**PARKS, PEACE, AND PARTNERSHIP:
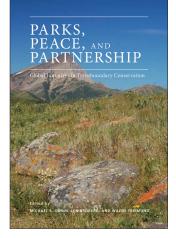GLOBAL INITIATIVES IN TRANSBOUNDARY
CONSERVATION**
Edited by Michael S. Quinn, Len Broberg,
and Wayne Freimund
ISBN 978-1-55238-643-9

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Enhancing Connectivity through Cooperative Management: Lessons Learned from Twenty-One Years of Transboundary Programs in the Australian Alps

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INTRODUCTION

The Australian Alps: The Place

The Australian Alps occur in the southeastern corner of mainland Australia, stretching hundreds of kilometres from Canberra to the Victorian Central Highlands west of Melbourne. They include regions known as the Brindabella Ranges in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), the Snowy Mountains of New South Wales (NSW) and the Victorian Alps (Map 1).

Map 1. The Australian Alps protected areas (M. Croot).

They are a mountainous biogeographical region in a predominantly dry and flat continent, containing Australia's highest peaks and unique alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems. The region consists of extensive undulating plateaus, ridges, and peaks surrounded by a dissected landscape of steep slopes, escarpments, and deep gorges.

ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY THROUGH
COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

Table 1. Protected areas included in the Australian Alps National Parks Co-operative Management Program.

Area	Size (ha)	Responsible Agency
Victoria		Parks Victoria
Alpine National Park	647,700	
Snowy River National Park	98,100	
Avon Wilderness	39,650	
Mount Buffalo National Park	31,000	
Baw Baw National Park	13,300	
New South Wales		NSW National Parks & Wildlife Division
Kosciuszko National Park	690,411	
Brindabella National Park	18,472	
Scabby Range Nature Reserve	4,982	
Bimberi Nature Reserve	10,886	
Australian Capital Territory		Environment ACT
Namadgi National Park	105,900	
Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve	5,450	
Total	1,665,851	

The Australian Alps contain plants and animals found nowhere else in the world, as well as significant natural and cultural landscapes. They are a highly valued recreational resource for many Australians and are the headwaters of some of Australia's most important rivers, supplying snowmelt waters for the maintenance of ecological processes and communities, domestic use, industry, irrigation, and hydro-electric production in NSW, Victoria, ACT, and South Australia.

The Australian Alps biogeographical region covers a variety of land tenures; however, most significant is the almost contiguous series of national parks and other protected areas that span the Alps across the borders of Victoria, NSW, and the ACT, collectively known as the Australian Alps national parks. These parks and reserves cover over 1.6 million hectares and are governed by an agreement between the Australian, NSW, ACT, and Victorian governments on co-operative management.

This paper presents the key lessons of the last twenty-one years of the Australian Alps co-operative management program from the perspective of park managers.

THE AUSTRALIAN ALPS CO-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Management Arrangements

The Australian Government is not responsible for managing all national parks. In the case of the protected areas that make up the Australian Alps national parks, the states of Victoria, NSW, and the ACT are separately responsible for legislation, policy-setting, and management of the protected areas within their jurisdictions. Together with the Australian Government, they have combined their efforts to ensure that management of the Australian Alps national parks reflects a single bio-geographical unit across state jurisdictions.

This coordinated management and conservation of the Australian Alps is the subject of an agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Australian, NSW, ACT, and Victorian governments. The vision of the Australian Alps National Parks Co-operative Management Program is agencies working in partnership to achieve excellence in conservation management of its natural and cultural values and sustainable use through an active program of transboundary co-operation.

Organization and Structure

The following entities have functional roles in the Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program under the MOU:

Australian Alps Ministerial Council: The government ministers responsible for participating agencies, which are in turn responsible for high-level inter-government relationships and the MOU.

Australian Alps Heads of Agencies Group: The heads, or their delegates, of participating agencies meet annually to consider strategic issues and to give direction to the Australian Alps Liaison Committee on policy, priority areas, and emerging issues.

Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC): The AALC facilitates the development, coordination and implementation of the Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program. Its members include a senior officer from each of the participating agencies in NSW, Victoria, and the ACT, and from the relevant Australian government department. The remainder of the structure is functional to best achieve delivery of the program as needed, particularly though the program manager and working groups.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ALPS CO-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: ELEVEN KEY LESSONS LEARNED

1. Making a Start: Establish a Champions Group

Cross-jurisdictional management arrangements are complex and often highly political. To establish such a co-operative agreement, it is important to establish an influential champions group. They need to be politically savvy and represent all the potential partners to ensure endorsement at a range of levels in each agency or organization.

Case Study 1A: Establishing the Australian Alps Program

In 1985, a group of policy-makers and planners from the four protected area agencies in the Australian Alps met at Howman's Gap in the Victorian Alps to discuss the state of the alps and potential co-operative management arrangements. The discussions produced a "Framework for Co-operation" that gained senior bureaucratic and political support (Crabb 2003).

A number of influential and dedicated senior managers representing the agencies across the Australian Alps evolved as a group to establish more formal transboundary co-operative management arrangements. The "Framework for Co-operation" became the more formal "Memorandum of Understanding in Relation to the Co-operative Management of the Australian Alps National Parks," first signed by government ministers in 1986.

The memorandum of understanding has since been revised in 1989, 1996, 1998, and 2003.

Lesson learned: Where a need is identified for inter-jurisdictional arrangements, establish a champions group of influential and politically savvy officers to drive the concept through organizations and government.

2. Have a Solid Program Structure: Top Down – Bottom Up and Getting the Right Balance

The strength of the Australian Alps program lies in having a solid program structure with the right balance of operational and planning level staff involvement, and high-level support through the formal signing of each agency to the Australian Alps Memorandum of Understanding. This commits governments at the highest level to co-operation and collaboration. While the heavy lifting of cross-jurisdictional politics and high-level strategy is dealt with through the Ministerial Council and Heads of Agencies, the majority of program outcomes derive from officer-level staff through programs developed by the working groups and managed through the program manager. This occurs under the leadership of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) that is made up of the senior park manager from each state. The program would fail without support and involvement at each end; facilitating that continued broad level of support is fundamental to the program.

Case Study 2A: Integration of Executive and Field Staff at Climate Change Workshop

As part of the science management workshop series, a recent workshop was held on climate change and management implications for the Australian Alps targeted at field staff. Running concurrently with that was the Australian Alps Heads of Agencies meeting that is held every one to two years. Immense value was gained by integrating the two to gain a wide view on management implications, while approving a number of other Alps initiatives and facilitating wide networking.

Lesson learned: Have an established structure involving agencies "top to bottom," and take opportunities to integrate and involve all levels at events.

Case Study 2B: The Working Groups.

The program is supported by four working groups that – along with the program manager – advise the AALC on specific matters and assist with the implementation of the Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program by:

- developing new projects in key result areas (KRAs) outlined in the strategic plan;

- recommending priority projects for AALC funding; and

- assisting with the delivery of the projects to varying degrees.

Working group members are drawn from each of the Australian Alps agencies with a mixture of both operational and planning staff. The working groups currently are:

- Natural Heritage Working Group;

- Cultural Heritage Working Group;

- Visitor Recreation and Facilities Working Group; and

- Community Awareness Working Group.

In addition to the working groups, the Alps Operational Group (Australian Alps park managers) meets and advises the AALC on the annual works program and a number of operational matters.

Lesson learned: The establishment of cross-agency working groups which work with the program manager is generally the key means by which projects are developed and delivered and staff are engaged. The working groups are the "engine room" driving the program.

3. The Program Must Have a Sense of Belonging: Building a Sense of Pride, Ownership, and Empowerment with Staff and the Community

For a program like this to succeed across such a broad range of jurisdictions, a key objective has been to involve staff at all levels and to build a sense of personal and professional ownership. It is often said the success of the Australian Alps program is in the ground-level support and involvement of the staff. Feedback from staff indicates this is best achieved through a program that is tangible, output-focussed, and contemporary that relates on an inter-jurisdictional and landscape scale.

