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The Australian Alps Transboundary Partnership: Analyzing its Success as a Tourism/Protected Area Partnership

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INTRODUCTION

In Australia, as is the case elsewhere in the world, there is a call for change in the way protected areas are managed. Constrained by limited resources and driven by legal, ethical, and moral imperatives, protected area management agencies are engaging with partners to achieve their goals, and nowhere is this more apparent than in their efforts to fulfill the tourism services side of their dual protection/use mandate. While protected areas are clearly essential for a viable and sustainable tourism industry, tourism in turn offers an important vehicle for garnering and maintaining public support. Eagles (2002) notes that "generally the trend is for government to

demand that parks earn much higher amounts of their budget from tourism sources" (139). Moreover, there is increasing evidence that working in partnership can lead to "more constructive and less adversarial attitudes" (De Lacy et al. 2002, 10). Thus, tourism/protected area partnerships are increasingly viewed as a valuable tool for both park management and the tourism industry.

Paralleling this move toward more innovative forms of management, as observed by Timothy (1999), has been a growth in the numbers of parks that straddle or are located adjacent to political borders. Transboundary parks offer additional challenges and opportunities for balancing the dual protection/use mandate that underpins most protected area management. Tourism, like nature, does not stop at jurisdictional borders – as with native animals, water, and other resources, tourists may have little or no interest in the boundary lines that determine legislative authority. Transboundary partnerships seem to offer a logical and efficient approach to developing and managing these shared resources for the benefit of both resource protection and tourism.

This chapter draws on the work of a two-year Australia-wide research project which seeks to identify the attributes of successful tourism/protected area partnerships and the factors contributing to and inhibiting partnership success. While much has been written on partnerships in the context of protected areas and tourism management, most studies have used a descriptive case study approach focussing exclusively on examples of successful partnerships rather than trying to identify and understand how particular factors might contribute to effective vs. failed partnerships. Moreover, they tend to fall short of synthesizing the literature and extracting theoretical constructs that can inform both study design and interpretation of results, and thus provide valuable lessons for partnerships elsewhere. The present study examines past tourism/protected area partnership research against a backdrop of a wider literature, in order to strengthen further theorizing and empirical research in this area.

The chapter begins by defining some key terms used in our study and then draws on theory from several bodies of literature to identify a number of partner-, process-, and context-related factors that potentially contribute to partnership success. This is followed by an overview of the

Australian Alps National Parks (AANP) as an example of a particular type of partnership – a transboundary partnership seeking to address a range of issues, many of which are tourism-related. Indicators (both process and outcomes) of success are then used to analyze the tourism elements of this partnership, followed by identification of some key factors that may explain this success. This analysis serves to illustrate the relevance of the theory, methods, and findings of this study to other transboundary partnerships and as a basis for recommendations for establishing, assisting, and monitoring transboundary partnerships.

DEFINING PARTNERSHIPS, SUCCESS, AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Partnerships

As a starting point, it is useful to define the term partnership and examine the explicit differences between it and related terms such as collaboration, cooperation, and joint management, which appear to have been used interchangeably in some of the literature (Hall 1999; Miller and Ahmad 2000; Dowling et al. 2004; Selin 2004). For example, Bramwell and Lane (2000) observe that "collaboration is commonly used in the academic tourism literature," while "in government and practitioner circles the term partnership is widely used … to denote a collaborative arrangement" (2–3).

A useful approach in defining partnerships is to identify the key elements of a partnership. For example, Brinkerhoff (2002) advocates the need for mutuality (mutual dependence, influence, accountability, and transparency), and Leach and Pelkey (2001) and others note that, while the degree of formality can vary, duration is important. In the context of natural resource management, Selin and Chavez (1995) argue that partnerships exist in order to solve a problem or an issue that cannot be solved individually, and Bramwell and Lane (2000) stress the need for agreement on rules or norms. For the purposes of this study, partnerships are defined as:

Regular, cross-sectoral interactions over an extended period of time between parties, based on at least some agreed rules or norms, intended to address a common issue or to achieve a specific policy goal or goals, which cannot be solved by the partners individually, and involving pooling and sharing of appreciations or resources, mutual influence, accountability, commitment, participation, trust, respect and transparency. (Laing et al. 2008, 4)

In considering Timothy's (1999) continuum of "cross-border partnerships" that ranges from alienation, to coexistence, to cooperation, to collaboration, and finally to integration, then, the former three are seen as being outside the scope of a true partnership, while collaboration is viewed as a mechanism to achieve partnership.

