

# MPA NEWS



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## International Workshop Gives Recommendations for MPA Planning Process

The involvement and education of stakeholders can play a key role in the success of MPA planning processes by building support in the community and reducing the likelihood of stakeholder opposition. At the International Workshop on the Role of MPAs and Integrated Coastal Management, held in late July preceding the Coastal Zone '99 Conference in San Diego, California, USA, more than 100 planners, managers, and academics laid out recommendations on how best to manage stakeholder involvement in the MPA planning process.

The table below provides a quick sampling of some of the suggestions provided by the assembled experts. The workshop divided participants by interest in geographic regions. Each composed a separate list of "do's" and "don'ts" in MPA planning. The table provides each tip according to the regional group that suggested it. Division into regions is not intended to suggest that tips work only in particular places.

Note: A fuller summary of the recommendations from the workshop's regional break-out groups is available by e-mail from Steve Morrison of the (US) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, at [steve.morrison@noaa.gov](mailto:steve.morrison@noaa.gov).

### Sampling of recommendations from regional groups of MPA experts

#### Asia/Pacific

- Use a combination of "top-down" and "bottom-up" processes -- take advantage of government's strength in providing legal protection while allowing community stakeholders to contribute local knowledge.
- Establish clear objectives for the planning process.
- Use a multidisciplinary team of experts as technical advisors.
- Avoid federal strong-arm tactic to achieve the objectives, as such tactics will foster resentment in stakeholders.

#### Canada/US/Mexico

- Communicate to stakeholders that the proposed MPA is needed because of threats to the area in question -- it is not enough to tell a community that the area is beautiful and, thus, worthy of protected status.
- Involve all stakeholders.
- Make sure that stakeholders are patient -- the planning process can take awhile.
- Conduct training for advisory council members on how behave in meetings.

#### Europe/Africa

- Clarify the government's policy on planning partnership.
- Negotiate through face-to-face contact.
- Understand the political, social, and economic context for stakeholders.
- Assess the governance process continuously to ensure its effectiveness.

#### Caribbean

- Make sure that stakeholder representatives are accountable to their stakeholder groups.
- Recognize that there will often be short-term pain in order to achieve long-term gain.
- Equalize among stakeholders the opportunity to influence the process.
- Provide easy-to-use and easy-to-understand enforcement of MPA rules.

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