The strategic plan and programs aim to focus projects on tangible outcomes that can occur outside the sphere or ability of normal agency business to demonstrate value of co-operation, networking, and engagement across borders. Staff, and to some extent the community, is invited annually to submit project proposals for funding that meet the strategic plan key result areas. The AALC evaluates the project proposals on achievability, stimulation, and relevance to staff and the community. Through discussion with the operational area managers group, the AALC also ensures that the majority of projects have an "on the ground" focus. Particular emphasis is on ensuring that at least two workshops are held each year where staff can come together. Experience indicates that, in the first stages of program establishment, picking off the 'lower fruit' with clear achievements results in quick support.

Tangible Outcomes

Case Study 3A: Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT)
The AAWT extends for 655 kilometres along the spine of the Australian Alps. Although the "Alpine Track" was in place in spirit for decades, one of the first initiatives of the Alps program was to facilitate co-operation across the agencies to have the track formally established and branded as the Australian Alps Walking Track. This was highly successful and gained early recognition of

the program value in terms of a tangible example of cross-border co-operation and connectivity for staff and community members.

Lesson learned: Focus on projects that can show clear and tangible evidence of successful outcomes of co-operation across jurisdictions.

Workshops and Networking

The consistent message from staff and stakeholders is that they most benefit from the ability to come together at workshops to discuss and collaborate on common issues across a large landscape, which would otherwise be difficult. The more common focus on workshops as opposed to conferences reflects the desire to interact and collaborate in an informal sense amongst staff and, now more commonly, interested stakeholders.

Case Study 3B: Alpine Human Waste Workshop

The matter of managing human waste in remote alpine settings is complex. Although there has been a lot of research and experimentation, a lack of communication often results in a duplication of effort when new facilities are planned. This was a key knowledge gap identified by Alps staff. Under the auspices of the Australian Alps program, a travelling human waste management workshop was held to include invited international and national experts, industry providers, recreationalists, and staff. This was very successful and led to the translation of the proceedings into a manual that has guided planning for some years.

Lesson learned: Workshops that share information on contemporary and common landscape-scale management issues have great value.

Engaging the Wider Community

As the program matures, it is becoming more focussed on expanding engagement with the broader community.

Case Study 3C: Australian National Landscapes Program. Tourism Australia is developing a new international tourism branding campaign for Australia focussing on Australia's best nature-based landscape-scale experiences. Fundamental to being part of that program is being able to demonstrate to Tourism Australia that the region has full co-operation and support of the community that will present those experiences. The Australian Alps region is a prime candidate due to its unique experience and established infrastructure. It also has, through the co-operative management agreement, a unique inter-jurisdictional arrangement to support such an innovative and sensitive tourism program. The Australian Alps program has been the backbone of community discussions regarding national landscapes and the 'glue that holds them together.' It has also been a great opportunity for the Australian Alps program to widen its base and influence, to work more closely with local government, the tourism industry, and regional and state tourism organizations and to gain their partnership and support.

Lesson learned: Inter-jurisdictional arrangements may need to look inward during their establishment to get key agency support, but in time grow to seize opportunities to engage in the wider community be it for tourism, natural resource management, or social and cultural areas management. Transboundary programs can be the glue to connect the parts to achieve great regional and national connectivity outcomes.

Going the Next Step

A more recent initiative of the program as it matures is to investigate leveraging off the strength and positioning of the program to invest small funding into seeking considerable external funds for substantial strategic programs.

Case Study 3D: Strategic Water Program

The Australian Alps – while being a very small part of Australia – contribute a relatively large proportion of fresh water to river systems due to high rainfall, topography, and snow melt. The catchments have been degraded over decades from domestic stock grazing, fire, weeds, and direct human impact. The Australian Alps program is investing in a positioning project to attract substantial sums to invest in catchment restoration, which has otherwise struggled for adequate funding.

Lesson learned: Inter-jurisdictional management arrangements across landscapes may, in collaboration with the states, leverage funds into large national-scale strategic projects.