Success

While the meaning of a successful partnership has been assumed to be self-evident in many studies, in fact, success can have multiple dimensions. In the context of our study, both process (what is achieved in terms of ongoing relationships among partners) and outcomes (what is achieved in terms of sustainable tourism) are considered to be important.

With regard to determining or measuring the success of a partnership's processes, the Watershed Partnerships Project (2002) suggests gauging success in terms of the effect of the partnership on human or social capital and on the "long-term policy implementation and conflict resolution" (14) of the organization. Leach and Pelkey (2001) note this approach as being particularly appropriate where the partnership has not been in place for very long or has had its progress thwarted by high levels of internal conflict. Leach and Pelkey (2001) also include trust-building, conflict resolution, satisfying the stakeholders, and strengthening the long-term organizational capacity of the partnership as process-related measures of success (380). Using these and other sources, the indicators that we included in our study as measures of a successful process were efficiency/productivity gains, social gains (e.g., equity and empowerment), stimulation of innovation, building social capital, strengthening

organizational capacity, and creating indirect benefits (e.g., local employment) (Laing et al. 2008).

Partnership success can also be measured in terms of the results or outcomes of the partnership arrangement. Notwithstanding the observation by Bramwell and Lane (2000) that it can be difficult to distinguish process from outcome, Buckley and Sommer (2001) suggest that success in the context of tourism/protected area partnerships includes outcomes such as:

- Conservation outcomes such as reforestation, protection of wildlife, enhanced stewardship across local communities (Mburu and Birner 2007), assistance with research and monitoring programs and protection of land from high-impact activities;

- Economic outcomes such as providing funding for various conservation or restoration programs or protected area management, financial assistance for local communities, and encouraging economic growth in regions without alternative sources of revenue;

- Social outcomes such as public education or creation of local jobs; and

- Management outcomes such as business skills development.

Following a similar approach, in our study we gauge the success of a partnership as one that achieves not only process outcomes as described above but also sustainable tourism outcomes. In order to determine what these outcomes should be, it was important to review, critically evaluate, and settle on a suitable definition and operationalization of sustainable tourism, as it is also widely contested in the literature.

Sustainable Tourism

Macbeth (1994) notes the long-term nature of sustainable tourism and argues for its importance in setting a "moral agenda" and providing "a

practical route map" for tourism. "Put simply, our task is to facilitate a tourism that will carry on, that will endure but that will also contribute, nourish and tolerate" (42). He identifies four principles within the sustainability model – ecological sustainability, economic sustainability, social sustainability, and cultural sustainability. This model, applied in a tourism context, goes beyond a focus on maintaining steady numbers of tourists and involves a holistic approach or quadriga, to use Macbeth's metaphor, with each "horse" (principle) required to pull the "chariot" (sustainability) evenly and in the same direction to optimize the outcomes.

Building on these principles, our search for an operational definition of sustainable tourism turned to the United Nations Environment Programme and World Trade Organization (2005) and their twelve aims for an agenda for sustainable tourism. Using Macbeth's (1994) categories, the twelve indicators include economic sustainability (economic viability, local prosperity, employment quality), social sustainability (social equity, visitor fulfillment, local control, community well-being), cultural sustainability (cultural richness), and ecological sustainability (physical integrity, biological diversity, resource efficiency, and environmental purity). These twelve indicators are used as measures of successful outcomes.

SUCCESS FACTORS

In addition to gauging the success of a number of tourism/protected area partnerships, our study sought to identify the factors that contribute to or inhibit such success. To achieve such explanatory power and to avoid "reinventing the wheel," we reviewed a wide range of literature, from which we identified a large number of factors from areas such as environmental dispute resolution (e.g., Bingham 1986; Moore and Lee 1999; Crowfoot and Wondolleck 1990), social capital theory (Coleman 1988; Macbeth et al. 2004; Leach and Sabatier 2005), institutional analysis and development (Ostrom 1999; Imperial 1999), adoption and diffusion of innovations (Rogers 1995; Lundblad 2003; Braun 2004) and network theory (Pavlovich 2003; Saxena 2005; Dredge 2006a, 2006b). These were then grouped into

Table 1. Factors contributing to partnership success based on previous research.

