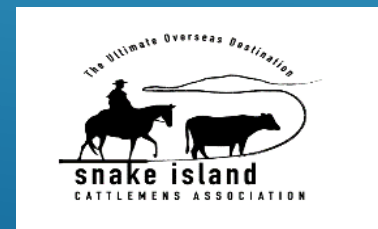


INQUIRY INTO THE CONTROL OF INVASIVE ANIMALS ON CROWN LAND

Snake Island Cattlemens
Association



Our presentation will expand on what we believe are the key issues raised in our submission

- ▶ Case Study – Snake Island Koalas
- ▶ Possible Management Model
- ▶ Recommendations
 - ▶ General Principles
 - ▶ Recreational Hunting
- ▶ Balloted Hog Deer Hunting on Snake Island – Comments

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LESSONS FROM THE SNAKE ISLAND KOALAS



- Koalas were hunted for their skins and by 1927 were almost extinct in Vic
- 133 koalas were introduced onto SI at around 1943
- SI was obviously over populated by 1997
- Estimates of 5000 koalas on SI
- Cattlemen work with the Parks Victoria. Ie Spotting, revegetation
- Koalas are caught, sterilized and released back on the island
- Sterilized koalas caught in subsequent years are relocated to mainland sites
- Koala control program stopped in 2012
- Current population is not being monitored and is now believed to be less than 200

LESSONS FROM THE SNAKE ISLAND KOALAS



Quote from Wal Cayzer – Veteran koala spotter and life member of Snake Island Cattlemen

“ In the early days I could find koalas easily. We didn't seem to worry them. They would sit in the trees and pose for us. Now they're timid. We've been under the tree on a horse watching them and as soon as they hear a motorbike coming or a vehicle, they'll climb around to the other side of the trunk.

We're told they haven't got very big brains, but they use every cell in it.”

