



Yosemite National Park User Capacity Symposium, February 6-8, 2008 Cliff Room, Yosemite Lodge

Round 3: Regardless of the approach chosen, how can land management agencies better implement and institutionalize user capacity systems, given issues such as money, time, political will, complexity, hard decisions, litigation, and other concerns?

- Are we focusing on the right thing (# ok not a #), should we step back & look @ the resource and visitor experience issue?
- Incremental approach: understand that there are different components to the process.
- Developing the common language.
- Education: implement self (visitor) - regulating plans (fishing tags...)
- Gateway community (involvement) engagement: eco-tourism principles... community –based approach.
- Start with the low-hanging fruit... makes sure this is still part of the process.
- How do we have freedom to make mistakes and to learn from them?
- Desired future conditions: focus on resource conditions. It is critical to ensure that resource values are understood & the relationship to user capacity.
- “question is not answerable”
- Improved and expanded public education is key to achieve buy in – and to put pressure on politicians and managers to find ways to address the listed issues.
- Educate visitors by presenting changes with enthusiasm rather than apologetically – with the benefit being a better visitor experience.
- The pending Yosemite Merced river legal outcome will set a precedent (whichever way the decision turns out) that will have an impact on managers’ implementation.
- Capacity issues don’t just come up when you do a CRMP every 20-30 years.
- Early discussion and possible consensus on DFC: invite your ‘enemies’, communicate as much as possible. Develop common language.
- Define need.
- Break process into steps.
- Homework done, research done, talk to the public...
- In the end you need to make that decision.
- Find common ground. Make it defensible.
- Cap is a tool, many available.
- Education is critical!!! Staff, management, politicians.
- We need to communicate more in depth.
- Focus as much on how to communicate these complex concepts.
- Take the science and make it ‘understandable’ to the average Joe. So much jargon...
- USFW – it’s about managing people, not wildlife. Much less recreation data than wildlife, soils...

- Much less \$\$ spend on OHV, urban interface – focus studies here to learn more...
- USFS – travel management – less OHV because fewer dollars – will that work in court?
- USFW – direction – wildlife #1 – if you have \$\$, invite visitors & managers.
- Integration between agencies – more science/state – of – the – art. Less heat on all of us.
- Learn from each other.
 - -example: wilderness management.
 - don't all agencies manage this for same responses?
- Standard methodology: better staff to staff, interagency, staff to publics
- Academic mini-conference?
- Have those together to hash out many details?
- Peer review practices?
 - ex: yearly internal review? This group this week was large. Need smaller group to drop into more detail.
- Both types of discussions are valuable.
 - expert -> managers <- publics.
- More public involvement – especially clubs, user groups.
- Will reduce management power.
- Public thinks of these processes as 'planning processes' they are larger – they are management processes. They will be used into the future for implementation and management.
- Don't reinvent the wheel, share in the information.
- Worth \$ - come together, learn from each other!!
- Look to all resources, wildlife hunting tags.
- Increase communication and transparency.
- Agency<-> users
- Talk about everything. Housing as a capacity component, ## of beds.
- Education of all – about why the cap is important.
- Public involvement is part of the process, all at the table. Public needs information about what a system would “be”/how “works” would work.
- Get resource managers to organize what they know, collect systematic information.
- Software for assembling information re: planning /monitoring.
- Spend more time on desired conditions.
- Do something, start soon!!
- Think about ways to piggy back on existing operations (implementation and monitoring may be insufficient)
- Simple is better (if possible)
- Limits should be based on things user groups can understand and respond to.
- Provide mechanism for involvement to make sure the system is working.
- Institutionalize learning, document what is learning.
- Closing the gate in no the only option.

- Involve all stakeholders including the users themselves.
- Drive solutions to the lowest possible level.
- Both involvement and education is key- especially with tight budgets.
- Invest in education and desired future conditions.
- Finding a ‘common ground’ with such a diverse users values.
- Ensure that a diversity of visitor experiences is accommodated.
- Prioritize and simplify.
- Coordinate with other agencies
- Pre-emptive planning
- Implement!!
- Define decision space (side boards)
- Define public involvement versus outreach
- Establish public trust early!!!
- Better agency communication.
- Engage elected officials
- Reasoned and informed decision making
- Public needs to be involved in the entire process in how decisions are to be made so the public can be more effective in their participation.
- Include public effectively.
- Understandable decision process.
- Monitoring
- Lobbying for the listed issues (npca)
- Transform visitors into stewards
- Educational and outreach.
- Direct people to healthy activities.
- All of the management tools need to be used not just ‘capacity’ – identify problems then choose.
- In planning, monitoring needs to be prioritized – especially for funding.
- Frontload comprehensive plan (which is well funded) with analysis and needed data collection, etc... so can address monitoring later with adequate funding.
- Relatively lots of \$\$ allocated to GMP -> so make it part of this process.
- Lay appropriate foundation with good plan process.
- Improve staff training- keep institutional knowledge up to date – systematic, regular training on : procedures and legal requirement (statutes)
- Keep all staff informed, not just resource management and planners.
- Do more outreach with the intent to get public to buy-in.
- Meet stakeholders even before needed... keep public engaged and informed before during and after planning process – confront issues right away.
- More funding!!! If not appropriated, find other sources.
- Think outside the box and use creativity in the management actions.
- Better education, it is the purpose of NPS and the national parks. I.e. public involvement.
- Indicators, standards and solutions in order of priority.
- Build open, honest, direct relationships from the beginning with all involved.