Partner-related Factors
Leadership
Empathy towards Partners
Presence of Innovation / Openness to Change
Distribution / Balance of Power
Participation of Stakeholders
Membership Composition
Process-related Factors
Scope of Partnership
Shared Vision / Purpose
Information Quality and Quantity
Commitment
Interdependence
Trust
Adequacy / Transparency of Process
Structured Process
Flexibility
Open Internal Communication
External Communication
Dealing with Conflict
Context-Related Factors
Adequacy of Resources
Adequacy of Time / Duration of Partnership
Legislative Framework
Administrative Setting
Enforcement of Behaviour / Decisions
Benefits / Incentive

Source: Laing et al. (2008, 59), based on Bingham (1986).

three broad categories: partner-related, process-related, and context-related. The factors which were picked up most by the theories are shown in Table 1. Determining which of these factors are influential in the success of tourism/protected area partnerships is a key aim of the study.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF CONSTRUCTS AND STUDY METHODS

This review of literature on success factors provides a rich basis upon which to critically examine specific partnerships in order to try to explain why some tourism/protected area partnerships are more successful than others. The remainder of the chapter provides information about one of the twenty-one partnerships being analyzed for this purpose – the Australian Alps National Parks (AANP) – selected primarily because it provides an opportunity to examine these issues in the context of a transboundary partnership. Its value to this chapter is greatly enhanced by the longevity of the partnership between the three protected area management agencies in New South Wales (NSW), Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) together with the Commonwealth government of Australia who, in the view of many including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), have achieved and sustained a highly successful partnership.

Data collection via self-completed structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews is in progress, however, much of the history and achievements as well as the many challenges of this particular partnership can be gleaned from published sources. These include the work of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) itself (including annual reports, regular newsletters, three-year strategic plans, and education kits), which are freely available via their website; the publication of the proceedings of the International Year of Mountains Conference held in the Alps in 2002 (Mackay & Associates 2003), which included several papers about the partnership; and Crabb's (2003a) comprehensive review of the cooperative management of the AANP. This latter study included interviews with over forty people at all levels of involvement and covering all of the agencies in the partnership (Crabb 2003b, 84). Thus, the preliminary findings included here provide considerable insight into the degree of success of this partnership and the factors contributing to its success.

BACKGROUND TO THE PARTNERSHIP: AUSTRALIAN TOURISM, PROTECTED AREAS, AND THE ALPINE NATIONAL PARKS

Much of Australia's nature-based tourism, ecotourism, and adventure tourism activity occurs in protected areas such as national parks, conservation reserves, marine parks, and world heritage areas (Buckley and Sommer 2001). As tourism in and around Australia's protected areas continues to grow at a steady pace (Buckley 2000; Cole 2001; Worboys et al. 2001; Eagles 2002; Newsome et al. 2002), protected areas are taking on even greater importance to the tourism industry.

In Australia, most protected areas including national parks are managed at the state level. Thus, as noted in the chapter by Jacobs and Anderson (this volume), prior to the mid-1980s, the various national parks located in the alpine region of southeast Australia were managed independently by the states of New South Wales, Victoria, and the ACT, with some arm's-length involvement by the Commonwealth government.

In their chapter, Jacobs and Anderson provide an overview of the biogeography and significance of the Australian Alps (Map 1). The resources protected by these park agencies include rare and endemic species, the headwaters of several major river systems and a rich and diverse Aboriginal and European cultural heritage. Population growth and demand for recreation and tourism in recent decades has increased the pressure to find ways to provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy these very special alpine areas while protecting these natural and cultural resources.

In 1986, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed by the Commonwealth and three state governments, encouraging these four jurisdictions to share responsibility for managing this linked, fragile ecosystem. Today the AANP includes seven national parks, one wilderness area and three nature reserves in three different states.

