, so too are social perspectives on protected areas and the values they are established to conserve. [1]

Throughout time, land has been set aside for special purposes and the public good. Early parks were established for their scenery and recreational values, this changed in time to “representative ecosystems” followed by “wilderness” to the present day “biodiversity”

In the same way, the meaning and preservation mechanisms for cultural heritage have also been reflective of society’s values. Originally cultural heritage had two meanings, being *things* such as buildings and monuments and *ideals* meaning customs and values.

Specifically to Australia, the 1940’s saw both of the above meanings as current, with a noted uncertainty about how to recognise customs and values. During the 1960’s, material aspects came to the forefront e.g. architecture of great homes. In the 1970’s the Australian Heritage Commission included within heritage definitions as the “things we want to keep”. This had the effect of democratisation of heritage to everyday things.

One way of charting the change in cultural heritage in Australia is by looking at different versions of a document called “The Burra Charter”

In 1979 Australian Council of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (AICOMOS) adopted a charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance at a meeting at Burra, SA. The resulting document became known as “The Burra Charter” The Charter is based on the philosophy of the Venice Charter of 1964 which was treaty that provided an international framework for the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings.

The Burra Charter became the official guideline for heritage management in Australia.

In 1998 International Council for Monuments & Sites - Cultural Heritage Places Policy - was updated to include

‘..heritage is manifest as place, object, stories (written or oral), and in values, traditions and customs’

During 1998, The Burra Charter also was revised, which defined cultural heritage as:

- Place meaning site, areas, buildings or other work, group of buildings or other works together with associated contents and surrounds
- Cultural significance meaning aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations
- Fabric meaning all the physical material of the place
- Conservation is based on a respect for the existing fabric and should involve the least possible physical intervention

In 1992 the Australian Heritage Council further defined social value as an '*attachment to place that acts as an essential reference point or symbol for a community's identity*'

In 1999, The Burra Charter was again updated with the following heritage definitions

- Place means site, area, **land, landscape**, building or other work, group of buildings or other works and may include **components, contents, spaces and views.**'
- Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations. **Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.**'
- Associations means the special connections that exist between people and a place.'
- Meanings denote what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses'
- Significant associations between people and a place should be respected, retained and not obscured. Opportunities for the interpretation, commemoration and celebration of these associations should be investigated and implemented.'
- Significant meanings, including spiritual values of a place should be respected. Opportunities for the **continuation or revival** of these meanings should be investigated and implemented.'

Thus, by late 1990s meaning of cultural heritage had extended from a focus on "things" to include "associations, customs and values".

Critically, this new definition proposed that continued use and access to a place is important in the maintenance of cultural significance. No distinction was made between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

CASE STUDY – Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area

In 1989 the Tasmanian Labor-Green Accord led to doubling of the area of the existing World Heritage Area to create the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA)

This new area included many ‘wild’ areas such the Central Plateau and Macquarie Harbour that were important to local communities and had been for generations. As part of the agreement, Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) commenced a management planning process heavily influenced by the (eco-centric) wilderness model

The PWS had a stated management objective: ‘The long term protection of many natural and cultural values will be assisted by the perpetuation of the remote and undisturbed characteristics of the area and, hence, the maintenance and enhancement of wilderness quality will, in general, be the over-riding objective for management of future activities and developments in the area’ [2].

In the draft Management Plan, cultural heritage defined as ‘relicts’... ‘the physical remains of Aboriginal and European use of the World Heritage Area’ and ‘... restricted to sites, objects and landscapes in the World Heritage Area and does not include the practices and activities themselves that gave rise to those heritage resources’ [3].

The plan, when released for public consultation, was heavily opposed in some areas, most notably the communities of the Central Plateau and Macquarie Harbour and recreational users. To strengthen their argument, a highly articulate group was formed, called the Tasmanian Traditional and Recreational Land Users Federation (TTRLUF) This group argued a wider definition of cultural heritage and most importantly, saw areas within the TWWHA as a **living cultural landscape bearing the imprints and stories of their ancestors and as a place where community values and traditions were passed on to younger generations.**

‘To us it is not ‘wilderness’. To us, it is in essence an extension of our back garden...Here we have ‘living history’, people who are proud of their cultural heritage and who still practice those same traditional activities as their pioneer forebears [4]’.

The communities of Central Plateau and Macquarie Harbour, and the recreational users, put forward their own definitions of cultural heritage

- Heritage is not just relics but traditions, values and activities
- Traditions, values and activities relate to specific areas of land
- Access to that land necessary to practice culture
- Often that access is required in particular ways

The Parks & Wildlife Service received 1200 submissions, with more than 50% from traditional and recreational land users.

The summary of the submissions found the P&WS recording the following statement:

The draft plan:

‘does not adequately recognise the European history and cultural significance of parts of the World Heritage Area, does not provide sufficient scope for pre-existing activities such as horse-riding, hunting and grazing and that the emphasis on wilderness enhancement will result in the loss of cultural heritage’ [5].