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4. Synthesize the cross-jurisdictional arrangements into normal agency identity to build trust and overcome concerns regarding loss of corporate identity of agencies and inconsistencies in policies and procedures

The risk with cross-jurisdictional arrangements that involve a small part of multiple organizations is that, while they may work across the broader landscape, they do not pick up wide corporate support or understanding across each agency.

Issues can arise around:

- dedicated recurrent funding support to the program when there are limited agency resources; and
- concern over cross-jurisdictional branding, priorities, and management systems conflicting with agency policy and positioning.

To alleviate these concerns, it is important to position the co-operative management program to ensure:

- that the borders between core state jurisdictional responsibility and the objectives of co-operative management are clear and don't conflict;
- that consistent inter-jurisdictional policy on issues may not be achievable and indeed may not be necessary but the co-operative program facilitates a way to achieve best outcomes across the landscape; and
- that co-operative management branding doesn't conflict or compete with agency branding and positioning.

The individual agency corporate support for the co-operative management program needs to be strong, and to achieve that the program must be defendable. A defendable program is achieved through staff support but also must have the ability to report on outcomes that meet strategic plan objectives and a clear position on the relationship between the program and agency corporate priorities and policies.

Case Study 4A: Australian Alps Signage Branding Project

As part of the Australian Alps co-operative management program, the strategic plan identified the need to identify Australian Alps national parks on the ground with signage, incorporating "Welcome to Country" from the indigenous communities, and on staff uniforms. A number of options were considered for signage from a complete newly branded sign, Australian Alps brand combined with agency brand, through to completely separate signage. The agencies at corporate communication levels were understandably concerned with the loss of individual agency branding either through signage or uniform. The agreed outcome was separate signage at strategic locations to present both brands as complementary but not competing.

Lesson learned: Branding and positioning of inter-jurisdictional programs should complement and not compete with jurisdictional agencies.

Case Study 4B: Deer Management Workshop

Introduced wild deer are an emerging problem across the Australian Alps landscape. For various reasons, the three states have different legislation relating to the management of deer as game or pest species, and this is unlikely to change in the short term due to differing circumstances and politics. In Victoria, a formal partnership agreement has been signed off between Parks Victoria and the Australian Deer Association. As part of the Australian Alps best practice workshop series, a deer management workshop was held to network and collaborate on deer management. Conflicting views emerged about the involvement of stakeholders in the workshop. Some states were concerned that

it was an internal issue and the involvement of stakeholders would become political, while others felt the involvement of stakeholders was critical to the open and honest partnership approach. The latter view was upheld but caused a rift amongst staff.

Lesson learned: Agencies involved in inter-jurisdictional co-operative agreement must accept that policy differences will occur and use the strengths of co-operative management programs to achieve an outcome that is acceptable. Co-operative efforts must also look outward for solutions and be prepared to involve the community.

5. Dedicated Program Support: Have a Strong, Defendable and Well-positioned Funding Base

The Australian Alps Memorandum of Understanding calls for each agency to contribute funds "as appropriate." To achieve successful outcomes, the program must have a reasonable level of funding. However, with co-operation and dedication of staff and agencies, a little money invested in establishing formal program co-ordination and management, coupled with support to the working groups, adds substantially to outcomes.

The MOU commits an agreed level of funds each year to support the program commensurate with the area and resource covered by the agreement. Currently, the two agencies with larger areas – Parks Victoria and NSW Department of Environment, Conservation and Climate Change – contribute $120,000 each, while the ACT Parks, Conservation and Lands gives $40,000 and the federal government normally contributes around $30,000. To consolidate ongoing funding, the program needs to report back to sponsor agencies on achievement of targets, effective use of funds, and community and staff support.

Case Study 5A: Program Manager

The key to success over the last two decades has been the establishment of a program manager position and targeted support where needed to drive, grow, and communicate on the program, and in particular support and co-ordinate the four working groups. Of the $310,000 annual program budget, over one-third goes to program co-ordination while the remainder goes to funding projects. The work of staff and working groups is a substantial in-kind contribution to the significant annual works program. The organic nature of the program leads to a very favourable cost-benefit-outcome ratio. To ensure agency engagement, the program manger is drawn from within the agencies on a three-year rotation basis.