As outlined in greater detail by Jacobs and Anderson (this volume), the vision of the AANP is to work in partnership to achieve excellence in conservation management of its natural and cultural values and sustainable use through an active program of cross-border cooperation. Co-operative
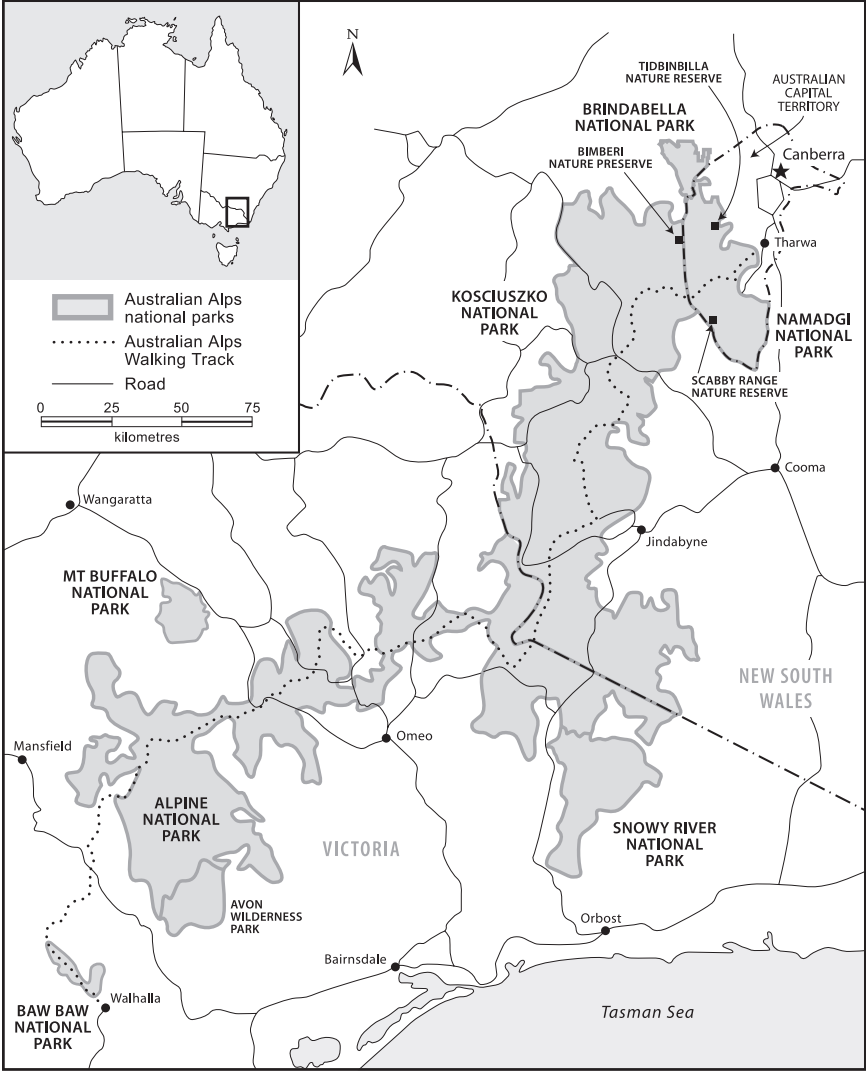
Map 1. The Australian Alps protected areas (M. Croot).

management of the AANP is guided in the first instance by an MOU which is regularly updated, an AANP Co-operative Management Program, a strategic plan which is rewritten every three years, the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) consisting of one senior officer from each of the four government jurisdictions (Commonwealth, ACT, NSW, and Victoria), and special task groups. There is also an Alps Ministerial Council (which meets occasionally and is responsible for the MOU) and an Alps Head of Agencies Group (which meets annually and approves the strategic plan, advises the AALC on policy and priorities, and negotiates for funding and in-kind support by the participating agencies) (Crabb 2003a). Jacobs and Anderson's chapter provides further insight into the mandate and activities of the Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program beyond its tourism initiatives.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS FOR THE AANP TOURISM/ PROTECTED AREA PARTNERSHIP

As outlined earlier, indicators that any particular tourism/protected area partnership has been successful can include a number of process outcomes such as efficiency/productivity gains, strengthening organizational capacity, social gains (e.g., equity and empowerment), building social capital, stimulation of innovation, and creating indirect benefits (e.g., local employment) as well as sustainable tourism outcomes such as economic, social, cultural, and ecological sustainability. Analysis of AANP-related published reports reveals many indicators of success in these categories, as illustrated by the following examples.

Efficiency/Productivity Gains and Strengthening Organizational Capacity

One major impetus for the creation of the original MOU was the need for more efficient and effective interstate law enforcement. This has been an important outcome, with staff now trained and authorized to carry out

law enforcement in adjacent border areas and rangers appointed as authorized officers for more than one agency (Crabb 2003b).

The AALC has achieved outcomes in many other areas of organizational understanding and capacity-building. For example, with respect to Aboriginal heritage, a number of staff-training activities and skill-building workshops have been run over a period of several years. The AALC was also instrumental in the development of an indigenous interpretive strategy for the Alps (Crabb 2003b). As detailed in the Jacobs and Anderson chapter, many non-tourism areas of resource management such as fire management, research into and reduction of feral animal and exotic pest species, water management, wilderness protection, and, more recently, climate change management have all benefited from the considerable training and professional development activities of the AALC. It appears that the partnership has achieved more than what could have been achieved without its existence, both through fostering collaboration and through economies of scale and reduction of duplication.

