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MULTIPLE USE, MULTIPLE VALUES – GREATER THAN THE SUM OF THE PARTS

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ABSTRACT

Multiple use can be established at any geographic scale and over any time frame. The larger the area and longer the time period the greater the likely number of users and the greater the complexity of establishing and managing multiple use. This complexity is underpinned by multiple values. How do we negotiate with multiple users who seek different uses and may hold different values? How do we manage conflicting uses and values? How do we ensure that uses do not compromise each other or any values? This paper draws upon the experience of establishing the Lake Eyre Basin process to discuss these questions, and to ask yet more.

Fundamental to the idea of multiple use however is the belief that when we successfully bring together the different parts – users, uses and values – we can create a better whole that benefits us all; an outcome that we couldn't manage to achieve on our own.

WHAT IS MULTIPLE USE?

It has taken me too many cups of tea to figure out how to define multiple use for this paper. It is one of those terms that we use without often being challenged to unpack the assumptions that lie buried beneath. And after realising that tea wasn't going to help and moving on to something stronger I managed to develop my own map for multiple use rather than a single definition.

My own direct involvement with multiple use has been at a very large and general scale (the Lake Eyre Basin) however I have recently been lucky enough to see examples of people undertaking innovative multiple use at the farm scale.

A striking example is John Weatherstone who, with his family and over twenty years, has transformed their degraded sheep property into an enterprise with cattle, native seed orchards, a nursery, biodiversity planting and a demonstration farm for hordes of curious visitors. (For more information John has written his story which I've referenced below).

At the opposite end of the scale the Lake Eyre Basin process strived to bring together an enormous range of people and groups to understand the multiple values and uses in the Basin, and to create a way for people to manage the change and conflict arising from these diverse values and uses.

So multiple use can be undertaken, and is relevant, at almost any geographical scale, from the paddock to the catchment or region. And likewise it can occur over almost any time period. However the larger the area one works with and the longer the time period, the greater will be the number of users involved and the greater the complexity which will need to be managed. Different land tenures, legislative requirements, administrative boundaries, local cultures and the like, all make it a more daunting task. This was definitely the case for the Lake Eyre Basin.

In Figure 1 I've simplistically graphed this range or the scope within which examples of multiple use can be mapped. Most would, I think, fall somewhere in the box with the question mark.

The concept and practice of multiple use has taken a number of forms and generated conflict and debate in a number of fields. In particular I think of forestry and multiple use conservation reserves.

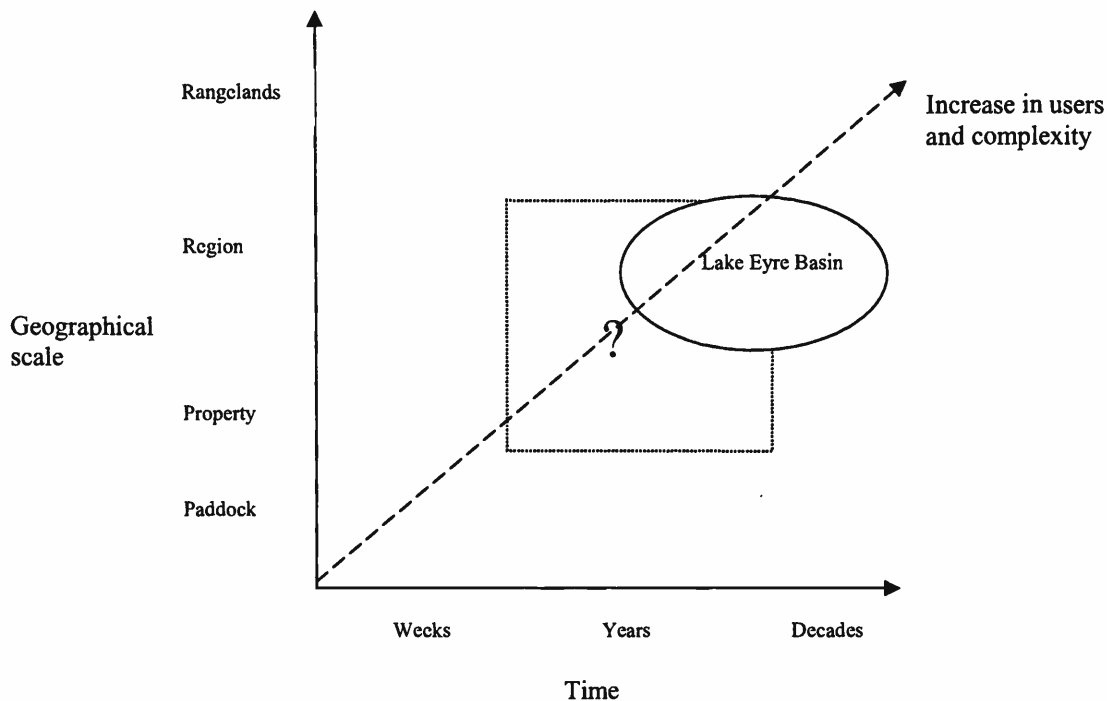


Figure 1. Scope of multiple use.

