

EMERGING TRENDS IN PARK AND PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EASTERN JAMES BAY REGION OF QUEBEC, CANADA

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Abstract

In the United States and Canada, national parks (and related protected areas) have typically been government-owned lands devoid of residents. However, new approaches have emerged that seek to include traditional resource uses and local communities within protected area boundaries. Some of these approaches are represented by the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) Category V model. Using a combination of Allison's (1969) conceptual lens method and on-site interviews, this paper assesses the potential applicability and utility of the Category V approach for the purpose of protecting Cree land and heritage in the Eastern James Bay region of Quebec, Canada.

The James Bay Agreement (1975) was, from the Cree perspective, negotiated to achieve 1) protection of subsistence lands from hydro-electric development, 2) political and administrative autonomy, and 3) reconciliation with the provincial government of Quebec and the federal government of Canada (Niezen 1998, p. 71). Despite these negotiated improvements, Cree land and heritage is faced with on-going threats resulting from the continued integration of the Crees into contemporary Canadian society. These threats include 1) increasing levels of regional-scale resource development and extraction on traditional Cree hunting grounds; 2) increasing pressure to create cash economy-based jobs for residents of Cree communities; and 3) Cree land managers (e.g., Tallymen) often have little legal authority over use of natural resources (e.g., recreational hunting and fishing) within their territories.

In response to these threats, several Cree communities are developing proposals to designate a portion of their hunting grounds as heritage areas (Category V, a provincial-level protected area status). Such designation is intended to further protect hunting grounds from over exploitation, provide economic stimulus through outdoor recreation and ecotourism related activities, and create partnership mechanisms whereby the Crees would gain some legal authority over the use and management of these resources. Results suggest that a heritage area-type approach may be appropriate if the Crees can overcome partnership and capacity related obstacles.

1.0 Introduction

The James Bay Agreement (1975) was, from the Cree perspective, negotiated to achieve 1) protection of subsistence lands from hydro-electric development, 2) political and administrative autonomy, and 3) reconciliation with the provincial government of Quebec and the federal government of Canada (Niezen 1998, p. 71). To some extent this agreement addressed these concerns. For example, the Agreement specified certain lands as protected "for the exclusive use and benefit of the...James Bay Cree bands" (Government of Quebec 1976, cited in Niezen 1998, p.55). In addition, the Agreement reorganized some governmental services to provide a degree of administrative autonomy for the Crees (Niezen 1998). These services included the creation of the Cree School Board and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay. In many ways, the James Bay Agreement (1975) served as a catalyst for the further development of Cree communities, while providing technical and financial mechanisms for the preservation of Cree heritage.

Despite these negotiated improvements, Cree land and heritage is faced with on-going threats resulting from the continued integration of the Crees into contemporary Canadian society. These threats include 1) increasing levels of regional-scale resource development and extraction on traditional Cree hunting grounds (e.g., the mill located near Ouje-Bougoumou can process 40,000 trees per day); 2) increasing pressure to create cash economy-based jobs for residents of Cree communities¹⁵; and 3) Cree land managers (e.g., Tallymen) often have little legal authority over the consumptive use (hunting, etc.) of natural resources within their territories¹⁶.

The Cree communities of Waswanipi and Ouje-Bougoumou are developing proposals to designate a portion of Cree hunting grounds as heritage areas, a provincial-level protected area status¹⁷. Such designation is intended to further protect hunting grounds from over

¹⁵Sam Bosum, Chief of the Ouje-Bougoumou Crees, personal communication, July 29, 2003

¹⁶Anna Bosum, Cree resident of Ouje-Bougoumou, personal communication, July 26, 2003

¹⁷Paul Wertman, Advisor to the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation, personal communication, July 29, 2003

exploitation, provide economic stimulus through ecotourism related activities, and create partnership mechanisms whereby the Crees would gain some legal authority over the use and management of these protected areas.

The Cree decision to pursue provincial-level heritage area designation raises an important question: Is the protected landscape approach (IUCN Category V) an appropriate strategy for the Cree to achieve the goals outlined above? Using a combination of Allison's (1969) "conceptual lens" approach and on-site interviews, this paper assesses the potential applicability and utility of the Category V approach for the purpose of protecting Cree land and heritage.