Building Social Capital and Stimulation of Innovation

The AALC has been very active in training and awareness-building beyond the park agencies. With respect to tourism, much effort has been devoted to raising the awareness and knowledge of those working in the tourism industry, including the production of a tour operators' manual, delivery of training programs and workshops for commercial tourism operators, and the development and accreditation of a training module for tour guides focussed on interpreting the AANP (Crabb 2003b), although this latter initiative has yet to be fully implemented.

Another major contribution of the AALC has been to schools and teachers throughout Australia via its Australian Alps Education Kits. These are available online and are comprehensive and of high quality. There are several modules, for example, a seventeen-page kit entitled "Recreation and Tourism in the Australian Alps" covers the history of recreation and ski resort development in the Alps, horse-riding, cycling, the Australian Alps walking track, the Australian Alps eight codes of conduct (Care for the Alps: Leave No Trace) program, the effects of recreation, and recreation planning, monitoring, and management. The AALC also

delivers teacher-awareness workshops (Crabb 2003b) and distributes CDs, brochures, and other resources to teachers and others.

The Australian Alps long-distance walking track is itself an innovation that almost certainly could not have been achieved without the existence of the AANP. First suggested as early as the 1930s, major construction on the track did not begin until the 1970s. The establishment of the AANP together with funding from the Bicentennial Authority in 1988 facilitated the extension of the Alps walking track to include all three states. To walk the entire walking track takes several weeks, along which a walker:

> … climbs over the highest mountain in Australia as well as the highest peaks in the ACT, NSW and Victoria. It traverses country covered by snow for much of the year, descends to rivers that can become impassable when in flood, follows solitary roads, fire access tracks … and can be a pleasant stroll under clear blue skies or a battle to survive as the elements vent their fury upon innocuous travelers (Siseman 2003, 337).

The AALC supports the Australian Alps walking track by maintaining a series of web pages under the AANP banner and providing prospective walkers with track-condition information, safety notes, trip planning notes, a track brochure, maps, track signage information, and minimal impact messages.

Finally, the three-day International Year of Mountains Conference held in 2002 was co-sponsored by the AALC. It included a mountains-for-tourism stream across the three days that featured several valuable papers on best practice tourism management in alpine areas by both Australian and overseas experts.

Creating Indirect Benefits

The existence of the AALC has generated only limited local employment, as much of the work of the AALC is undertaken by staff of the parks agencies who serve on the various committees. There is one secretariat position (a community projects officer) responsible for the marketing, public

relations, and media work of the AALC, including the website. There is also a program coordinator position which is filled on a secondment basis from within the existing park management agencies, and this person oversees the program and budget of the AALC and executes other aspects of the strategic plan.

In reviewing the various process outcomes that this partnership has achieved, it is the areas of relationship-building that are most in evidence – the development of a culture of cooperation among the participating agencies as well as those outside the actual partnership (AALC 2004). According to Crabb (2003b), there is enormous goodwill, understanding, and trust, with one interviewee describing the partnership as "a brotherhood" and another as "a fantastic experience" (85). "[Notwithstanding] very tangible achievements, perhaps of most value have been the intangibles, the day-to-day activities and on-ground work, networking, learning from others, peer support, things that are so hard to value in dollar terms but which are so valuable" (Crabb 2003a, 40).

Indicators that the AANP partnership has been successful in terms of sustainable tourism outcomes include economic, social, cultural, and ecological sustainability.

Economic Sustainability (Economic Viability, Local Prosperity, Employment Quality)

It is difficult to attribute economic success solely to the existence of the AANP or the work of the AALC; however, it was the AALC who together with the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) funded a study assessing the economic value of tourism in the Australian Alps (Mules and Stoecki 2003). The research involved a twelve-month survey of a sample of visitors to the parks in all three states, resulting in a useable sample of nearly five thousand visitor-completed questionnaires. The study concluded that the capital value of the Alps for recreation, not including other use values, option values, or existence values, is in the order of AUS$40 billion. It also concluded that the expenditure of interstate visitors to the AANP contribute an annual gross product of AUS$322 million and the equivalent of 5,155 full-time jobs described in the report

as "jobs and income which would not occur in the absence of the parks" (Mules and Stoecki 2003, 154).