As a result, the 1992 TWWHA Management Plan contained a “Traditional practices” clause with the following wording:

‘At present there are no procedures for assessing the significance of activities and practices which people consider to be traditional. Methods for assessing the significance of traditional practices will therefore be developed and the use of these procedures will be integrated into the planning process where appropriate [6]’

To assist the PWS evaluate traditional practices, Anthropologist Dr Joan Knowles appointed. In 1997, Dr Knowles submitted a major report which found that European traditional practices were culturally significant, and were:

- Spatially specific
- Fundamental to the cultural reproduction of the communities concerned

And that Wilderness management policies practiced by PWS were harming communities not just by denying access but by denying the very meaning of the land. Interviews with Mole Creek community - Under PWS management- stated that the mountain was dying and if the mountain died then the communities below it would die (Local community interpretation of access denial)

The communities continued to work strongly to have their voice heard.

Politically, TTRLUF was persistent and articulate. The group continued to advocate and lobby for their proposed an alternate vision in relation to the definition of cultural heritage values. They even threatened civil disobedience. These actions generated intense conflict, serious mistrust and even considerable antagonism toward PWS as well as polarising the Tasmanian community.

The group stated that the consultative process was ‘wracked with controversy’ and the ‘only way to gain broad acceptance of the new plan was to move beyond public consultation...to engage critical stakeholder groups and create a consensus [7]’

In response, the Parks and Wildlife Services reconsidered their approach to recognise “Established Practices”

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan, 1999, now permitted

- Continuation of established practices (access to some areas)
- Community partnerships
- Areas of community interest
- Community communication
- Involvement in management research
- Companion dogs
- TWWHA Consultative Committee now included a seat for an “Established Practices” representative
- Aboriginal management framework also accepted TWWHA plan recognized European cultural attachment to land and the need for access to maintain that attachment

What did this mean?

Consistent with Burra Charter, but perhaps first time in Australia -**European attachment to landscape** had been so recognized. The Management Plan reflected a growing body of research (Dominy, Read etc) and considered that there is a Universal human response to land (attachment)

Dr Simon Cubit then proposed the idea ‘Ownership’ and asked the Master Class

1. Is there a place in SA that is not ‘owned’?
2. What the dimensions/dynamics of ‘ownership’?
3. Give examples of people with these attachments?
4. How would you assess these values as a public land manager?

Every place has someone that feels they “own”. This is often related to previous land use or association. All people have an attachment to some place. Land Managers need to look to past associations, social surveys, social value assessments. Be careful about self appointed community representatives without undertaking a broader review.

For Land Managers and users, what are the issues and complexities related to recognising cultural heritage?

The Master Class participants discussed:

1. Horses and 4WD's - complex relationships. (One an earlier form of transport than the other, but both a chosen way of accessing the landscape)
2. Symbolic and practical - harm from a distance
3. Hunting dugong in Torres Strait. (Use of canoe and spear vs. use of powerboat and rifle. Still a traditional practice but now management rules apply to ensure sustainability of Dugong supply)
4. Traditions- meaning making e.g. Mountain Biking is a newer tradition

By not understanding the web of cultural associations in which a given tract of land exists in time and space, land managers can unwittingly put in place management prescriptions that deny meaning and fracture relationships to groups in society they may not even know exist.

The consequences are typically that the community feels alienation, disaffection, creates winners and losers and ultimately leads to lack of support for land management agency

Effective land managers are those that work to:

- Interpret cultural heritage broadly
- Accept that multiple layers of association exist (even in 'wilderness' areas)
- Effectively engage with the diverse elements of their communities
- Promote sustainable opportunities for access and celebration
- Create support for 'natural' area management

The South Australian Department for Environment & Heritage website has a well balanced, positive statement relating to cultural heritage:

'Heritage places, artefacts and customs are important reminders of where we have come from and provide a tangible link with the attitudes and values that have helped shape our environment. They also help to provide a sense of place and community identity. Our community's heritage includes buildings, landscapes, artefacts, customs and beliefs.

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The DEH website then goes onto list recognised classes of heritage as being:

- Aboriginal heritage
- Built heritage
- Documentary and other records (archives)
- Folk life heritage
- Geological, archaeological, palaeontological and speleological heritage
- Maritime heritage
- Moveable heritage
- Natural heritage
- Significant trees

The sentiments don't appear to translate to the list above, or onto the ground. Apart from Aboriginal heritage (managed through the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet) there does not appear, at this level, to be an overt institutional response to professionally accepted definitions of non -Aboriginal heritage. The notions of "attachment" and customs, values, traditional practices, and European-Australian cultural heritage values have not been recognised.

