

Key Ingredients of Collaborative Management

It is widely accepted that collaboration amongst stakeholders can lead to more sustainable land-management. Voluntary collaboration is currently the favoured approach to managing a number of different environmental issues such as conservation, wildlife management and water catchments.

This project, developed in discussion with stakeholders, sought to identify forms of collaboration and the most important constituent parts using a case study on deer management.



"[collaboration] allows me to see our deer management in the context of the wider countryside" (Deer manager).

Background

Natural resource management frequently involves complex issues related to the diversity of stakeholders, uncertainty or a lack of knowledge, or the characteristics of the resource. Collaborative approaches to management, including 'co-management', are commonly adopted in order to address these problems, and are implemented in numerous, often locally nuanced, ways. We sought to draw general lessons about collaboration from established research and practice with a particular focus on wild deer. In Britain, wild deer are a type of common property resource with a complex institutional structure. No individual can claim ownership over them, and only after they die or are 'captured' do they become subject to legal entitlements. However they are not an "open access" resource as an institutional structure — founded largely upon private land-ownership and associated hunting rights — has evolved to govern access. Recently a number of social, cultural, economic, and ecological factors have altered people's relationships with deer. These have introduced new impacts and increased interactions between deer, their environment, and a growing variety of stakeholders. We describe this as "multivalence". The project was characterised by 'participatory interdisciplinarity', with researchers from a broad range of backgrounds and skills interacting closely with land-managers and other deer management stakeholders.

Objectives

This research aimed to:

- consider the different forms of collaborative management.
- identify reasons for stakeholder collaboration.
- identify the elements of collaborative approaches which have the greatest impact on their effectiveness.

Method

- We used qualitative research methods including in-depth interviewing, participant observation, and documentary analysis within a case-study structure.

Findings

Collaboration can take many forms. These may include:

- co-ordinated land management
- discussion and planning meetings
- governmental consultation exercises
- development of 'Best Practice' advice
- establishment of 'strategic partnerships' amongst like-minded organisations
- personal interaction between individuals
- completion of bilateral research contracts

Stakeholders chose to collaborate because

it is *necessary* to:

- address management problems
- set standards
- avoid conflict
- gain influence
- share responsibilities

benefits gained include:

- knowledge sharing & reduced uncertainty
- more efficient (shared) resource use
- generating new solutions to problems
- recognition of shared objectives
- development of effective management

Key 'ingredients' of collaborative management include:

Prerequisites	Drivers	Process	Outputs	Product
Interest	Leadership (Convenorship)	Knowledge & Information	Understanding (issues and perspectives)	Integrated Collaborative Output
Time	Networks & Linkages	Communication		
Resources	Willingness	Tolerance & Flexibility Trust	Power	

Collaborative management processes do *not* have to result in all stakeholders adopting common objectives in order to be effective. Rather, they provide critical opportunities for communication and cultural exchange which can result in increased trust and perceived legitimacy between stakeholders. Collaborative efforts often require consistent leadership and administration by neutral individuals. Considerable time must be allowed for efforts to become effective.

Recommendations

Those seeking to achieve effective collaborative management should:

- Support local leaders ('champions') and allow time for trust to build between stakeholders.
- Identify and give voice to 'outsiders' who may be able to improve the quality of the process.
- Use face to face meetings to develop trust and for knowledge and cultural exchange.
- Use adaptive and flexible methods (field workshops; participatory GIS; discussion groups) to engage with stakeholders and integrate local knowledge with ecological understanding.

Partners

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Reports and Publications

Fiorini, S., S. Yearley and N. Dandy (2011) 'Wild Deer, Multivalence, and Institutional Adaptation: The "Deer Management Group" in Britain'. *Human Organization*, 70, 179-188.

Collaborative Frameworks in Land Management: a case study on integrated deer management, RELU Policy and Practice Note 18, May 2010.