The AALC has contributed to the economic sustainability of tourism in the Alps by playing a very active role in tourism marketing and promotion, including the funding of marketing strategies, contribution to tourism promotional displays, and the publication of a touring guide. A recent marketing plan includes activities targeted at two main audiences: rural neighbours and park visitors (AALC 2001, as cited by Crabb 2003b). Considerable AALC resources are committed to promoting the Alps through the community projects officer's time producing media releases and other marketing collateral, and through the funding of displays, newspaper inserts, and radio and television announcements. Finally, the AALC funds a very comprehensive and effective website which potentially reaches a global tourism audience.

Social Sustainability (Social Equity, Visitor Fulfillment, Local Control, Community Well-being) and Cultural Sustainability (Cultural Richness)

The AALC runs frequent community awareness training courses aimed at public contact staff but open to local residents. In 2001, the community awareness program received an award for excellence in the general tourism services category of the Canberra Region Tourism Awards (Crabb 2003b, 84) for its suite of marketing publications and products, including its website, community service announcements, workshops, and efforts to develop links with the tourism industry. That said, there has been a continuing lack of community involvement, as well as a lack of involvement by important non-park organizations such as the Victorian Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council and land managers outside the national parks (Crabb 2003, 41). In spite of this lack of active participation in the AANP by the alpine resorts, the AALC has promoted the development of uniform and coordinated tourism planning approaches, consistent messages and information, visitor advice, and visitor resources such as signage and interpretive materials that foster enjoyment, appreciation, and sustainable use, to the benefit of both local residents and tourists (Crabb 2003b; AALC 2004).

The AALC's commitment to Aboriginal cultural heritage conservation and interpretation has already been mentioned. In addition to the significant gathering of Aboriginal people facilitated by the International Year of the Mountains celebrations in 2002, respect for the Aboriginal values and heritage of the Alps, and improved engagement and involvement with Aboriginal people with connections to the Alps, has been achieved via the Alps Co-operative Management Program (AALC 2004). With respect to European heritage, the AALC assisted with inventorying and surveying of the historic huts found throughout the Alps (see Jacobs and Anderson this volume), the outcomes of which have been of relevance and benefit not only to the parks themselves but to a wide range of volunteer groups (Crabb 2003b).

Ecological Sustainability (Physical Integrity, Biological Diversity, Resource Efficiency, and Environmental Purity)

There is little doubt that the AALC has been directly responsible for achieving improvements in the level of understanding and management of natural ecosystems, and some of this is evident in the considerable environmental research that has been ongoing in the parks. The AALC maintains an Australian Alps Scientific Sites Database with plots that enable monitoring of environmental change caused by fire, climate change, introduced plant species, and land-use practices such as cattle-grazing and tourism resort operation. With regard to the latter, one important focus of the AALC has been on the implications of climate change, including the increasing need for snow-making for the ski resorts and the impact of increased demands for more water on the alpine ecosystems (Whetton 2002, cited in Crabb 2003b).

Topical work that has had potential ecological benefits on a much wider scale has occurred. For example, in March 2000, an international five-day human waste management workshop was held in the Alps, which dealt with contemporary approaches to human faecal waste management at visitor facilities, at trailheads, and in backcountry protected areas (AALC 2000, cited by Crabb 2003b).

At the level of the individual visitor, the AALC's main contribution has been the development of minimal impact codes of practice, largely

through the development and distribution of visitor codes of conduct (Beckmann 2003). With AALC funding and direction, a suite of minimal impact messages were developed, tested, and then refined for a range of target audiences including: independent visitors, special-interest recreation groups, teachers and educational leaders, students, local residents, and commercial tour operators. These have been disseminated via a range of media including the mass media (newspapers), visitor information centres, schools, fliers, posters, signs, shelter displays, and accessories (e.g., water bottles), and incorporated into the Alps walking track brochure and the AANP website (Beckmann 2003). However, the effectiveness of these in terms of influencing visitor behaviour is largely unknown.

On the other hand, some major cross-border issues have yet to be addressed, such as wild horses and dogs, which can cause severe effects on vegetation and pose significant threats to local wildlife and the integrity of the alpine environment (Crabb 2003a). Coyne (2001) outlines a range of additional environmental threats to the Alps that are directly attributable to tourism and have not been addressed by the AANP, including:

- *decreasing water quality* (due to urban runoff from resort buildings, roads, and car parks, and the disposal of sewage, which is discharged from treatment plants into streams);

- *reduction of mountain pygmy-possum habitat* (due to disturbance particularly during the ski season);

- *effects on terrestrial vegetation and the spread of weeds* (due to resort development, snowmaking, and bushwalking);

- *increasing pollution* (due to sewage generation and accidental spills); and

- *increase and spread of pest animals* (due to road and resort development).

