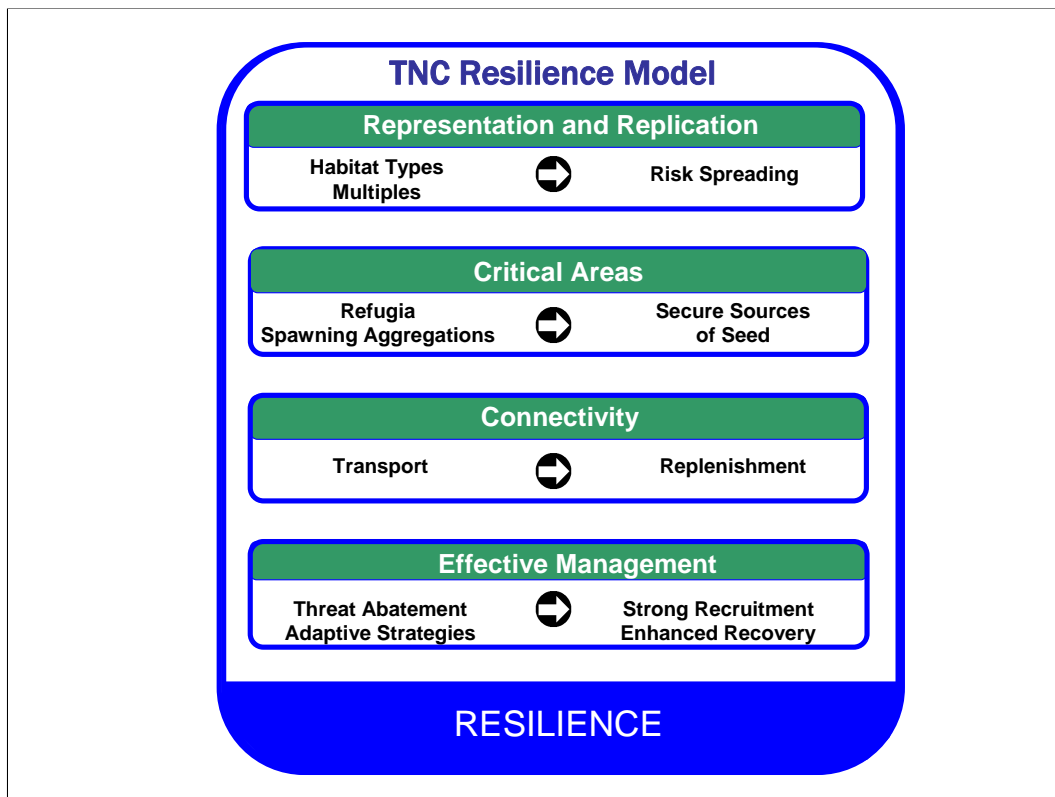




Communicating Resilience

Presentation Courtesy
of TNC & Stephanie Wear

This presentation focuses on different types of communication needs for different management objectives. It provides some examples and some guidelines for those that are trying to develop communication strategies.