2.0 Theoretical Context: A Conceptual Lens Approach

According to Graham Allison, "conceptual lenses" both "fix the mesh of the nets" as well as direct the casting of these nets "in select ponds, at certain depths, in order to catch the desired fish" (Allison 1969, p. 132). In other words, policy analysts (in this case, government officials and park managers) make judgments based not only empirical data, but also the conceptual lenses through which data are examined. Allison developed this approach to understand policy decisions during the Cuban missile crisis, and this approach has subsequently been applied to a range of public policy problems. The conceptual lens approach is relevant here because it provides a rationale for understanding and evaluating alternative protected areas models, which effectively are public policy alternatives. Allison's method relies on 1) articulation of basic conceptual lenses employed (either implicitly or explicitly) in alternative policies; 2) identification of organizing concepts underlying these conceptual lenses; and 3) specification of the logic (analytical assumptions) behind the organizing concepts (Allison 1969, p. 149). I will apply the conceptual lens approach to compare the traditional national park model developed in the United States with the Category V model recently developed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN)¹⁸.

¹⁸It is important to note that a number of authors have thought deeply about the history and development of national parks in North America. In this analysis I will rely primarily on discussions of these topics presented by Callicott and Nelson (1998), Runte (1997), and Phillips (2003). By doing so, I risk reducing these topics to caricatures. However, as Allison (1969) suggests, caricatures can be instructive (p. 133).

3.0 National Parks and the Wilderness Ideal

3.1 Basic Conceptual Lenses

National parks in the United States have historically been places valued for their natural phenomena, scenic beauty, and wilderness character (Nash 2001; Runte 1997; Zaslowky and Watkins 1994). For example, Runte (1997) discusses how the national park ideal emerged, in part, from romantic notions associated with frontier life during the westward expansion of the United States. With the official closure of the frontier in 1890, American elites were concerned that values derived from frontier-living would be lost once the nation industrialized (Nash 2001; Runte 1997; Marshall 1930; Muir 1901; Roosevelt 1897). Thus, the national park system was initially developed, in part, to preserve wild landscapes so that visitors might reconnect to the places and values associated with the American frontier legacy.

3.2 Organizing Concepts

Management of national parks in the United States has reflected the philosophical origins of the national park ideal as discussed above. For example, the Organic Act (1916), which created the U.S. National Park Service, charges the agency to manage for the conservation of "scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations". Implicit in the Euro-American frontier experience, and the national park ideal, is the notion of wilderness. Robert Marshall (1930) defines wilderness as regions which contain "no permanent inhabitants, possess no possibility of conveyance by any mechanical means and sufficiently spacious that a person crossing it must have the experience of sleeping out" (p. 85).

In post-industrial American society, wilderness is understood as a pristine, unspoiled, and dehumanized landscape that offers refuge from urban life (Nash 2001; Runte 1997; Muir 1901). For example, the Wilderness Act (1964) codifies wilderness as an area "untrammeled by man, where he himself is a visitor who does not remain". Thus, national park and wilderness areas are typically large parcels of government owned land. They are places where people visit, but do not live, and are intended to provide opportunities for visitors to experience nature unspoiled by human degradation.

3.3 Analytical Assumptions

At least three analytical assumptions emerge from the above discussion and these are embedded in traditional, refuge-style parks and wilderness areas. These assumptions are 1) parks and wilderness areas are typically government-owned and managed; 2) these are places where people visit (recreate) but do not live; and 3) parks and wilderness areas are perceived to “natural” places, where the impacts of human activity are largely absent.

While perhaps appropriate for industrialized, western societies, the creation of refuge-style national parks and wilderness areas in developing countries has been problematic. For example, Calhoun (1972) documents the plight of the Ik (a tribe of nomadic hunters in Uganda) after the establishment of Kidepo National Park in 1962. In establishing Kidepo, the Ugandan government imported the refuge-style model and removed the Ik from their traditional hunting grounds located within the newly established national park. In addition, the Ugandan government prevented the Ik from hunting game, their traditional food source found within the park. Once deprived of their social economy and separated from their traditional homeland, the Ik literally disintegrated into a “travesty of humanity” (Calhoun 1972, p. 29).

Experiences like Kidepo have demonstrated some inadequacies of refuge-style approaches with respect to management of subsistence use and native peoples in parks and protected areas. Early attempts to address these inadequacies were often legislative initiatives geared towards modifying existing approaches. For example, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (1980) contains specific provisions for subsistence use on federally protected lands (Bosworth 1995). While such legislative initiatives have improved access to subsistence resources in some cases, they fail to fully recognize the reciprocal influences between human cultures and natural systems. As a result, it has been argued that the wilderness concept may be grounded in analytical assumptions incapable of integrating subsistence use with refuge-style protected areas (Cronon 1995; Gomez-Pompa and Kaus 1995; Calicott 1991), and a new, complimentary national park model may be necessary for the preservation of cultural heritage and natural systems (Phillips 2003).