A number of additional recreation- and tourism-related issues were identified by Crabb's (2003b) interviewees as areas where the partnership has so far failed to deliver cross-agency cooperation and consistency, including

backcountry recreation use issues, horseback-riding licences, management of mountain-biking, and monitoring of visitor behaviour and impacts.

In summary, it appears that this particular partnership is credited with having achieved a considerable number of successes that extend well beyond the tourism elements that are the focus of this chapter. Moreover, the AALC appears to be held responsible for relatively few failures with respect to both process and sustainable tourism outcomes. There is no doubt that the feeling of those who have written about the AANP perceive it to be an example of a very successful partnership.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUCCESS OF THE AANP TOURISM/PROTECTED AREA PARTNERSHIP

As illustrated in Table 1, factors that can contribute to the success of a partnership include partner-related factors, process-related factors, and context-related factors. The perceptions of those who have written about the AANP suggest that a number of the factors identified in Table 1 have contributed to the success of the partnership. Many of these are also described as lessons learned in Jacobs and Anderson's chapter.

Partner-related factors that appear to have helped facilitate the success of the AANP partnership include:

- *Membership composition*: From the ministerial level through to field staff, there is involvement by staff from all of the partner (Commonwealth, state, and territory protected area management) agencies. At the initiation of the partnership, Crabb (2003a) notes that "the right people came together at the right time, with a concern about the one place, the Australian Alps" (38). A strength of the partnership today is that it operates at many levels, although its real strength is seen by many to be at the field-staff level (Crabb 2003b);

- *Participation by the relevant protected area management agencies*: This has been considerable at the level of the AALC

and the working parties but has also included a commitment by decision-makers (heads of agencies) to meet annually. Crabb (2003a) notes that certain internal agendas such as the state of Victoria wanting to establish an alpine national park helped initially in getting the partnership off the ground (40);

- *Non-agency leadership and commitments*: Crabb (2003a) notes support from other organizations such as the Australian Conservation Foundation, particularly in the start-up phase of the partnership;

- *Empathy toward partners*: The frequent professional development and regular training activities provide opportunities for relationship-building, networking, and peer support, at least by those directly involved in the partnership;

- *Leadership*: This has come from the agencies themselves, with some evidence of a sustained effort by particular individuals over many years, although there has been concern expressed by some (Crabb 2003b) that this has not always carried through to implementation; and

- *Distribution of power*: There appears to be a commitment to sharing the implementation role among the agencies by way of the rotational program coordinator position, but it is not known how well other aspects of the partnership such as decision-making are shared.

Some factors that do not appear to have been present include:

- *Membership by non-government agencies*: Links are lacking with tourism peak bodies and many key organizations and community groups including the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs, the Australian Conservation Foundation, National Parks Associations, and special interest groups such as horse-riders and off-road vehicle groups (Crabb

2003b, 93). This appears to have hindered some aspects of the partnership; and

- *Inclusion of all people affected by the partnership*: Some of the partners are very large protected area management agencies and inclusion of staff throughout these organizations can be difficult. Crabb (2003a) notes a lack of commitment by some agency staff and a lack of recognition of its achievements (40). Several of Crabb's (2003b) interviewees commented that many agency staff fail to see the AALP's work as core business.

Process-related factors that appear to have helped facilitate success of the AANP partnership include:

- *Scope of the partnership and a shared vision*: These appear to be clear to all parties by way of the MOU, the three-year strategic plan, and the AANP Co-operative Management Program. There is evidence of a shared informal concern for the natural environment, a shared desire for uniform management policy and control, and a shared vision to do things better (Crabb 2003a, 38);

- *Information quality, quantity, and transparency*: Documentation suggests that there are regular meetings and transparency about the activities and programs of the AANP partnership. What is less clear is how meetings are run, decisions are made, and the outcomes of the various projects are disseminated and taken up;

- *External communication*: There is evidence of extensive external communication by the AANP with some stakeholders, although, as noted above, there are many stakeholders with whom communication is inadequate or nonexistent; and

- *Interdependence, commitment, trust*: As mentioned earlier, the perceptions of those who have written about the AANP are that there is a considerable degree of goodwill and a long-term commitment by those involved in the partnership.

