Victorian State of Parks (Australia)

1.1   Organisation

Parks Victoria, Australia.

1.2   Purposes

✓ **to improve management (adaptive management)**
✓ to raise awareness and support
✓ for accountability/ audit
✓ for prioritisation and resource allocation
✓ to support budget submissions to government for increased funding.

1.3   Brief description of methodology

This methodology was developed to provide information to prepare a State of the Parks report. The methodology consists of a proforma that addresses each of the six elements of the IUCN WCPA Management Effectiveness Framework. The proforma is designed to be completed for all or most protected areas in a system to provide data for compilation of a State of the Parks report. It is designed to be completed by park staff in a workshop setting under the direction of a trained facilitator. A single workshop covers a group of geographically related parks. Results from assessments can be used to track progress in individual sites over time, or analysed across a group of parks or the entire park system to provide data relevant to planning and decision making.

1.4   Objectives and application

The Parks Victoria SoP system is designed to provide an overview of management effectiveness in parks and to identify factors that influence conservation outcomes on parks. The SoP system aims to:
- promote effective communication of our management performance to communities (i.e. through the State of the Parks report)
- improve the understanding of the condition of and pressures on the parks system;
- evaluate the effectiveness of management activities against objectives and planned outcomes; and
- inform planning and decision-making at all levels of management from statewide to the park level, leading to more effective management.

1.5   Origins

The system has developed from an original State of the Parks report prepared in 2000 that was a more descriptive account of the park system and pressures on individual reserves. Additional elements have been added to incorporate data from existing research and monitoring programs and agency databases. Qualitative assessment items were incorporated based on items from the NSW State of the Parks methodology.

1.6   How the method is implemented

The proforma is developed as an Access database. The following process was used in applying the system:

1. Train facilitators in application of the methodology.
2. Assemble relevant information for each site in preparation for the assessment (information from agency databases, results from research and monitoring programs being conducted in each protected area etc).

3. Conduct assessments workshops of key staff involved in management of a group of parks in an administrative region.
4. Compile and analyse results across the system of protected areas and incorporate data from corporate databases in
5. Feedback results to the protected area agency staff
6. Prepare State of Parks report (planed for every 5-6 years).

1.7   Elements and indicators

The elements and indicators are similar to the ones from the NSW State of Parks (see previous section).

1.8   Scoring and analysis

The methodology uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators. Most qualitative indicators are scored on a four point ordinal descriptive scale. In addition to the rating on this scale, information is collected on the justification for the rating that is given, the sources of information used in making the assessment, the proposed actions to be taken in relation to the issue over the coming twelve months, and the extent to which actions for the previous twelve months had been achieved.

Analysis can be conducted on individual sites or, more commonly, on groups of sites or the whole system of protected areas. Performance can be reported on a site or area basis (i.e. the number of sites performing at a specific level or the percentage area of the total estate in different performance categories. Correlation and pattern analysis across a dataset for a protected area system can identify possible factors influencing park management performance.