The Master Class participants then prepared to undertake a brief cultural heritage overview of the DEH Management Plans currently available on the website www.environment.sa.gov.au , along with the Forestry SA Native Forest Management Plans as available on www.forestry.sa.gov.au

Two examples were provided, being Anstey Hill Recreation Park along with Bool and Hacks Lagoon.

Anstey Hill Recreation Park

- 362 ha of native vegetation recently grazed
- Proclaimed in 1989 to conserve native vegetation and cultural heritage
- Provides refuge for native flora and fauna and a much valued recreational resource
- Recognises historic Aboriginal ownership and commits to protect sites and record stories. Commits to consultation with Aboriginal groups.
- Recognises European heritage as historic sites and commits to identify, record, protect and monitor sites.

There is reference to a Friends group. The question was raised as to if the land managers had checked to see if the group is fully representative?

Bool and Hacks Lagoon Management Plan

- 3220 ha comprising important wetlands
- Proclaimed 1967, also Ramsar site
- Reserved for wetlands and duck hunting (Bool) and waterbird refuge (Hacks)
- Of significance to indigenous groups of the south east. Site of early European settlement and remains a focus of the local community.’
- Site focus for heritage but recognition of wider cultural linkages
- Aboriginal partnerships/cooperative management
- Extensive community involvement
- No swimming/boating/fishing
- Hunting permitted
- Vehicle access to visitor facilities
- Dry land cropping under license in some areas as fire management strategy

This plan has a much broader statement “Consult with the local council, relevant management boards, the local community and other relevant bodies to explore the benefits of partnership arrangements that will support future management decisions and resolve issues of common interest within and surrounding the park.”

Each participant selected a plan and reviewed the document based on the questions below before each discussing their findings.

1. What notion of heritage is adopted?
2. Is cultural access recognised?
3. Who gets recreational access?
4. Who is denied recreational access?
5. On what basis is access denied to some groups?

Discussion summary:

1. There appears to be limited translation from high level statements to professional practice.

2. Little or no evidence of on ground practice, including even lack of recognition for Aboriginals to practice their cultural heritage activities.

The questions asked can also be applied to Local Government.

The discussion moved onto that of equity and balance.

- 1992 Earth Summit - emphasis on sustainability
- Emergence of triple bottom line reporting where corporate sustainability is defined in terms of environmental, financial and social performance
- Growing trends in Australia for corporations to demonstrate triple bottom line performance to maintain 'community license to operate'.
- Many government agencies, including many in SA, have adopted the initiative. DEH, PIRSA, ForestrySA etc. What are the social implications of sustainability for a parks agency?

The following questions were then discussed

- What are the social implications of sustainability for a parks agency?
- Who do parks serve?

Conclusion

Toolkit for a Land Manager

- Know the history of your park/natural area very well
- Seek out those members of the community with historical use or ‘ownership’ of your area
- Understand their stories, values and traditions in respect of the land
- Give them an active voice in management even if it means building capacity
- Provide opportunity for commemoration and access
- Consider new uses as opportunities to build future heritage.

Action list for those who consider they are unfairly excluded from parks and protected areas

- Know your own traditions and document them
- Engage natural area planners and policy makers on the question of how cultural values are defined
- Insist on independent assessments of these values, especially social values
- Assert your traditions, seek commemorations
- Engage senior policy makers on what they regard as the social component of triple bottom line reporting
- Provide land managers with your own formal reports on their social performance.

Weblinks & Contacts

Horse SA www.horsesa.asn.au

Australian Council of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (& The Burra Charter) www.icomos.org/australia/

Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area www.parks.tas.gov.au/wha/whahome.html

Tasmanian Traditional and Recreational Land User Federation Inc. Contact: Ian Atkins
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Definition

Ecocentrism (definition as provided on <http://www.answers.com/topic/ecocentrism-1>)

A term in ecological political philosophy used to denote a nature-centred, as opposed to human-centred, system of values. The justification for ecocentrism normally consists in an ontological belief and subsequent ethical claim. The ontological belief denies any existential divisions between human and non-human nature sufficient to ground a claim that humans are either **(a)** the sole bearers of intrinsic value or **(b)** possess greater intrinsic value than non-human nature. Thus the subsequent ethical claim is for an equality of intrinsic value across human and non-human nature, or ‘biospherical egalitarianism’.

Ecocentrism is taken by its proponents to constitute a radical challenge to long-standing and deeply rooted [anthropocentric](#) attitudes in Western culture, science, and politics. Anthropocentrism is alleged to leave the case for the protection of non-human nature subject to the demands of human utility, and thus never more than contingent on the demands of human welfare. An ecocentric ethic, by contrast, is believed to be necessary in order to develop a non-contingent basis for protecting the natural world. Critics of ecocentrism have argued that it opens the doors to an anti-humanist morality that risks sacrificing human well-being for the sake of an ill-defined ‘greater good’.

— *Mathew Humphrey*

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