There is no evidence from published sources of the following:

- *Dealing with conflict and change*: It is not clear how the AANP partnership deals with internal issues nor how well it copes with change. Staff turnover was mentioned as an issue as was the tendency to focus on new projects rather than persisting with long-term tasks (Crabb 2003b); and
- *Internal communication*: There appears to be a need for better communication about the AANP's activities and uptake of some of its findings on a broader scale within each agency. Communication between the AALC and other levels of the partnership was also mentioned by Crabb's (2003b) interviewees as an issue. Crabb (2003a) notes that there is sometimes conflict with agencies' internal tasks that precludes implementation, which relates to the point made earlier about the work of the partnership not being seen as core business. It also reflects a lack of resources, a key issue we return to below.

Context-related factors that appear to have helped facilitate success of the AANP partnership include:

- *Adequacy of time / duration of partnership*: The partnership has been in existence for over twenty years, and this has clearly contributed to the partners' sense of commitment and to its success. On the other hand, there are those (Crabb 2003b) who describe the partnership as being "on a plateau," "at a low point," and even "declining" (96).

There is evidence that the following issues may have hindered the success of the AANP partnership:

- *Legislative and administrative framework*: Despite the fact that all partners are state or Commonwealth government bodies responsible for protected areas and with similar mandates to facilitate tourism opportunities, Coyne (2001) sees the differences in legislation across the parks as problematic, and Crabb (2003b) identifies the ministerial side of the MOU as needing attention. Coyne (2001) calls on the AALC in particular to strive for the resolution of differences in management objectives and standardization of approaches and procedures to better facilitate environmental management;

- *Enforcement of decisions*: Crabb (2003a) notes a lack of uptake and implementation of some of the decisions emanating from the partnership, making reference to the lack of legal and administrative authority of the AALC. The lack of resources for implementation and enforcement was raised by many of Crabb's (2003b) interviewees; and

- *Adequacy of resources*: Inadequate staffing and lack of resources were the two issues most consistently mentioned in publications about the AANP partnership and by Crabb's (2003b) interviewees. The withdrawal of Commonwealth government funding in particular was seen as a significant threat to the partnership.

Results to date suggest that a wide range of partner-, process-, and context-related factors have contributed to the success of the partnership. If anything has inhibited its success, our analysis of published reports suggests that context factors such as disparate legislative and administrative frameworks, inadequate resources, and the absence of legal authority on the part of the AALC have most constrained the partnership. Jacobs and

Anderson highlight these and other factors as challenges that need to be addressed going forward.

LIMITATIONS, REFLECTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

While indicators of success or at least perceptions of success can be gleaned from published sources, it has proven more difficult to identify the factors that contribute to or inhibit partnership success. Field work involving the administration of questionnaires and in-depth interviewing of participants will be necessary to either bolster or undermine the claims and information in published sources. It has also been difficult to separate out the tourism element of the partnership, as the AALC has a focus and range of responsibilities well beyond tourism. In any case, putting boundaries around what constitutes tourism, let alone its impacts, can be problematic.

On a more positive note, this chapter serves to illustrate the relevance of this kind of analysis to other transboundary partnerships and as a basis for recommendations for establishing, assisting and monitoring transboundary partnerships. The categories identified from the literature provide a rapid and apparently accurate means of identifying the outcomes from such partnerships, as well as the influences on them. The preliminary findings suggest the potential benefits that can be accrued from focussing further on elements of the context that may hinder partnerships, influences such as legislative and administrative incongruities and inadequate resourcing. The context can then, potentially, be actively managed to address these hindrances.

In conclusion, despite the plethora of studies which have looked at tourism/protected area partnerships to date, partnerships remain "an evolving concept and practice" (Brinkerhoff 2002, 28). This study leverages off existing theory from fields such as environmental dispute resolution, social capital, and network theory to identify a series of partner-, process-, and context-related elements and examines the extent to which each of these contributes to or inhibits the success of tourism/protected

area partnerships. This preliminary analysis of the Australian Alps trans-boundary partnership suggests that the partnership has been on the whole a very successful one, while highlighting ways in which to strengthen and enhance its outcomes. In particular, it provides evidence that even a modestly funded partnership can deliver economic, social, cultural, and ecological sustainability outcomes, although greater resourcing might further enhance these outcomes. We conclude that the partnership has made a real contribution to managing tourism sustainably in a multi-jurisdictional protected area context.

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