The forestry industry was an example where multiple use was interpreted as simply a way to maximise the economic benefit of an area of land or natural resources. What different uses and management practices can be undertaken to increase the productivity of an area? This definition is based upon holding a single value, the economic or productive value, for an area or resource. Even thirty years ago the forestry industry and their practice of multiple use, full utilisation and maximum yield was being criticised for focusing on only this one value. Kanowski (2003) writes about the Routleys work *The fight for the forests* which challenged this approach and presented an alternative approach for forestry in Australia based on respecting multiple values and delivering restrained sustainable yields.

There are numerous examples of multiple use to improve production capacity on one property or operation in agriculture (although it can be limited by the tenure type and lease conditions). The growth of tourism in the rangelands, and on pastoral properties, particularly around Alice Springs, the Flinders Ranges and central west Queensland is an obvious example. When local Aboriginal enterprises are linked, such as ecotourism ventures, the positive flow on effects for the whole local community become more substantial.

And sometimes economic benefit is not the main driver. I know some instances in the Lake Eyre Basin where land managers see tourism as an opportunity to educate urban Australians and to share with them some of the other values of the Outback. In these cases multiple use begins to be defined more broadly to incorporate values other than economic productivity.

In South Australia the practice of multiple use reserves was an attempt to achieve this. While seeking conservation outcomes, they allow for production outcomes through possible mining, oil, gas, or grazing activities (for example Innamincka Reserve). This could be considered a classic win-win, allowing for an increase in the area of conservation reserves in SA, while providing access for other activities, such as mining and grazing, with greater controls upon these activities. Conservationists have argued, however, that this mix of uses may compromise conservation outcomes and that resource use is not necessarily compatible with the protection of environmental values (Reeves 2000).

MULTIPLE VALUES?

So it seems that any discussion of multiple use brings us back to the fundamental of values. Most of us do value country for more than just its productive capacity. These other values influence the choices we make, the way we manage country, the lives we lead (although these other values can remain unacknowledged). We hold values personally, as a family, in our local community or as a society nationally and internationally. And these wider values influence our own values, or impact upon our own choices and actions, sometimes whether we like it or not. The proposed listing of Lake Eyre for World Heritage was a classic example of this. National and international communities are increasingly seeking to protect ecological and heritage values and these 'external' expectations are impacting upon local and regional communities. However they can also provide positive opportunities for communities and producers, for example the market for organic rangelands beef.

Through my work across the Lake Eyre Basin I experienced the economic, social, cultural and heritage, environmental, and spiritual values that people hold for this country. And I learnt never to make assumptions about what values people would hold or what values motivated them. I discovered that the hardest, crankiest old pastoralist might have a deep and powerful commitment to their country that I could only begin to understand.

A formal categorisation of values for natural areas includes:

- Commodity values – minerals, pasture.
- Amenity values – lifestyle, scenery.
- Environmental quality values – air, water quality.
- Ecological values – habitat conservation, biodiversity.
- Public use values – subsistence, recreation, tourism.
- Spiritual values (Stankey and Clark, 1991).

I would also include cultural and heritage values. These had, and have, an important role in the Lake Eyre Basin. The work undertaken for the Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Group and the Australian Heritage Commission on Heritage Tourism, the *Inland Rivers – Outback Tracks* project captures the importance of this heritage to many Australians who now want access to it. Managing tourists' demands and expectations so they don't impact upon what draws them is a challenge this work will help people meet (see LEB website and Schmiechen 2004, referenced below).

Ecosystem services are a vital value that does not yet provide direct economic benefit to land managers. This more recently coined term equates to the environmental quality values in the list above. Studies have been done addressing how society could (and should) pay for the provision of services such as clean air and water. One example is stewardship payments to land managers.

NEGOTIATING MULTIPLE USE AND MULTIPLE VALUES

Given the complexity of dealing with multiple use and diverse values, how do we find our way to a positive outcome? I believe that it needs to be an inclusive process of negotiation, whether in a family, community or region.

The questions below pick out some of the issues that I believe need to be tackled when establishing or integrating multiple use, particularly at a larger scale.

The users

Who are the 'users' and who has an interest?

The values

What are peoples' values, needs and expectations?

Do we acknowledge and respect these even if we don't share them?

The outcomes and vision

What outcomes are we seeking?

Is there a vision we can share or can we develop a vision together?