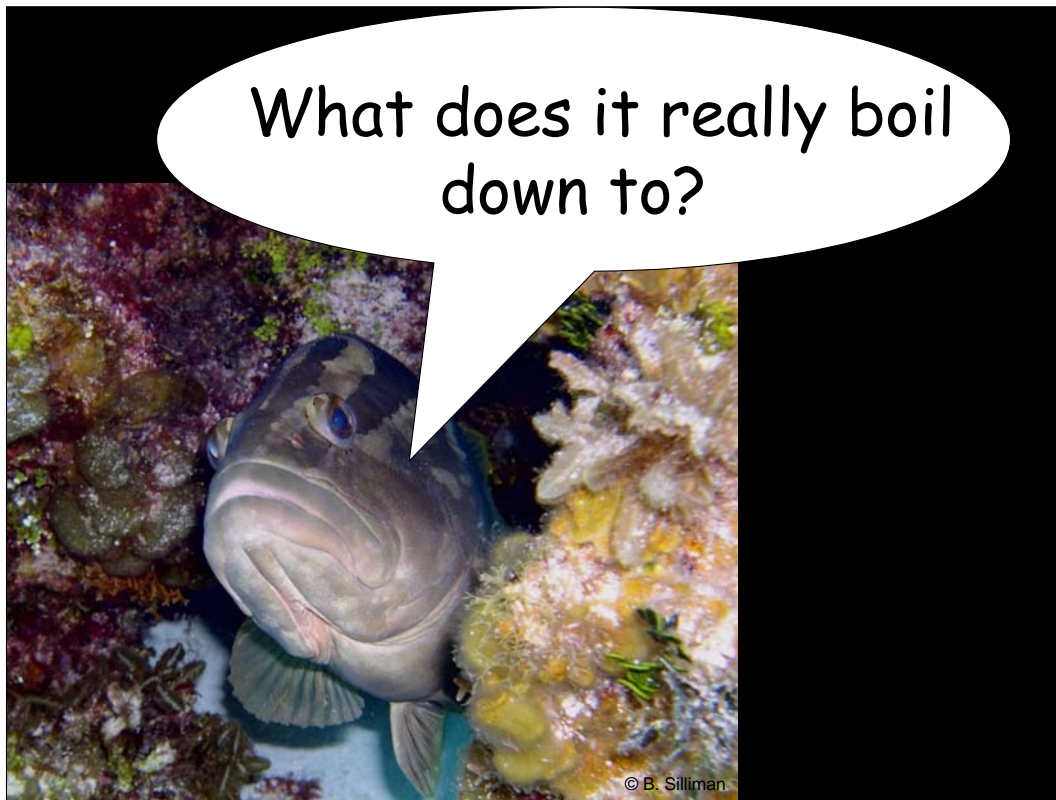


At the foundation of the resilience principles is effective management. We are not going to cover the many ways in which reefs can be managed effectively. This topic is broad and usually the single subject for a week long training. Please refer to the “How is your MPA doing” manual that is included in the R2 Toolkit (or found on the NOAA, IUCN, and GBRMPA websites). We are going to focus in on one of the basic pieces of effective management, which is communication.

Examples of management actions:

- Reducing land-based sources of pollution
- Ensuring compatible coastal development practices
- Supporting a sustainable fishery
- Monitoring reef health
- Ensuring public health & safety through management practices
- Enforcing the regulations of managed areas

Just to skim over this broad subject- here is a partial list of management actions that make up effective management at any given site. It is important to recognize that what happens on land is critical to the health of the coastal systems and that maintaining a healthy fishery is fundamental to overall reef health.



But as a manager, what does it really all boil down to?



What is effective management about? It is about people.

About managing people and their relationship with the environment

About people understanding their environment and respecting their environment (or the laws that govern)

To do this- we must communicate with each other- does not happen magically- no mind reading involved- we have to tell people how to respond – common sense isn't always good enough in this case – people need guidance.



It's about people and how they relate to their environment. Whether it be snorkeling, diving, fishing, hiking, boating – it is how they interface with their environment and the natural world. As you can see from this image- it is complicated. Even with MOSTLY compatible activities- there are issues with each. People have their habits, they have their preferences, they think they are entitled to certain things. We as managers are asking them to make changes to these habits and consider the common good and the future of the resource. How do we make this compelling to them? How do we make it resonate? How do we focus so that they are not overwhelmed? The answer is to speak to them in their language. If people use an area for recreational fishing – you talk about how the habitat needs to be protected so that they can continue to fish...Etc. etc.

How We Communicate



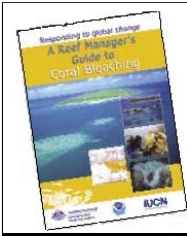
It's how we communicate with people – not everybody will understand a common message. It is important to be diverse in the ways you communicate with people – employing a variety of different formats and delivery methods. Making sure the method is audience-friendly is critical.

Examples of how to manage for resilience

- Manage for bleaching
- Manage for change (adaptive)
- Manage reef function



Transition slide



Communicating About Bleaching

3-Part Strategy



- To gain support from supervisors and constituencies to respond to mass bleaching in the short and long term
- To engage stakeholders in a 2-way communication about the extent & severity of bleaching and actions that can be taken to build reef resilience
- To work with the media to raise awareness about mass bleaching among the general public

This section discusses some of the issues involved with communicating about bleaching events – especially mass bleaching events where it is important for the public to be notified. This guidance is taken from the Reef Managers Guide to Coral Bleaching published by NOAA, IUCN, and the GBRMPA. They suggest a 3-part communication strategy –outlined on this slide.