Lesson learned: Investment of funds into dedicated and effective program co-ordination adds significantly to outcomes and harnesses the organic nature of the program. This produces enormous in-kind benefits and substantial output relative to cash investment. A three-year rotation is a preferred minimum period of time for the program manager to come to terms with the complexity of the program and for jurisdictions to share ownership.

6. Develop the Program to Stay Relevant and Fresh

Many staff have said they enjoy involvement in the Australian Alps program as it aims to take leadership on sharing information on strategic issues that normal agency business at the operational level may not have exposure to. To continue to achieve this, it is important to stay abreast of, and communicate on, contemporary issues that affect park management. It is also important to be fresh on ideas and directions for the program to continue to engage staff and community, and to be relevant to government and agencies.

Case Study 6A: Fire workshops and expert panel

The 2003 fires were a megafire event for the Australian Alps, burning out 1.8 million hectares across three states, resulting in the largest fire in south-eastern Australia in over sixty years. While the states dealt with fire suppression and recovery in their jurisdictions, the Australian Alps program played the co-ordination role for reporting of research results, monitoring the effects of fire on the wider alps landscape, and identifying issues for the states to address. The outcome was three different alps-wide workshops of scientists and mangers on the effect of fire on alps biodiversity and cultural values and the facilitation of an expert panel to report on effects and action required.

Lesson learned: Be flexible and proactive in response to contemporary issues as they arise. Leadership is needed on transboundary landscape-scale issues, which provide the mechanism and forum to bring people together.

7. Build on Strengths of a Cross-Jurisdictional Approach

The primary basis for cross-jurisdictional co-operative management programs is the focus on landscape-scale management across administrative borders to improve connectivity outcomes. It is therefore fundamentally important that there is a clear separation of output-based programs that are delivered by agencies and the true nature of cross-border-focussed outputs. When evaluating projects for funding and support, the Australian Alps program carefully considers that the outcome has benefits for all states with Alps landscape-scale benefits that cannot be achieved through agency programs. It is not a fund source for the latter.

Case Study 7A: Feral Pig Workshop – Pigs Know No Borders

Feral pigs are an established pest in some parts of the Alps and are emerging in others with spread occurring across borders. They are highly destructive in Alps environments and a serious threat to native biodiversity. While operational feral pig control is clearly an agency responsibility, there is a wealth of experience across the Alps accrued through decades of feral pig management and new research to consider. The role of the Alps co-operative management program is to bring together staff, contractors and researchers regularly to discuss pig movement intelligence, recent successes, concerns and new information on methods to improve program efficacy, and hopefully significant reduction or elimination of the species.

Lesson learned: Co-operative management programs across borders must avoid being a fund source for agency operational issues, and focus on strategic support across the landscape to facilitate best practices and improved efficacy that can be achieved through sharing of knowledge and information.

8. Look Outward to Build Partnerships and Expand Connectivity Opportunities

The earlier stages of the development of the co-operative management program naturally looked inward to establish interagency relationships and engagement, and to develop the program. As the program has matured and consolidated, more focus is directed to looking outward to the community and developing further partnerships with stakeholders and adjacent land managers to connect a wider region beyond the traditional protected area boundaries.

Case Study 8A: Alpine Resorts

In Victoria, four large alpine resorts act as the "holes in the dough-nut" of the Australian Alps national parks. They have not been included in the co-operative management agreement to date on the basis that they have not been considered protected areas and were seen as a potentially weak point in the agreement. However, in New South Wales, similar resorts are included by the fact that they are within the Kosciuszko National Park. As stated earlier, inter-jurisdictional inconsistency is not a difficulty if the same outcomes can be achieved through co-operative management. The resorts are integral to managing the alpine area estate and integrated planning for visitor use and natural and cultural values is vital. All the benefits of the Australian Alps co-operative equally apply to resorts to manage the big picture. The alpine resorts in Victoria have now been invited to be included in the MOU and have gladly accepted.

