# Limits of Acceptable Change Planning System An Alternative Implementation of Carrying Capacity Professor Ed Krumpe RRT 287

# Why Not Use Recreation Carrying Capacity?

- Carrying Capacity focuses on the wrong question.
- Decreasing the <u>Number</u> of users may NOT lessen impacts.
- We want to manage for desired resource & social conditions.
- The public demands to know how decisions are made!

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# What is Limits of Acceptable Change?

- LAC is a process to define:
- What kind of <u>Resource</u> conditions and
- What kind of <u>Social</u> conditions are acceptable? and
- To prescribe <u>Actions</u> to protect or achieve those conditions.

#### Why Use LAC?

• LAC process focuses on maintaining Desired <u>Future</u> Conditions:

Resource conditions,

Social conditions,

Managerial conditions

- It provides for stability over time.
- It is trackable and traceable.

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#### **How Does LAC Work?**

- It usually follows a nine-step process designed by the USFS.
- It often includes public input and involvement at key steps.
- It moves from broad descriptions to specific prescriptions.
- It requires setting standards and monitoring conditions.

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#### **The Nine-Step Process**

- 1. Identify area concerns & issues.
- 2. Define & describe opportunity classes (zones).
- 3. Select <u>indicators</u> of resource & social conditions.
- 4. <u>Inventory</u> resource & social conditions.
- 5. Specify standards for both.
- 6. Identify <u>alternative</u> opportunity class allocations.
- 7. Identify  $\underline{\text{management actions}}$  for each alternative.
- 8. Evaluate and select a preferred alternative.
- 9. Implement actions and monitor conditions.

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#### Problems with the first step

Starts by Identifying Issues & Concerns:

- Inherently negative.
- Pits one group against another.
- Creates a narrow focus.
- "Hot" issues may overlook long-term ecological problems.

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#### A Positive Way to Fix the First Step

- Build upon people's positive values.
- Silently list things they like or value.
- Individually present their values.
- Silently generate list of threats to their values.
- Round-robin share list of threats (= issues).



Limits of Acceptable	Change	Planning
Process		

### Why Work Towards Consensus Rather than Voting?

- Voting pits winners against losers.
- Voting makes suboptimal decisions (49% may still hate the decision!)
- Voting tends to polarize groups.
- Voting fosters politics rather than collaboration.
- A marginal favorable vote is seldom supported on the ground.



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### 4 Levels of Support to Reach Consensus



- 1. I can easily support the action.
- 2. I can support it but it is not my preference.
- 3. I can support it if minor changes are made.
- 4. I cannot support it unless major changes are made.
- (I agree to discuss level 3 & 4 concerns before positions are made firm.)

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# Step 2 -- Defining Desired Future Conditions

- Create Zones based upon the ROS classes:
- Primitive

Semi-primitive Non-motorized Semi-primitive Motorized Roaded Natural Rural Urban

• Pristine, Primitive, Attraction Sites, Portals

## **Step 2 -- Defining Desired Future Conditions**

- Define key <u>physical</u> attributes to be maintained (undisturbed natural environment, no permanent development, remote from access...)
- Define key social attributes (solitude, isolation, few contacts, self-reliance, challenge . . .)
- Define key <u>managerial</u> attributes (light-handed, minimal management presence, primitive tools used, rely more on information & education than policing . . .)

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# Step 3 -- Indicators (The Heart of LAC)

 Indicators are things we can measure which tell us if desired resource & social conditions are <u>changing</u> from human use.

#### **Example Indicators:**

Exotic plants Impacted campsites Damaged vegetation Litter & human waste



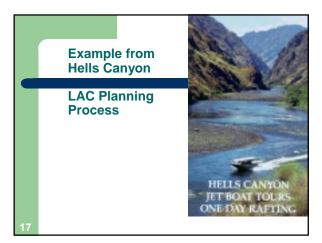
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## Step 5 -- Standards (The Heart of LAC)

- The point at which an indicator tells us that the change is *acceptable* or *not*.
- Exceeding the standard should trigger a management action.
- "If it isn't broken, don't fix it!"
- Management actions can be traced back to specific problems (via indicators).







# Create goals to accomplish the DFCs Desired Future Condition in Hells Canyon (examples) (The public decided that most conflicts started at the launch/take-out ramps.) Goals: • Decrease conflict among floaters and power boaters. • Minimize congestion on the river.

# Specific Objectives to accomplish the goals Provide launch/take-out facilities to minimize congestion & conflict. Minimize the amount of time people must wait to

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#### **Indicator & Standard**

launch their boats.

• Indicator:

Time spent waiting to launch.

• Standard:

80% of boating parties will have to wait no longer than 15 minutes.

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#### **Monitoring**

- Develop a <u>systematic monitoring plan</u> (schedule, protocols, locations)
- Take measurements on the ground and compare to standards.
- If standards are exceeded:

1st, check conditions and sampling 2nd, check if standard is appropriate

• Then Implement Management Action.

# Management Actions (triggered by standard)

- Do nothing until the standard is exceeded, then: (hierarchy, indirect to direct)
- Post signs on bulletin boards.
- Staff launch & take-out sites with a ranger.
- Build more launch ramps.
- Schedule staggered launch times.

Indirect Actions

Direct Actions

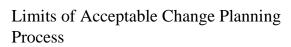
#### **Disadvantages of LAC**

- It takes a lot of time.
- Forces you to be specific.
- We don't know best indicators to use.
- Setting standards is difficult.
- Requires a lot of systematic monitoring.
- Must be revisited and fine tuned.

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#### **Advantages of LAC**

- Public input at all stages (Values, threats, DFCs, etc.)
- Desired Future Conditions clearly defined.
- Relevant Indicators & Standards selected.
- Management Actions address specific problems & you can evaluate effectiveness.
- Trackable and Traceable!
- Public becomes partners in management.



# LAC & Recreation Carrying Capacity

- RCC <u>limits numbers</u> of people to prevent deterioration of resource & social conditions.
- LAC <u>maintains</u> desired future resource & social conditions through monitoring & management actions targeted at specific problems.
- LAC is trackable & traceable--RCC seldom is.
- LAC is most reasonable way to implement RCC.