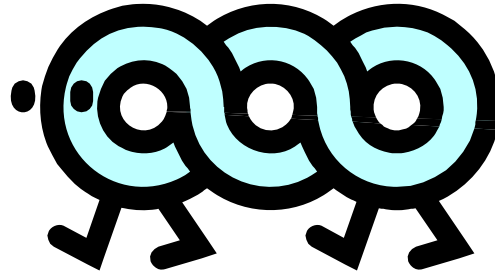
Maintain Credibility

- Clear
- Proactive
- Solution oriented
- Balanced
- Respectful
- Resist over-dramatization
- Resist premature conclusions

The first piece of guidance is to make sure you maintain credibility. It is important to take an approach that is clear and well thought out, proactive, solution oriented, balanced, and respectful of political constraints. Managers need to resist temptations to over-dramatize issues or events in order to meet the expectations of the press. Lost credibility due to exaggeration of facts or presentation of premature conclusions can be costly and sometimes impossible to regain.



Keep Them In The Loop

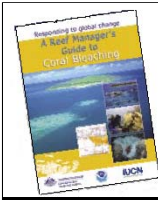


Consult early & often to increase acceptance of problems & solutions

Audiences are more likely to be more receptive when they feel they are being consulted early, and presented with options or useful information. When people feel attacked or helpless to solve a problem, they may become frustrated or angry, disengage in the discussion, or actively try to cover-up the issue. For this reason continuous 'doom-saying' can be destructive to efforts to address the threat of coral bleaching. Instead, managers should enter the discussions with a clear, balanced presentation of key issues and solutions, including specific recommendations for how any given audience can help.



Being sure to have a plan in advance of a bleaching event for how you will communicate is very important. Not only do you need a bleaching response plan to manage the situation – you need a plan to make the community aware of the event and what they can do to help. Don't wait until a major bleaching event to figure out who you need to communicate with.



Ask For Help

Community-based
monitoring/reporting to
engage and inform



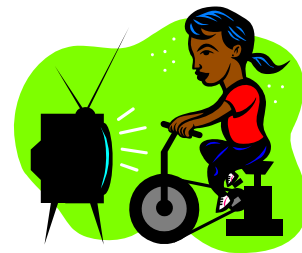
Commitment to
identifying and
implementing practical
tools

Involvement can convert a sense of helplessness into one of commitment to identifying and implementing practical tools. Reef users who are willing to contribute to community-based reporting programs are often the individuals and organizations who are leaders within the stakeholder community, and are ideal conduits for communication with the larger community. Their commitment to their group and the reef makes them valuable as partners in collaborative efforts to understand the problem and to devise appropriate solutions.



Make Friends with the Media

- Take a proactive role
- Prepare information
- Provide resources
- Provide images
- Respond quickly



Good media coverage can significantly advance efforts to increase awareness about coral bleaching and engender support for management initiatives. Professional training in media engagements can be extremely valuable. Taking an active lead in interactions with the press will allow managers to influence the agenda of discussions and will avoid managers being forced into a defensive position. There is value in meeting with the media before a mass bleaching event to educate, provide contacts, and offer resources. Media statements should be released as soon as new info becomes available and senior decision-makers have been notified. Media statements should be prepared for release at key points during the bleaching season when: conditions of high risk develop, significant bleaching occurs, event has concluded and describe mortality and impacts

Examples of how to manage for resilience

- Manage for bleaching
- **Manage for change (adaptive)**
- Manage reef function



Transition slide

Managing for Change

Communication & Lessons Learned



Photograph courtesy of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

This is an example of how the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority dealt with communications and outreach during the rezoning process of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park that was finalized in 2004. The information presented was taken from documents that the GBRMPA has produced about the process – and are available on their website. In general the GBRMPA is an excellent source of information and lessons learned as they make great efforts to document and share their processes.



Rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

- Established 1975
- Management tools
- Coral reef-centric
- Ecosystem approach
- Representative Areas Program (RAP)
- Extent of rezoning



GBRMP was declared in 1975 – provided different levels of protection for different areas & broad scale habitats

Have used a variety of management tools (zoning, permits, management plans, public education) & collaboration to achieve ecological protection & other management objectives. About 1600 km² was zoned as No-take (about 4.7% of the Park). These areas reflected the historical focus on coral reefs and remote 'pristine' areas. The RAP program was undertaken due to increasing awareness about the value of an ecosystem-approach to management and the level of interconnectedness between a wide range of habitats, species, and communities that exist within the Park. Just to give an idea of the extent of the area being rezoned: the GBRMPA covers 340,000 square km, about the size of Japan or half the state of Texas.



What They Did

Above & Beyond

- Community Information Programs (22)
- Public meetings (600)
- Brochures distributed (90,000)
- Information Hot Line (6,000)
- Media items: TV, radio, print
•(2000)
- Project Website (73,000 hits)

Received over 31,500
public submissions



The GBRMPA went above and beyond what was expected or legally required of them by law in terms of communication, outreach, and consultation. They put together a massive consultation and outreach program that included every type of media that stakeholders might be using. They gave opportunities for people to meet in small meeting settings where they could have one-on-one discussions; they developed TV/Radio/Newspaper ads and information pieces to reach out to as many stakeholders as possible. They set up a system to manage all of the public comments they received and in the end they received over 31K public submissions!



“Despite careful preparation and planning...some communication messages became confused, deliberately twisted, or failed to get through”

-Thompson et al.



Photos Courtesy of GBRMPA

Despite all the effort to reach out and be transparent – in a document examining communications for the effort, the staff reported that communication messages still became confused and deliberately twisted or failed to get through. No matter how hard you try, you can expect this to happen. However, you can minimize it by taking great care to reach out and stay transparent.



Barriers to Communication

- Problems understanding the problem
- Lack of trust & misinformation
- Differing cultural & sectoral views
- Lack of 100% scientific certainty
- Creating a conducive environment for effective communication
- Complex management arrangements

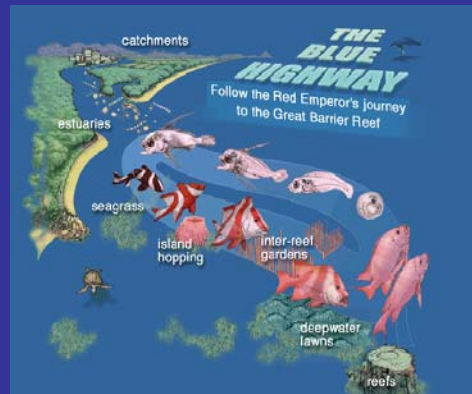
The barriers that GBRMPA staff identified as being problematic in their process are shown in this slide. These should look familiar to most folks as these are fairly typical no matter where you are in the world, as long as there are people.



GREAT BARRIER REEF
MARINE PARK AUTHORITY

Understanding the Problem

- Public didn't understand that there WAS a problem
- Public didn't understand how the GBR 'worked'
- Public didn't understand the terminology



Biodiversity means all plants and animals together with the places they live and the natural processes that keep them alive

To get more specific with some of these barriers - General community didn't understand what exactly the problem was. A large proportion of the public believed the GBR was still largely pristine partly due to years of promotion by the Park Authority (without communicating threats in the future). Therefore the public was reluctant to accept the NEED for a solution. People tend to support protection of charismatic megafauna- but people didn't realize the importance of non-reef habitats that aren't 'pretty' or do not generate tourism dollars. "Why is there a need for a 'no take' area between the reef and the coast, when there isn't anything there?" "The reef is 2 km east, not adjacent to the coast" – not helped by previous focus on no-takes around coral reefs. So, the Australian Coral Reef Society put together a campaign to explain the connections of different habitats and why they are important (as seen in the slide with the "Blue Highway" poster). One of the issues was terminology- for example, the term: Biodiversity – is something folks didn't understand so they worked to redefine it here (definition provided on the slide)



Building Trust & The Coconut Telegraph

GREAT BARRIER REEF
MARINE PARK AUTHORITY

Be transparent & involve (listen to) public whenever possible



© TNC



© S. Wear

Use distressed & suspicious public to your advantage to correct misinformation

Some of the lessons learned from this process are included here. It is important to build trust and be transparent – otherwise the ‘coconut telegraph’ is likely to take over and distort important messages. It is important to always have an open ear and be available to the public when they want to provide comments. It is also key to take advantage of a distressed and suspicious public. Expect upset folks to show up at meetings and be prepared to take advantage of the situation by clarifying misunderstandings and correcting misinformation that is likely the source of their distress.