Lesson learned: In establishing inter-jurisdictional agreements, be focussed on what is achievable early but allow the arrangements to broaden as the program matures and strengthens to perhaps include non-traditional partners to gain better connectivity outcomes.

Case Study 8B: Indigenous Cultural – "The First People's Gathering"

Australian indigenous people have a long and rich history in the Alps, albeit largely disconnected from European culture and indeed park managers until more recent times. Settlement of the alpine areas by non-indigenous people resulted in major disruption and decline to the indigenous population due to disease, massacre,

and relocation to missions. The states have been slowly rebuilding relationships with communities and starting to engage them in partnerships. Different state legislation can mean different approaches are used. However, the indigenous community boundaries and interests cross the landscape and are not constrained by state boundaries. The megafires of 2003 (see Case Study 6A) were a significant step in bolstering engagement. The Australian Alps program built on this for the first time in known history by bringing together the Traditional Owners from across the Alps to the "First People's Gathering" at Mount Hotham. This was a major historic event with a number of outcomes for furthering the partnership, including a "treaty" made possible through the co-operative management program. Essential to this achievement was the fact that the indigenous groups understood the Australian Alps agreement is a facilitator and does not replace state and federal legislative requirements.

Lesson learned: Cross-jurisdictional programs can achieve wide engagement and partnerships for landscapes that are not possible when working only within jurisdictional boundaries. Once an agreement is established, it is important that partners understand the jurisdictional roles of state and other agreements.

9. Develop a Strategic Plan and Evaluate Achievements

The development of a strategic plan agreed upon by all partners is vital to set direction, identify outputs, ensure desired outcomes are clear, and give direction to program development and projects. The 'sign off' on the plan builds confidence and support in the partners. The plan is a contract with the states to secure funding and a reporting mechanism to measure delivery.

Case Study 9A: Australian Alps Strategic Plan.
Developed on a three-year cycle, the strategic plan identifies six key result areas:

i. Integrated Landscape Management. This area targets networking, linkages and sharing information. The co-operative program is a mechanism, providing access to a great body of knowledge that is used in all kinds of ways, which is of great value to individuals as well as agencies. Projects include input into agency planning, policy development and review, visitor advice, and compliance activities across borders. The program has prepared values statements actively promoting the Australian Alps for National Heritage Listing under the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity and Conservation Act and for the National Landscapes Program (see Case Study 3C) adding weight to the "One Park" connectivity concept and a precursor to potential UNESCO World Heritage Site listing. The recent twenty-one-year celebration of the MOU brought together key drivers of the past and present program and hopefully, through younger participants, the new drivers to discuss future direction (see The Next Twenty-One Years).

ii. Natural Heritage Conservation. The significant natural values of the Australian Alps national parks have been defined by the program and are now being widely used as a basis for planning, research, and operational management. The AALC commissioned a study entitled "Protecting the Natural Treasures of the Australian Alps." It identified more than 1,300 significant natural features in the Australian Alps and nearly a hundred threats to their continued survival. This area targets achieving best practices and co-ordinated plant and animal pest threatened species and rehabilitation programs through networking, workshops, engaging experts, publications, and support to research and monitoring.

iii. Cultural Heritage Conservation. The Australian Alps has very high indigenous and historic heritage values from thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation to more recent mining and grazing activity. The latter is now mostly finished with protected area establishment. This area targets facilitating involvement of indigenous people in park management, research into historic cultural heritage, cultural landscape management guidelines, and workshops on cultural themes such as hut management and recording of history.

iv. Visitor Recreation and Facilities. The Australian Alps are an attraction for visitors seeking a very wide range of recreation and leisure activities that occur across the landscape, with the Australian Alps Walking Track being an example (see Case Study 3A). While the program does not provide facilities, the aim is to provide best practice advice on visitor impacts, visitor planning, and facility products and management though workshops, manuals, and networking.

