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Greifswald Lagoon

Example Greifswald-Lagoon, Germany, Baltic Sea: Voluntary Stakeholder-Agreements with water users as a basis for MPA- Management Plans

Introduction

In the Greifswald Lagoon, a 750 km² shallow coastal lagoon in Germany's eastern part of the Baltic, located between the Island of Rügen and the mainland, WWF has facilitated a process for regulating sea-uses applying a stakeholder involvement approach. The process started in 2000 and went into the implementation phase from summer 2004 on.

Situation

Nature Conservation

The Greifswald Lagoon is subject to various nature conservation categories. The whole area was nominated as a Baltic Sea Protected Area (BSPA) in 1994, nominated as SPA in 1999 and as a SAC in 2004. Parts of the lagoon belong to the Biosphere Reserve South – East Rügen, core areas were designated as nature reserve.

Despite the legal status, no management plan exists so far.

Uses

Apart from professional fisheries and local transport on the sea, two main uses show a significant growing trend, in line with growing tourism in the area:



- Leisure boat tourism and the adjacent infrastructures
- Sport angling / fishing.

For sport fishing the Greifswald Lagoon is the most important fishing area on the German Baltic Sea coast. Target species are pike, perch-pike, eel and flounder.

These activities represent the potential main threats to the MPA, and they are the focus of the WWF project.

Trends for leisure boating

Number of commercial anchorage sites in the Greifswald Lagoon:

1996: 791
2004: 2,054
2007: 4,000 (forecast based on planning figures)
+ app. 1,500 boats in private clubs and piers

Sport fishing in the Greifswald Lagoon area

Sport fishermen organised in app 50 associations/clubs: app. 10,000
non-organised sport fishermen /tourists: app. 30,000

Goal of the project

To secure and if possible to improve the good conservation status of the MPA via a binding voluntary agreement between users, government and conservation NGOs for sustainable management of the MPA, to implement it into practice and to transfer it into an official management regime for the NATURA 2000 area.

Project approach

WWF followed a **management approach** according to the following principles:

- Openness for a fair and truly partnership-based process
- Early involvement of stakeholders in design and implementation of the project
- Willingness by all partners to commit time and ideas
- Awareness that a solution will in many cases be a compromise to suit both conservation and user interests
- Willingness to accept commonly agreed results
- Reliability that once agreed the results e.g. management plans are valid for all partners

Key players

User groups: leisure boat owners and sport fishermen from umbrella organisation, clubs to single users

Authorities: Ministry for the Environment and conservation and other authorities

NGOs: WWF (facilitator), BUND, NABU

Key results and elements of the project

Voluntary but binding agreements for the use of the MPA were signed (character of a treaty according to public law). They include the commitment to fulfil the agreed restrictions and from the Ministry's side the commitment to transfer the regulations directly into a MPA-management plan for the SAC/SPA:

- 1 framework agreement (Ministry, User umbrella organisations, NGOs, WWF)
- 4 detailed agreements for the sub-areas (Ministry, local user associations, WWF)
- Implementation of an awareness-building/nature information system
- Consensus between users and conservation representatives to continue the co-operation and to jointly monitor the implementation of the agreement.

Information, creating awareness and trust: **breaking the ice!**

To set up a detailed and user-orientated nature information, communication and awareness building system was a crucial element of the whole process. The WWF project team (2 project managers + consultants) developed a set of different information tools and products and conducted a series of face-to-face meetings, training courses and workshops at all levels.

Information products

- Overall information leaflet (map and existing regulation/natural values): 15,000 copies
- Web-page: 2002, from the start of the project on

- Sub-area leaflets with maps and detailed measures agreed for each sub-area (4 x 12,000 each)
- 300 Posters and information boards (weather-proof) in each harbour and in association clubrooms
- An area – guide for the whole area with sea charts containing the agreed measures available at bookshops (June 2005)

Training courses/presentations/lectures

- Multipliers training units for trainers for sport fishing licenses

Workshops

- A series of working sessions was arranged area wise and target group wise and facilitated in a multi-step procedure in order to elaborate the regulations in a true bottom-up way.

Dissemination/press work

- Elements and milestone-results were published in local media in order to increase support
- A journalist trip was organized and press releases published at different stages of the project.

The way the process took

Important steps and lessons for bottom-up conservation with stakeholders:

- Awareness building phase: 30 months: Open the doors, find a common language, talks, talks, talks, building trust
- Develop and offer a user-orientated information leaflet about the area
- With the help of the leaflet start talks in each of the user-associations and present the project idea of a joint MPA-management approach
 - > Mostly positive feed-back

- Parallel: at the umbrella-organization level: develop a co-operation-agreement and sign a MOU to implement the MPA use-regulation in a co-operative way.
- WWF gets the mandate from the Ministry for the Environment to develop use-agreements together with the area users under condition to keep the Ministry informed at all time.
- Negotiations – intensive work phase 18 months negotiations took place at the sub-area/association-level, the whole area was divided into 4 sub-areas
 - All data from both sides were put on the table and transferred into maps, areas of conflict were identified jointly and solutions developed
 - In some cases several rounds of negotiations (separate per target group and jointly for final compromises) were carried out.
 - Final results were found that were agreed in a consensus.
 - WWF had to secure fairness, openness of the process and to make sure that no hidden agendas could dominate the results.
- Final events: signing up of the (1+4) agreements.
- Ongoing process: establishing the nature information system, maintenance and updating as well as public relation work during the whole process.

Two year monitoring results: results show that the agreements work.

Political result: End of May 2005, the WWF project was recommended from the Conference of German Ministers of Environment as a model of how to implement management agreements for MPA on a voluntary basis.

The way forward

WWF Germany seeks to develop the project further in order to secure the implementation of the agreements, to foster the integration of the agreements into the management plans for the MPA and to use the project as a model for other MPA management projects.

Framework –Agreement

Spatial Focus:
the whole MPA

Legal status:
according to public law

Conservation Goal:
To secure and if possible to improve the good conservation status of the MPA via a binding voluntary agreement between users, government and conservation NGOs for a sustainable management of the MPA, to implement it into practice and to transfer it into official management regime for the natura 2000 area.

Function of the agreement:
define objectives, spatial scope, duration, commitments, implementation rules, duties and measures for information and dissemination

Duration of the agreement:
3 years, another 3 years if no partner opposes

Voluntary monitoring/implementation control:
secured by a network of “conservation-pilots”(anglers, field-ornithologists, ...).
Task: dissemination of the regulation, monitoring of area use (infringements, disturbance of species,...)

Evaluations:
yearly evaluation meetings for measuring implementation, practicability (based on monitoring data) and agree amendments if necessary, participants: all contracting parties

Contracting parties:
Minister for the Environment, WWF, state Watersport and fishermen-associations, BUND, Maritime business representatives

Funding

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Detail- Agreements

Included in and referred to the framework agreement

Spatial Focus:
sub area

Legal status:
Directly referred to Framework agreement

Conservation Goal:
Directly referred to Framework agreement
Function of the agreement: detailed regulations for the water uses accompanied by detailed maps and texts

Duration of the agreement:
Directly referred to Framework agreement
Voluntary monitoring / implementation control: directly referred to Framework agreement
Evaluations: directly referred to Framework agreement

Contracting parties:
Minister for the Environment, WWF, local water sport and fishermen-associations, local maritime business companies

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