The Sydney Morning Herald

December 17 2010

LESSONS FROM THE SNAKE ISLAND KOALAS

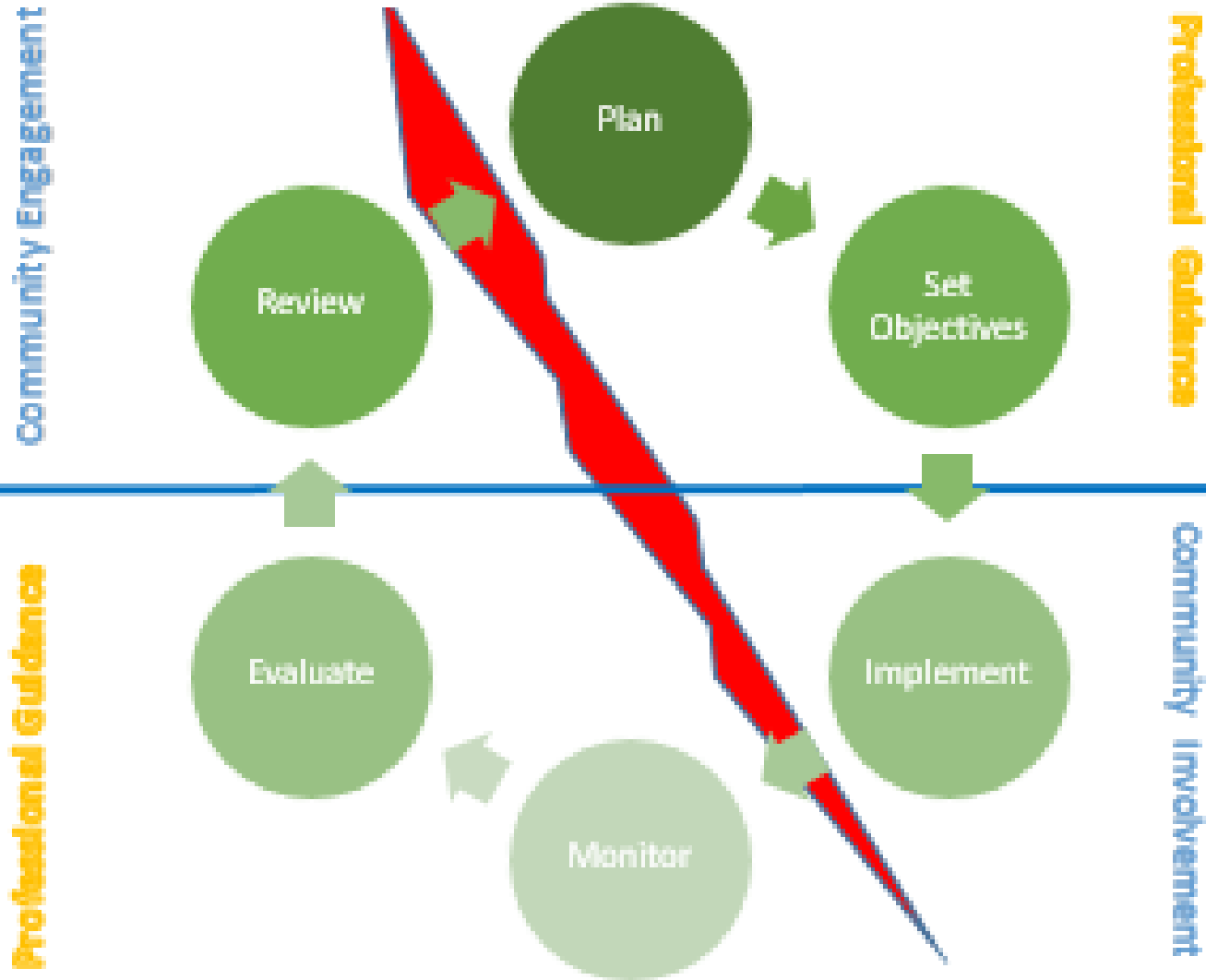


- Major changes to ecosystems need to be managed
- Interventions must take public expectations into account
- A wide variety of options exist to involve community groups in the management of public land
- Management plans must consider the impacts and implications across the entire ecosystem.
- Animal will adapt to interventions with changes in behaviors.
- Ongoing monitoring is critically important

LESSONS FROM THE SNAKE ISLAND KOALAS



Integrated Fauna and Flora Management Planning Community Based Model



COMMUNITY BASED MANAGEMENT MODEL

- Transparent approach
- Community engagement/involvement
- Professional guidance
- Objective based monitoring
- Accept that plans must change
- Resource (fund) the Land Managers



RECOMMENDATIONS: General Principles

1. Community partnerships with a broad range of users should be encouraged
2. Detailed Management Plans need to be developed prior to implementing significant change and plans must consider the entire ecosystem and always in the context of public expectations.
3. Decisions/strategies should be supported by science not emotions.
4. Public safety and ready accessibility to the broadest range of users must be maintained.
5. The consultation process needs to foster diverse views and when necessary moderate the loudest voices and nurture the less forceful opinions.

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RECOMMENDATIONS: General Principles

6. The definition of “Invasive animals” should include all animal species that are creating an imbalance in a local ecosystems ie Introduced, game, pest, domestic and/or native species.
7. Interventions should be scheduled over longer rather shorter timeframes to allow the ecosystem and populations within it to **adapt, recover and prosper**.
8. Review periods must be decided at the start and objectives critically evaluated.
9. Public Land managers must retain control and responsibility for implementing change . This includes adequate funding/resourcing.
10. Public Land managers should have a full set of tools available to manage invasive animals on public land effectively.

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RECOMMENDATIONS: Recreational Hunters

1. Public safety must be the first consideration – Buck Fever (Cognitive Biases)
2. Management Plans must identify the target species and the possible impacts on dependent and competitive species, both flora and fauna.
3. Management plans identifying the need to cull a species should stipulate the age, sex and reproduction cycle (time of year) of the target species to ensure optimal benefits.
4. Hunter registration should include mandatory skills testing.
5. Only the most humane methods of killing the target species should be approved
6. Standardized reporting should be introduced based on the agreed objectives
7. Harvesting of game species for commercial purposes should only be considered where the populations are proven to be sustainable prior to commercial harvest.

Balloted Hog Deer Hunting on Snake Island

1. The decision lacks detail and was taken without public consultation
2. We believe previous risk assessments undertaken by Victoria Police failed to consider the relatively small land area, isolated location with multiple entry points, and the consequent potential for casual users to be unwittingly exposed to danger. *(Note: The most recent Vic Police safety report has not been released and is currently subject to a FOI request)*
3. A management plan has **not** been developed for the Island, baseline population data for the hog deer and interdependent species has not been established.
4. Adverse and unintended impacts on other species within this RAMSAR site have **not** been considered.

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Balloted Hog Deer Hunting on Snake Island

5. The impact on the current (and future) licensed tour operators and user organizations' has **not** been considered. ie Currently approx. 5000 organized visitors days are at risk for a maximum 320 visitor days for recreational hunting.
6. Local and State tourism strategies are designed to attract Melburnians and international visitors to experience regional Victoria's natural beauty. Restricted access to Snake Island is counterproductive to this goal.
7. Hog Deer have an intrinsic value in the SI landscape and if managed effectively could provide greater economic benefit to the community, including recreational hunters, than by the taking of a limited number of trophy's and/or harvested for their meat.

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Thank you for the opportunity

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