v. Community Awareness. The aim of this area is for the Australian Alps to be widely perceived and understood in government and the community as a single biogeographical unit of national significance and that co-operative management across states is a worthy outcome. To achieve this, customer services – needed by visitors to understand the wider landscape – are targeted through the production of a suite of visitor resources (maps, publications, signs, and displays) that promote enjoyment, appreciation, and sustainable use. Media campaigns through television, print, and radio outlets are also used to achieve this aim.

vi. Capacity building. Australian Alps national parks agencies employ about two hundred staff, working more or less directly in the parks. Many others contribute less directly. In addition, many stakeholders and volunteers contribute to programs. This area aims to increase the technical and functional capacity of staff and stakeholders by bringing together staff and experts to

share experiences and knowledge related to programs that occur across the landscape, such as the best practice workshops mentioned above.

Lesson learned: A strategic plan is vital for functioning co-operative programs. It should be an output-focussed contract with partners that outlines agreed-upon key result areas and mechanisms for reporting back on achievements.

10. Education and Science Give Powerful Support and Knowledge Base

An area often identified by managers, scientists, and educators is the lack of collaboration and integration of these streams into protected area management. These streams can be silos and often blame each other for lack of engagement. This is an immensely wasted opportunity when managing a landscape. Education and science are pillars to good management and when working together are a powerful support and knowledge base. A recent example is the science-based case put to government to remove the last cattle-grazing in the Alps, which was successful.

A strength of the Australian Alps program is its role as a facilitator of networking and partnerships. The Australian Alps Liaison Committee, with the support of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has identified a direction for the program to broaden understanding of opportunities for the integration of science and management in the Alps.

Case Study 10A: Science-Management Workshops and Partnership with IUCN

The Australian Alps Program now has the annual science-management-themed workshop as part of the annual works program. The 2007 workshop was on climate change and implications for management and was hosted jointly with the IUCN. Scientists were carefully briefed to ensure that they understood the workshop was not about science methodology or arguing the science case but presenting the best information on expected outcomes. It targeted at how managers may be able to develop suitable responses and assist further science enquiry. The workshop ended with managers having a clear picture of expected climate change effects on the Alps and importantly the direction that management needs to consider to mitigate and adapt.

Lesson learned: Science and education are fundamental to good management and positioning and must be engaged in co-operative programs. A benefit of co-operative management programs can be facilitating science and education to also work across jurisdictions where landscape-scale issues are being considered. The program is also strengthened with the assistance of well-respected partners in science and management such as the IUCN.

11. Communication is All: Build Awareness Both Internally and Externally

The fundamental key to success or failure of cross-jurisdictional co-operative programs is communication, both internal and external. The support base from government, staff, and community will not grow without communication excellence by a variety of means, reporting on outcomes, successes and values to individuals and communities of these programs.

Perceived values will vary with the diversity of stakeholders, so communication must be targeted in a variety of means to suit the need. Evaluation of success from time to time is also needed.

Case Study 11A: Communication within Government, Agencies and Key Stakeholders – Annual Reports and Regular Newsletters

The annual report informs of achievement against the strategic plan and presents the case that funds are well-targeted and outcomes achieved. The audience is largely government and agencies.

In addition, well-presented newsletters give regular updates of achievements, upcoming events, and general networking news. The audience for the newsletter is staff and closer stakeholders that have more intimate interests in the Alps.

Lesson learned: To achieve support and commitment from government, agency, staff, or stakeholders, it is vital to communicate achievements, news, program successes, and general network information in a variety of means at the right level, time, and medium.

Case Study 11B: Communication with Wider Non-aligned Community – Map, Website, and Community Announcements

The three pillars of community communication have been an effective website, a good map and community announcements supported by a range of other collateral. The map is aimed at car-based touring visitors and presents the whole area under co-operative management. The map also provides additional information on facilities, walks, drives, and natural and cultural values with links for further information. It is a key communication tool.

The Australian Alps website is very well visited and targets visitors, students, staff, and general audiences. It contains all relevant visitor information and the range of publications and reports that the program has produced, along with current information updates as needed and links to agencies for further information.