The conflicts

Do any of the uses compromise any other existing uses or values? (Are any incompatible?)

Do they conflict with other needs or expectations?

Do they compromise possible future uses?

Existing knowledge and gaps

What information and knowledge do people have? (Local and scientific; economic, social and environmental.)

What other information is needed?

Do we have an informed understanding of how the possible or existing uses may affect or compromise other uses or values?

Are there ways to change practice to manage this and optimise all outcomes?

How do we ensure that we continue to learn from, and improve, what we are doing?

The negotiating process

What is an appropriate negotiation process for people which is relevant to their situation?

What are the guidelines and principles for this process?

Who is managing it? Is it more likely to be successful with an objective third party facilitating or mediating?

Although I have written the above questions as a sequence, of course reality is never that neat. When I write about the process we undertook in the Lake Eyre Basin it reminds me of the cartoon where an archer shoots an arrow at a tree and then paints a target around the arrow so that it is directly in the bullseye. Except in our case, the arrow didn't hit a tree but a scrub bull.

With regard to the first point above – the users – I think that sometimes the users or potential users may not be obvious. And some uses or users don't have as much weight as others for example if they aren't directly related to economic production. This can mean that they have less voice. Will it work if this is the case? Reinforcing the status quo is not always the best way, particularly if you've already decided that what the status quo is giving you isn't good enough or is creating conflict.

The second point concerning values can take a longer time to address. Being willing to let someone else speak is one thing but being willing to hear and respect their different values is a whole new step. And this can take more than talking. We found that travelling to different parts of the Basin and experiencing someone else's part of the country helped us understand them, and the country, better.

Sharing outcomes and a vision – why would you bother otherwise? Not only do you need to have an idea of what you are seeking but that you share it. I find it remarkable how such diverse people can share a vision. A friend from a town in north Queensland has been working to bring together her Aboriginal community with the cane growers and local businesses to create viable options for their area that provide for them all. The enthusiasm that is being generated by working across these groups is creating a wide range of new ideas and may also result in a land use agreement.

A clear example of point four is a conflict over use that arose in the Lake Eyre Basin, the Currareva proposal to establish cotton on the Cooper. An unusual alliance was formed when people realised that a number of values could be at risk. The extraction of water from the Cooper may have harmed the water supply of the local town (Windorah), the livelihood of pastoralists relying upon floodplain grazing, and the health of the river system and the biodiversity it supported. Less explicit was the perceived threat to cultural values. When a 'demonstration' was held in Windorah, a parade on

horseback down the main street, people were also representing the importance of the outback culture and the pastoral industry to them. The incursion of intensive, high capital farming was seen as a possible threat to this way of life and culture. The 'battle over the Cooper' was a conflict over the introduction of a new land use that was seen to compromise existing uses and values. It also became apparent how little understanding we had about the possible impacts and the river system itself.

This lack of certainty is often a given in natural resource management. We can, however, ensure that we have based decisions upon the best available knowledge and are starting to address the knowledge gaps that we are aware of. In the instance above, further research was initiated that should help us better understand the relationship between use, impact and values in the Cooper catchment. We are also seeing more instances now where local and indigenous knowledge is being used alongside scientific knowledge. This acknowledgement of the value and usefulness of different forms of knowledge, and their integration, should help lead to better-informed decisions and more successful outcomes. Likewise we see the increased use and integration of economic, social and environmental information. How can we manage multiple use and values without an understanding of each of these (the triple bottom line) and how they may be impacted?

Once multiple use has been established there is always a need for ongoing learning and response to those lessons – adaptive learning and management. Monitoring of outcomes and impacts is an important way of ensuring that the uses do not impact upon each other or upon recognised values: economic; biophysical and environmental; cultural, social and heritage.

The final questions above in point six relate to the process of negotiation itself. Fundamental to the long-term success of any negotiation are open communication and the establishment of trust. Participation of all the parties helps create ownership of decisions and more likelihood of success.

THE WHOLE IS GREATER!

One of the original drivers for the individuals who bravely and optimistically kick started the Lake Eyre Basin process was to move forward from a position of antagonism and distrust between stakeholders, generated by the proposed World Heritage listing, to a position of greater understanding and perhaps mutual benefit.

One of my favourite quotes on negotiation states that negotiation "...is about breaking the paradigm of winning and losing and transforming negotiation into a search for improved solutions to problems." (pviii, Hall 1993). With this statement, Hall moves negotiation on from the traditional ball crunching variety of the 70s (bottom lines and ambit claims) to the process that we need to have to manage the complexity of multiple use and values in the rangelands for the benefit of us all, including the environment. The Lake Eyre Basin was one attempt at this, which still had a way to go. For those of us involved it did teach us that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

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