- Form advisory board to oversee the quantitative side of desired conditions.
- How to incorporate changing demographics.
- Better outreach to multi-cultural populations.
- Divide problems into steps so they can be addressed in a timely manner.
- Limit opportunities for (legal) challenges.
- Do your homework.
- Need #'s and indicators and standards. They are not mutually exclusive.
- Need political risk-taking.
- Empower visitors to take responsibility to achieve desired objectives.
- Education and learning.
- Build trust.
- Hire appropriate recreation / visitor use staff.
- Create a career track for visitor use assistants!!!
- Understand complex biological systems (utilize vital signs).
- Buy in social and capitol, build trust
- We (scientists and park staff) need to communicate better. When we have new data (such as what came out of apptl) needs to be communicated to the stakeholders.
- Hire more people to package information and figure out best timing for delivery.
- Make better use of modern technology to get information out there. Madera County has a model for that - you don't have to travel there to participate.
- Record data on ground with video.
- Management commitment for staffing and infrastructure in technology to communicate better with the stakeholders in order to build trust. Gary's "make our problem someone else's" and get stakeholders involved in that. More information about what we are doing needs to be out there. Talk about complexities and trade offs.
- Communicate the data and that we want the same thing and commitment made in staffing and organization change.
- Requires a commitment of time, public involvement and money – especially in leadership.
- It's really about individuals incorporating it in vs (?) Intuition.
- Operationlize as much of user capacity program as possible: accomplish multiple objectives with every task. Pair up indicators and standards with the NEPA process/impact topics. (though NEPA language confines indicators)
 - Micro level of this @ Yosemite with air management.
- Can be frustrating when public zeroes in on one alternative. Why don't we go to congress to get laws changed??
- Key is making sure agency and stakeholders are educated @ same level to help engage things like law change.
 - Can a major "planning fatigue" from public.
- Public involvement process: help prioritize it because there is so much planning fatigue. Collaborative effort can cause it to be successful. Being involved in strategic planning?
- Are there better systems we should be looking at instead of capacity systems??
- What are the criteria for determining what tool should be used?

- How we address user capacities is the better question...
- Conflicts between desired conditions are easier to resolve in some places.
- Change from saying one capacity to looking at capacities.
- Analyze the degradations first.
- Do not wait until it is too late to set the limits...
- Question is – who do we decide to limit??
- Distinguish simple capacity issues from complex ones.
- Focus on resource conditions impacted by humans.
- To keep local stakeholders involved in the planning / decision making process.
- Implementing VERP process in all NPS planning in parks.
- Consider visitor management a professional job series with a career ladder.
- There needs to be a personal touch.
- Establish plans, get decisions in writing and stick with it.
- Should have been looking at planning in the 19th century.
- Buses should have never been allowed in the falls area. While that area was restored, new areas were paved to direct people's movement.
- How can land management agencies implement and institutionalism user capacities systems???
- “spin management”-> press releases about ‘user capacities’ will be positive (i.e. this will improve the visitor experience vs. it is closed)
- Support YARTS (public transit)
- Have the willingness to go through the “growing pains”.
- The feds, state, counties are going broke. Where is the \$\$ going to come from??
- Create networks so that when things need to be announced you are talking to you friends.
- Announce all of the alternatives to issue management -> focus on what is positive.
- Transfer users into stewards: develop positive relationship – invest people in the solution.
- NPS to create infrastructure to work with dedicated volunteers to implement monitoring and messaging.
- Funding source; dedication to system
- Programs for youth, backpacking.
- Bed tax in park carrier's counties.
- Distribute information at principal visitor centers and front desks.
- Focus on maintaining conditions and implement creative solutions, using many tools.
- Learn from previous experience and draw a line.
- Need to come to agreement on desired conditions!!!