The community announcements are high-quality video images linked with short, very simple messages designed for television that merely raise or re-enforce awareness of the Australian Alps as a bioregion.

Lesson learned: External communication is achieved through tools that the public find useful and will use, such as maps and websites. For simple first step awareness or re-enforcement, quick television grabs using free community services offered by media are very effective.

THE NEXT TWENTY-ONE YEARS

The Thredbo Meeting and Declaration

Past, present, and future staff and stakeholders involved in the Australian Alps co-operative management program gathered at Thredbo, NSW, in June 2007 to celebrate twenty-one years of the program and take part in a futures planning exercise to support the development of the next strategic plan. A declaration was made to present to government recognizing the successes of the program, re-enforcing its ongoing need for high-level government support, and refocussing where needed, such as enhancing indigenous community involvement (Australian Alps Liaison Committee 2008).

A selection of views from the meeting regarding the future directions of the program, which the Australian Alps Liaison Committee will consider for advice to the heads of agencies, include:

a. Maintain strong recurrent funding and seek outside funding support for larger more strategic programs;

b. Seize opportunities to widen the program to go outside existing protected areas to enhance connectivity values and be more outward-focussed and encompassing of others;

c. Take leadership with major issues such as climate change, water, and fire;

d. Improve collaboration with indigenous communities;

e. Ensure the program maintains relevance to new generations of staff and community;

f. Recognize the aging factor of the current generation of leaders involved in the first twenty-one years;

g. Develop a program that encourages retired and soon-to-be-retired Australian Alps leaders to continue to engage in voluntary program support; and

h. Ensure the program is robust to survive in a range of political circumstances.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Australian Alps co-operative management program has been in existence for twenty-one years. It is still a robust program with firm support and a sound future. It is a fine example of making cross-jurisdictional protected area management work though co-operation and dedication.

The eleven key lessons that have contributed to the success of the program as it has matured are:

1. Making a start: establish a champions group. Create a prominent and politically savvy group representing agencies that can influence and convince government.

2. Have a solid program structure: top down – bottom up. Get the right balance of high-level support and ground-level engagement.

3. The program must have a sense of belonging. Build a sense of pride, ownership, and empowerment with staff and the community. This is the key to success.

4. Build trust within governments and agencies to ensure that cross-jurisdictional arrangements don't impinge on individual agency policy, identity, and responsibility. Inconsistencies in policies and procedures may not be as much of an issue if they can be managed through co-operation.

5. Dedicated program support is vital and needs to have a strong, defendable and well-positioned funding base to achieve program goals, but a little money can go a long way when there is co-operation.

6. Develop the program to stay relevant and fresh in order to continue to engage and interest staff, stakeholders, and the community and to be attractive to government and agencies.

7. Build on the strengths of a cross-jurisdictional approach and do not become distracted by individual agency business. Ensure programs are strategically targeted at benefits to most, if not all, partners in the landscape.

8. Look outward to build partnerships to expand connectivity opportunities. While the focus might initially be on protected areas and staff, there are many

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partners that might contribute to expanding the benefits and thereby enable the program to gain more relevance in the community. However, don't lose the organic nature, which is a key strength: that is the fundamental support, engagement, and work of the staff and stakeholders.

9. Develop a strategic plan and evaluate achievements. This is the contract with partners regarding what is expected to be delivered. Evaluating achievements will build confidence in the program direction.

10. Co-operative management can be the mechanism for integrating education, science, and management to give a powerful support and knowledge base to decision-making.

11. Communication is all. Build awareness and report effectively both internally and externally through a variety of mediums to target a diverse market.

The future challenges and directions of the program are likely to be to:

- Consolidate and expand funding;
- Develop a more outward focus;
- Take leadership with major issues such as climate change, water, and fire;
- Improve collaboration with indigenous communities;
- Ensure the program maintains relevance to new generations;
- Engage retired leaders; and
- Ensure the program is robust to survive in a range of political circumstances.

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