4.0 The Category V Approach

4.1 Basic Conceptual Lenses

The Category V approach is a radical extension of the national park model presented above. It is a protected area model intended to compliment, not replace, strictly protected areas, with a focus on maintaining relationships between people and nature (Phillips 2003; Phillips 2002; Beresford and Phillips 2000). The World Conservation Union (IUCN) defines Category V lands (Protected Landscapes) as,

“Area[s] of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area” (Phillips 2002, p. 9”).

A number of governments have created designations that contain some of the logic of the Category V approach, and these are sometimes generically referred to as “heritage areas”. Examples of these include the US National Park Service Heritage Areas Program and the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (Parks Canada 2003). Although both of these programs are administered at the federal level, designation occurs in response to local initiatives and interest, and management responsibilities are shared by collaborations between a variety of stakeholder groups (National Park Service 2003; Parks Canada 2000). In addition, federal designation is not solely funded by large federal investments.

4.2 Organizing Concepts

Inherent in the Category V model is the notion of landscape. In this context, landscape refers to the interaction of people with their environment over time (ICOMOS-UK 2002). Unlike traditional national parks, Category V protected areas are lived-in landscapes, and research has shown that landscapes that were once thought of as pristine, or primeval, have been inhabited and modified for long periods of time (Phillips 2002; Cronon 1983).

In this regard, Category V is a unique protected area approach and model. The central concept behind this model is the maintenance of cultural and environmental

values where direct interaction between people and nature occurs (Phillips 2002). Management focus of Category V areas is not explicitly on nature preservation or conservation. Rather, management is about guiding human activities to protect the area and its resources, while allowing these activities to evolve in a sustainable way. In the Category V approach, the objective is to maintain and enhance natural and cultural values for visitors and resident populations (Phillips 2003; Phillips 2002).

Since its inception, interest in the Category V concept has increased throughout the world for three primary reasons (IUCN 2002; Hamin 2001). First, the Category V model offers a framework for trans-boundary collaboration between government agencies, third sector organizations, private landowners, and sustainable industry. A large body of literature addresses the importance of trans-boundary collaboration in achieving conservation goals (e.g., Brick et al. 2001; Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000; Knight and Landres 1998). Second, recent experience suggests that conservation may be most effective when conducted in concert with people closest to the resources (e.g., Brown and Mitchell 2000). Finally, as global populations continue to rise, few landscapes will remain uninhabited. Thus, protected area models must account for resident populations.

4.3 Analytical Assumptions

The analytical assumptions embedded in the Category V model can be summarized as follows: 1) Category V areas are not based on notions of wilderness and/or pristine lands; 2) reciprocal relationships (heritage) between landscapes and people have conservation value; and 3) sustainable partnerships (or co-management structures) between multiple actors are necessary. These assumptions suggest that the Category V approach may be a viable management framework for protecting Cree land and heritage. The following sections discuss how Category V has been used previously, and examines why this approach may be appropriate for the Cree context.

5.0 The Category V Model and Cultural, Economic, and Ecological Sustainability

5.1 Silves

Chernela et al. (2002) present a case study from Silves, and the following is brief summary of their paper. Silves is an equatorial island municipality (~ 4,000 residents)

located at intersection of the Urubu River and Lake Canacari, Amazonas, Brazil. Silves is approximately 175 miles from the urban center of Manaus, and its economy is a mixture of subsistence activities (e.g., approximately 50-75% of all animal protein consumed by the local population is from fish, extractive industries (e.g., commercial fishing, forestry) and ecotourism.

In the 1960s, the Brazilian government instituted a number of development projects in an attempt to integrate the Amazon into the modern Brazilian economy. These projects were large in scale and included the development of a 10,000 km² Free Trade Zone. As a result of these development initiatives, the population of Manaus rose from 173,000 in 1960 to 1.5 million in 1990, dramatically increasing pressure on local fisheries from commercial fishing (Chernela et al. 2002; Chernela 2000). By the 1980s, hundreds of commercial fishing vessels regularly entered the lakes at Silves, despite community pleas for conservation, and local residents began to note declines in fishing yields. This was indicated primarily by the scarcity of preferred fish species (Chernela et al. 2002).

Lacking assistance from government agencies, local residents of Silves responded by developing a long-term, strategic plan for the protection of local fisheries. Two types of aquatic preserves were developed for the Silves region. The first, Lago Sanctuorio, is a category of absolute preservation where fishing is strictly prohibited (similar to the aforementioned wilderness designation). The second, Lago de Conservacao prohibits commercial fishing while permitting local subsistence use, and this protected area status is similar to Category V (Chernela et al. 2002).

