

## **Back to Office Report**

Participation in ITMEMS  
The International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium  
Coordinated by the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)  
Townsville, Australia, 22-26<sup>th</sup> November, 1998

Floyd Homer  
Deputy Project Manager  
Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change  
Regional Project Implementation Unit, CERMES Building  
University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, BARBADOS

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### **Purpose of the Symposium**

- To review actions taken to date on a global and regional basis to implement the objectives of ICRI as outlined in the Call to Action and Framework for Action;
- To identify gaps in the global approach of ICRI to stop the degradation of coral reefs and related ecosystems;
- To provide direction for the future implementation of ICRI; and
- To share experiences and lessons amongst coral reef managers and policy makers of recent developments in the conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs and related ecosystems.

### **Sessions**

Many of the sessions provided case study presentations which reviewed both successes and failures within the framework of the four ICRI cornerstones: Integrated Management, Capacity Building, Monitoring, and Review. These sessions ran concurrently which meant that it was not physically possible to attend all of the interesting presentations.

On the day preceding the official opening of the ITMEMS, there was a special session hosted by The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN). Twenty-five participants from around the world presented papers on various aspects of monitoring results, the GCRMN Pilot Monitoring Project, data from long-term monitoring, problems in implementing monitoring, and different methods of monitoring. I presented a paper on “Coral Reef Monitoring for Climate Change: institutional arrangements for sustained activities in the Caribbean” which was jointly authored with Leslie Walling.

On the first day of the Symposium, Regional Reports were presented. These reports summarised progress, achievements and challenges encountered in each of the ICRI regions (Caribbean, Pacific, East Asia, South Asia, Japan, Eastern Africa and Western Indian Ocean) since the Dumaguete City workshop in May/June 1995.

## **Summary of Sessions Attended**

### **Sustainable Coastal Tourism in the Caribbean and the Private Sector Perspective** (*Kelly Robinson*)

The tourism product in the Wider Caribbean is largely dependent upon the natural resource base, that is, the physical environment. The traditional marketing approach of selling "sand, sea and sun" has created a mind set that has resulted in the concentration of tourist facilities in the coastal areas of the islands and continental Americas. Several initiatives for improving environmental performance or the "greening" of the tourism industry were described including activities by the Caribbean Action for Sustainable Tourism programme.

### **Dive-Tourism and Stewardship of Small-Scale Coral Reef Marine Protected Areas** (*Stephen Colwell*)

Dive-tourism has the potential to help protect or to destroy nearby coral reef habitats. This paper explored the current involvement of three dive resorts in the creation and management of small-scale marine protected areas (MPAs) and suggested that commercial partners, such as dive resorts, that have a vested economic interest in promoting abundant marine life, can become the primary stewards of small-scale MPAs in some coral reef areas.

### **The Chumbe Island Coral Park Project: Management Experiences of a Private Marine Conservation Project** (*Sibylle Riedmiller*)

Chumbe Island Coral Park (CHICOP) in Zanzibar/Tanzania is a rare example of a small but increasing number of privately created and managed protected areas operating in an often difficult institutional and legal environment. The project has over six years invested heavily in the conservation of Chumbe Island in Zanzibar/Tanzania, and has made exceptional achievements in establishing it as an efficiently managed protected area, providing significant educational benefits. It is the only existing marine protected area in Zanzibar and was the first established in Tanzania. The paper analysed the background and history of the project and described management experiences, problems and achievements in the legal, political and institutional environment of Zanzibar/ Tanzania, a country that had after Independence, embraced a socialist development model and only recently encouraged private investment.

### **Making Tourism Work for the Bonaire Marine Park** (*Kalli De Meyer*)

Bonaire is economically dependent on tourism - primarily dive tourism - and its challenge is to ensure that tourism works for the island. In order to achieve "sustainable" tourism three aspects need to be considered: impact of tourism development, impact of running tourist facilities and the impact of the tourists themselves. The Bonaire Marine

Park has been most successful at managing the impact of the tourists themselves under the banner "Bonaire needs tourists .... who care". The Park has successfully used the tourism industry to help police and protect the marine environment. Examples were given of programmes used to educate tourists and industry professionals along with proposals for future work. Examples were also given of the problems faced and inroads made into minimizing the impact of tourism development and the running of tourist facilities on Bonaire.

### **Coral Reef Assessment and Monitoring** (*Panel Discussion*)

Panellists in this session made short presentations based on their experience, of lessons learned and recommendations for the establishment of coral reef assessment and monitoring programmes for management. Reef Check Global Programme, Establishment of a Coastal Ecosystem Monitoring Programme: lessons learned from CARICOMP, and preliminary lessons from developing a monitoring programme in a region with scarce resources: Southeast Asia, and the Marine Rapid Assessment Programme were discussed.

### **Public Awareness and Education, including Capacity Building** (*Panel Discussion*)

Panellists in this session made short presentations on case study examples to review existing activities, facilitate the sharing of experience and identify capacity building needs. An overview was provided on the major issues concerning education and awareness activities in coral reef management programmes. Twelve lessons learned in building public awareness by the Coral Reef Alliance, awareness raising in the Reefs at Risk Programme, and the concerns which evolved from a campaign to protect and manage the Great Barrier Reef were the major areas of discussion.

## **Assessment**

The outcome of the Symposium was essentially a renewed call for action that did not identify any new major concerns, approaches or priorities for action, in comparison to the ICRI Call to Action and Framework for Action 1995. The structure for the draft report proposed four themes: 1) Integrated Management, Coordination and Linkages; 2) Stakeholder Partnerships and Community Participation; 3) Public Awareness and Education, including Capacity Building; and 4) Data and Information for Management. These themes will review the lessons learned, identify gaps, and priorities for action.

Much of the proposed action will rely on existing projects and programmes initiated by governments, NGOs, regional, and international agencies. It was not clear if the outcome of the ITMEMS was expected to bring significant changes to the current status of coral reef management in any of the regions around the world.

## **Networking**

Contacts with colleagues in the Pacific, Asia, and Africa were established and existing relationships with colleagues from the Caribbean, USA and Europe were strengthened.

Barbados, Jamaica, Bonaire, US Virgin Islands, Cuba and Puerto Rico were the only Caribbean countries represented at the Symposium.

A brief meeting was arranged with Dr Nancy Foster, IUCN Vice Chair-Marine (also Assistant Administrator, National Ocean Service, NOAA). She indicated that at least three World Commission on Protected Areas working groups will be rejuvenated, with some priority to be given to the Caribbean in 1999.

I met with Phil Dunstan and we discussed his coral reef monitoring technique using the Point Count method. The equipment for video frame capture and analysis, as well as the methodology will require further evaluation by CPACC staff.

### **Follow-up**

- Send out reminder to UNEP East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit for a copy of the report on Methodology for Economic Valuation of Coastal Resources.
- Provide information on coral reef monitoring methods reviewed by CPACC to a colleague from Yemen.
- Arrange visit of CPACC's CZMS to Phil Dunstan's Laboratory to evaluate monitoring and analysis equipment and methodology.
- Request to GCRMN for CPACC Regional project Implementation Unit to be included in their network.
- Send information on options for Caribbean MPAs to N. Foster.

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