Know Your Audience

Create different messages for each target audience



How you deliver the message matters

Creating a conducive environment for effective communication is really important. Instead of having a public meeting where everyone is packed into a room and gets their turn at the microphone to voice concern and complaint – provide an opportunity to participate in less confrontational situations where there is no audience to hear the dramatic oppositions of what is often the minority. You are more likely to hear from those that oppose management actions rather than those that support. Providing forums that are attractive to those that are supportive can give a more balanced perspective of how the general public feels about possible management actions.

Differing cultural & sectoral views are important to consider. Don't assume that everyone feels the same way or places the same value on a particular area or resource. Be mindful and respectful of the differences in and between communities.

Examples of how to manage for resilience

- Manage for bleaching
- Manage for change (adaptive)
- **Manage reef function**

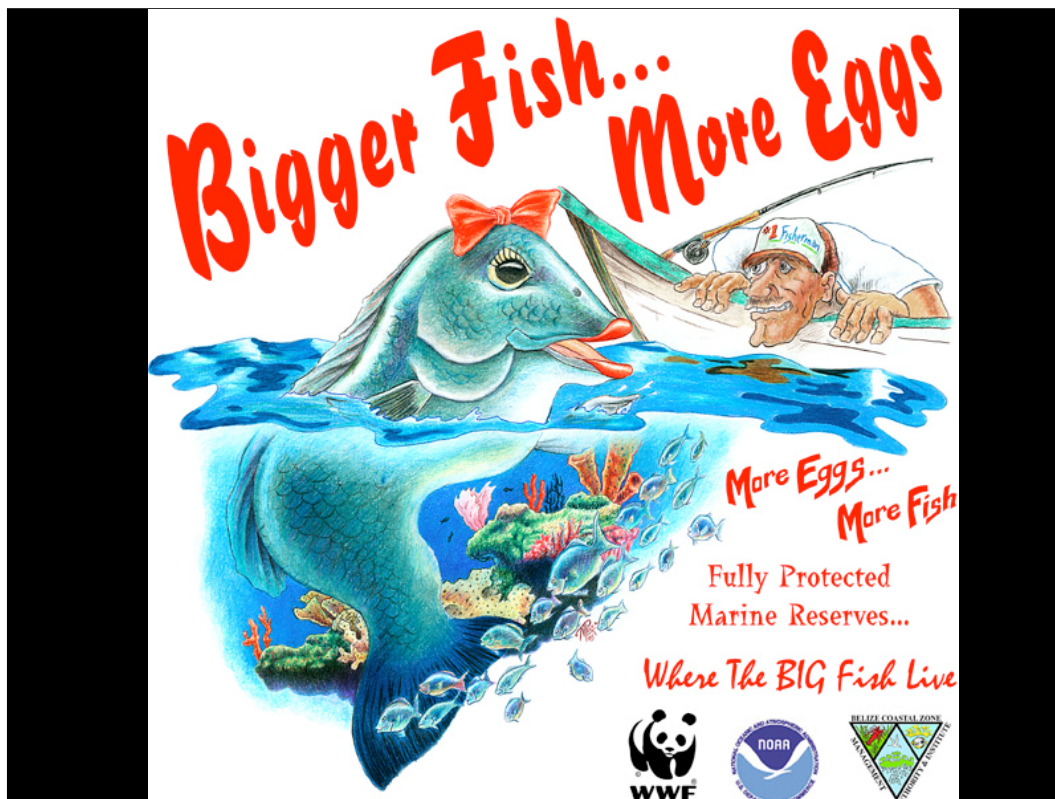


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Managing Reef Function ~Big Mamma Campaign~