As a result of these grassroots conservation initiatives, Silves became an attractive partner for the World Wide Fund for Nature. In 1993, with help from the Fund, eight communities of Silves partnered to form a third sector organization called the Cultural and Environmental Protection Association of Silves (ASPAC). ASPAC's mission is to preserve the environmental and cultural inter-relationships, while supporting eco-development. In addition, ASPAC is charged with heightening local awareness of the importance of the lake reserves and to establish, monitor, and enforce fishing regulations (Chernela et al. 2002).

The success of the ASPAC project has led to a number of initiatives that meet the spirit of the Category V approach. For example, an eco-tourism project was commissioned in 1994, and the community has since constructed an eco-lodge. Economic development associated with the lodge is expected to contribute to long-term community empowerment, while providing alternative sources of employment for local fisherman (e.g., heritage interpretation and guiding). In addition, local markets may be stimulated by tourist demand for food products and handicrafts, and public revenue is increased by the taxes generated from lodge income (Chernela et al. 2002).

Thus, the experience at Silves demonstrates how the Category V approach can help protect ecologically significant resources, preserve local heritage and customs, as well as serve as a catalyst for sustainable economic development. In addition, Silves provides a good example of how the Category V approach offers a framework with which different communities can engage in effective collaborative conservation efforts¹⁹.

5.2 The Cree Context of Eastern James Bay, Quebec

A number of similarities exist between the Silves (Chernela et al. 2002) and Cree contexts and experiences. These similarities include 1) regional-scale development and extraction of natural resources on Cree subsistence hunting grounds; 2) increasing pressure to create cash economy-based jobs for local residents; and 3) a history of adversarial relationships between local (indigenous) peoples and state and federal level governments.

Like the communities in the Silves region, the Cree communities of the Eastern James Bay Region, Quebec are threatened by several regional-scale resource and development initiatives. Historically, these initiatives have been proposed by the governments of Quebec and Canada, and have included hydro-electric development, logging, and mining. Resource development and extraction typically ignored Cree subsistence activities, and often resulted in the displacement of peoples.

¹⁹For other case studies on Category V areas, see Parks, Vol. 12, No 2, (The World Conservation Union – IUCN) as well as Phillips, A (2002) Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Areas: Protected Landscapes/Seascapes. IUCN Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. xv + 122pp

Subsistence activities continue to play important roles in Cree culture. For example, while in the field with David and Anna Bosum²⁰, we consumed a number of culturally important foods available only through the practice of subsistence (e.g., beaver, moose, bear, etc.). These foods have stories and rituals associated with their consumption, and these rituals appeared to guide the harvest of these animals. To preserve Cree heritage, it is necessary to create real opportunities for quality subsistence activities, not just set aside areas of land from development. Because the Category V approach identifies the interaction between nature and culture as a conservation target, it has the potential to further protect Cree hunting grounds from such large-scale development initiatives, while allowing subsistence harvest to continue.

The Cree communities of James Bay are a mixture of subsistence and cash-based economies. Both of these economic systems play important roles in contemporary Cree life. As discussed previously, we consumed a number of culturally important foods available only through the practice of subsistence. The harvesting of these foods, however, requires materials produced and purchased through the cash-based economy (e.g., rifles, ammunition, etc.). Furthermore, as the Crees continue to integrate into contemporary Canadian society, there is pressure to acquire skill sets associated with cash-based economies. This requires Cree students to spend time in school, not in the bush. As a result, while many older Crees continue to spend significant time in the bush, younger generations are raised in communities like Ouje-Bougoumou and Waswanipi, and visit the bush only when time allows.

Recognizing this transition, the current chief of Ouje-Bougoumou, Sam Bosum, identified job creation as the most important 5-year goal for the continued development of that Cree community²¹. Ouje-Bougoumou has subsequently responded by constructing a lodge for developing eco-tourism as a sustainable form of economic development. In addition, the Waswanipi

²⁰This site visit occurred between July 21, 2003 and July 30, 2003. Included in this site visit was a 6-day paddle trip with David and Anna Bosum. As Tallyman, David overseas his family's traditional hunting grounds. David is the brother of Sam Bosum, the current Chief of the Oujé – Bougoumou Crees

²¹Sam Bosum, Chief of the Ouje-Bougoumou Crees, personal communication, July 28, 2003

Cree have formed their own timber company, Mishtuk, which purports to harvest timber in a sustainable manner. Such economic development initiatives further underscore the dual economic systems (cash-based and subsistence-based) in which these Cree communities participate. Because the Category V model focuses on maintaining sustainable relationships between local communities and natural systems, it may be an effective approach for integrating subsistence and cash-based economies.

