Broadly Engaging with Tranquillity (BETP): an alternative approach to protected management

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Partnership: ESRC, Dorset County Council, Dorset AONB, & University of Winchester
Overview

- Key challenges for protected area managers in UK:
  
  How balance use, development with conservation whilst encourage economic & community well being?

Increasing Developments

How encourage public to engage in decisions taken?

Greater majority disengaged!

How meet statutory planning duties to maintain & enhance ‘tranquillity’?

Need for localised data on tranquillity! Views highly subjective!

How if no data, can decisions actually be informed?

- BETP innovative, eclectic approach to balancing decisions on conservation, use & development.

Aims: targeted research to enhance the diversity & quality of governance through a) collating & interpreting views on tranquillity; b) converting these views into GIS models of tranquillity; c) using these models to support decisions taken on conservation, use & development.

Method: genuinely broad public participation in project design, its implementation and on results.
Institutions & Managing Organisations: local, regional and national (EU)
Collective Public Voice: Community and User Groups
Residents: Engaged & Disengaged Citizens
Visitors: UK & Overseas
All sectors of society

Participation Action Reflection Consensus

Groups Innovative
• Breadth of stakeholder engagement – top-down, bottom-up & diagonally!
• Results of civic engagement – amount, breadth & depth
• Principles: equal participation & influence on project outcomes
• Diversity of participatory methods

‘PARC’ model
• Facilitation of views: group meetings
• Active involvement
• Reflection & Deliberation on polarised views: working towards win-win results!
• Consensual agreement on views rather than majority votes!
• Participants’ views encouraged on further stages of the research
• Participants’ views guided and finally, verified interpretations
• Final models validated by stakeholders
Effective & innovative solutions

• Models of tranquillity - informed by breadth & depth of all participating stakeholder & rightholders’ views.
• Principle of ‘every view is of value & counts’: inspired more citizens to engage!
• Stakeholder & Rightholders emphasis throughout.
• Largest single participatory ‘consultation’ of its type: quality of governance, especially of civic engagement emphasised
• Research framework: easily & readily transferable to other locations in the UK & overseas
• BETP team actively seeking alternative locations & interest to extend the research programme further.

Evidence of implementation

• DAONB Managing Authority: results contributing to their evidence base for decisions taken on development planning, in implementing policy, in addressing objectives of their Management Plan & in contributing to formulation of future plans for the DAONB
• Redressing balance to decisions on external challenges for e.g. infrastructural development(s)
Drivers of success

Partnership working from design through to project end
- working with rather than on behalf of local residents & visitors: equity principle
- Genuine meaningful participation in decision-making: rightholders and stakeholders including local residents, the disengaged & visitors
- Series of continuous two way feedback opportunities with stakeholders: verifying results, interpretations made & providing the public with opportunities for a final seal of approval
- Evidence based outcomes.

Enabling factors
- Collaboration & knowledge exchange amongst multidisciplinary team of practitioners, academics & the public: common goals
- Longstanding relationships & range of expertise of team members: mutual respect
- Previous knowledge of area & of contextual events
- Strong experience of project management & public participation
- Equitable access to information required
- Flexible & creative methodology
- Policy Frameworks inclusive of civic engagement
- Strong active support from managing agencies, political bodies & University
- Externally funded & led by University – politically detached