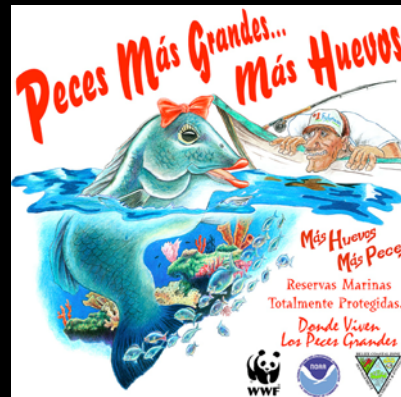
This last example highlights a communication campaign that occurred in 2004 and was carried out by WWF and local partners in Belize (supported by NOAA funding). This is a communication campaign that focuses on the conservation and management of important reef fish – the large reproductive females that are so critical to sustainable fisheries.



In 2004, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in the Mesoamerican Reef, with the support of NOAA and local partners, developed and launched a public awareness campaign to raise awareness about the fisheries benefits of fully protected marine reserves and support the development of a regional network of representative MPAs including fully protected zones. Pictured here is the logo and slogan for the Big Mamma campaign. The “Big Mamma” campaign featured a colorful big mamma logo, a lively song (radio advertisement), and a three minute video (TV advertisement). The ads were aired in March 2004 and coincided with community meetings held in fishing communities in Belize, Mexico and Honduras.

The Message

- Colorful Big Mamma Logo
- Lively Radio Advertisement
- TV Advertisement

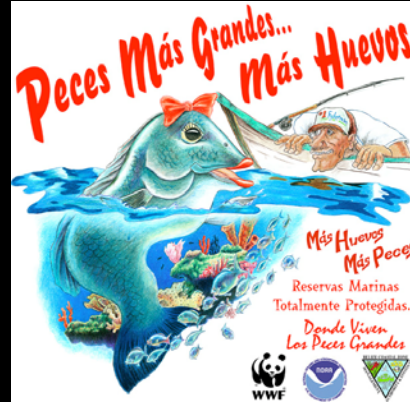


Aired TV & Radio in March 2004
Community Meetings in March
T-Shirts Distributed at Meetings

At these meetings fishers listened to presentations about the science behind MPA design, connectivity, and fisheries benefits. The increased egg production of larger fish is a largely unrecognized component of these benefits and was the focus of the campaign. Fishers quickly understood the significance of the increased egg production, or as the song says: *"Bigger fish mean more eggs... more eggs mean more fish... more fish mean more money... fisherman can't you see?"* They were also very interested in the latest findings regarding the region's current patterns, connectivity and the current MPA statistics. Prior to the compilation of these statistics there was substantial mis-information and an large over-estimation of the area under protection. For example, Belize has a system of MPAs covering approximately 22% of its shelf but only 2% is fully protected. The fishers participated in lively discussions, listened and even danced to the big mamma calypso beat, and went home feeling better about the MPAs. They also got to take home colorful big mamma T-shirts as a reminder of the message.

The Return

- In 2002, 45% of fishers believed MPAs had a negative effect on the fishery
- Post-meeting surveys showed 75% of fishermen supported fully protected MPAs
- Concerns over demarcation & enforcement
- Interest in training for alternative livelihoods, exchange programs



Post meeting opinion surveys in Belize found that 75% of fishers participating in the meetings supported fully protected MPAs as a fisheries management tool. This compares to a 2002 survey that found that 45% of fishers believed MPAs actually had a negative impact on fisheries resources. Fishers did express concern over the need for better definition, demarcation and enforcement of the existing fully-protected zones and any new ones to be established. They also expressed a desire for training in alternative livelihoods and for exchange programs to discuss management implementation and fishing practices in other parts of the region. WWF engaged in both of these activities in 2004-2006 through the ICRAN - USAID Mesoamerican Reef Alliance Project. Many of these fishers are now actively engaged in marine tour guiding and are becoming involved in conservation issues.

Keys to Successful Communication

- Audience Specific
- Appropriate communication medium
- Build on existing comm. structure (don't reinvent the wheel)
- Issues that resonate
- Appeal to the emotions (nostalgia, family, place)
- Have a plan

These are some summary points to help design a strong communication campaign.