The Crees, like local community residents in Silves, have often had adversarial relations with state and federal-level governments. Historically, the tensions between the Crees and the governments of Quebec and Canada surrounded proposals to dam much of the James Bay region for hydro-electric development. Not surprisingly, the Crees opposed this development, and this opposition eventually led to the James Bay Agreement (1975). Although less so now, tensions continue and the Crees are currently in negotiation to obtain jurisdictional authority over recreational and consumptive use of fish and wildlife²². The Crees hope these negotiations will result in regulations that require non-native visitors to obtain permits (from the tallyman) for the recreational and consumptive use of fish and wildlife resources on Cree territory²³. With its focus on trans-boundary collaboration, the Category V approach may offer a productive framework with which to conduct these negotiations.

As previously discussed, a number of similarities exist between the successful application of the Category V model at Silves and the current Cree context, suggesting that the Category V approach may be a useful strategy for the Crees. Moreover, concepts like respect for the natural world and environmentally sound land stewardship are well documented in Cree culture (Niezen 1998), and these values have been integrated into the design of village structures. For example, all village buildings are heated from waste saw-dust produced at by nearby saw mill. Because the Crees are experimenting with sustainable development, this suggests that the Category

V concept may be more culturally relevant to the Crees than traditional models of protected areas discussed earlier.

6.0 Limitations of the Category V Approach in the Cree Context

Despite the potential utility of the Category V approach, it is important to understand the limitations and challenges associated with this model. First, as previously discussed, the Category V model requires effective use of partnerships to overcome administrative and political boundaries. Partnerships, however, can be challenging and require considerable social and administrative capacity (Brick and Weber 2001; Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000). In this sense, capacity includes abilities to develop resource management plans as well as technical and legal expertise. Although the James Bay Agreement (1975) helped to improve this situation dramatically, it remains unclear if the communities of Waswanipi and Ouje-Bougoumou possess the capacity to effectively sustain such partnerships at the present time²⁴.

Use of the Category V model also requires the Crees to give thoughtful consideration to how they define "sustainability". The Category V model can be an effective approach for preserving cultural landscapes and involving a diversity of stakeholder groups. However, IUCN management guidelines state that economic activities which do not need to take place within the protected area should be located outside it (Phillips 2002, p. 41). The Crees' timber company, Mishtuk, is actively harvesting on lands near Waswanipi, and other potential economic projects include the development of a Cree-owned mining company. The extent to which these economic activities are compatible with the objectives of a protected area for the preservation of Cree lands and heritage remains unclear.

Moreover, like other rural and indigenous communities, many of the Crees are enthusiastic about integrating eco-tourism into their local cash-based economies²⁵.

²²Anna Bosum, Cree resident of Ouje-Bougoumou, personal communication, July 26, 2003

²³Anna Bosum, Cree resident of Ouje-Bougoumou, personal communication, July 26, 2003

²⁴Susanne Hilton, Cultural Liaison to the Cree Nation of Waswanipi, personal communication, July 22, 2003; Rhonda Oblin, Manager of Waswanipi Model Forest, personal communication, July 22, 2003; Martin Pelletier, Consultant to Waswanipi Model Forest, personal communication, July 21, 2003

²⁵Sam Gull, Cree resident of Waswanipi and entrepreneur, personal communication, July 22, 2003

Although eco-tourism may generate revenue, it can damage the integrity of indigenous communities through over-commodification. These and related questions deserve serious consideration as the Crees pursue protected area designation.

Finally, heritage areas and the Category V model have yet to undergo substantial evaluations. Although a number of rapid rural assessments and quasi-case studies (such as this paper) report success, additional analytical rigor is needed to determine the long-term effectiveness of this approach.

7.0 Conclusion

Despite the limitations raised above, I believe the Category V approach is potentially useful and applicable for the Crees. This model has been effective in similar contexts and is grounded in analytical assumptions focusing on reciprocal relationships between nature and culture. As a result, Category V designation may further protect traditional Cree hunting grounds, help to integrate the subsistence and cash-based economies, and perhaps provide a conciliatory and collaborative framework with which the Crees can engage both the governments of Quebec and Canada. In addition, Category V (and related) models may best be understood as the latest evolutionary step in the development of protected area management frameworks. Ultimately, these approaches create new opportunities for conservation by providing managers and policy makers with additional tools.

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