

BOOK REVIEW

Thinking Like a Manager: Reflections on Wildlife Management, by John F. Organ, Daniel J. Decker, Len H. Carpenter, William F. Siemer, and Shawn J. Riley. 2006. Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D.C., USA. 106 pp. \$10 (paperback).

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Thinking Like a Manager is a fictional novel that reflects and confronts the struggles related to the human element in wildlife management. It explores the challenges and complexities faced by contemporary wildlife managers of integrating aspects of social science into the profession. The book, as stated by the authors in the Preface, was not written as an academic work nor was it intended to serve as a detailed guide for successfully incorporating aspects of social science into the management process. Rather, the book, written from a wildlife manager's perspective, takes a practical approach at illustrating key concepts that can aide in providing a constructive philosophical framework for integrating social science considerations with biological information and ecological principles.

The novel follows 6 wildlife managers that are participating in a monitoring detail to assess the effects of an oil spill on wildlife species along the Oregon coast. Although they have all been staying at a cabin for 2 weeks, they have been limited to casual conversations around the supper table due to long days working independently in the field. However, when their departure is postponed for a day due to inclement weather, the subsequent down-time leads to a philosophical conversation about the role of human dimensions in the wildlife profession.

The conversation was unintentionally initiated when a species management specialist was asked what she primarily worked on in her current position. After sarcastically responding that her primary job was "managing people" and then being asked in a follow-up question if she was in public affairs or information and education, an in-depth discussion ensues among the 6 managers about the role and importance of sociology in wildlife management. The 6 characters in the story are at different stages in their careers (e.g., recently out of graduate school and in the workforce for a few months vs. in the profession for a few decades), range in age from early 20s to late 50s, work in different regions of the country for either a state or federal agency, and have diverse job descriptions and levels of responsibility (e.g., assistant regional director of a federal land management agency vs. district manager of a state wildlife agency). Thus, each character brings a unique perspective of the profession to the conversation. This diversity in age and experience among the managers serves to provide the reader with an idea of how this issue has evolved within management agencies, in the training of wildlife managers, and in the minds of the managers themselves.

The book is comprised of 7 chapters. Chapter 1

introduces the reader to the overall issue via the discussion mentioned above and also defines some key terms, such as fundamental and enabling objectives. It also briefly introduces the reader to the concept of adaptive impact management (AIM), which is revisited in greater detail in later chapters. Chapters 2–5 are a continuance of the discussion among the managers and introduce key concepts related specifically to values, impacts, limits and capacity, and scale. During these chapters, the characters use issue- and species-specific examples (e.g., dealing with human–bear conflicts) to relate the above concepts to real-world issues and define and discuss key terms related to these issues, such as cultural carrying capacity, stakeholders, and the public trust doctrine.

In Chapter 6, the managers resume their discussion from the previous day while waiting for their plane to arrive to take them back to civilization. The conversation reflects back on the concepts from the day before and leads into a detailed discussion about the challenges and complexities of decision-making. At this point, the conversation revisits the concept of AIM and briefly outlines its primary components. The chapter concludes with the group deciding to work together in applying AIM to a specific management issue that one of the managers is facing. The various components of AIM are delegated among the managers and they agree to meet at a regional event to follow up on their efforts and investigations. In the final chapter, the authors use this reunion and subsequent follow-up discussion among the managers to outline and elaborate on the 8 primary components of AIM: situational analysis, objective setting, development of system models, identification and selection of management alternatives, actual management interventions, monitoring, refinement of models, and adaptation of interventions. In the process of discussing these components, the managers revisit many of the key terms and concepts that were introduced in previous chapters and discuss them in the context of the AIM approach. Additionally, the authors' Postscript serves to further synthesize and summarize the ideas of integration and how those ideas are relevant to contemporary managers.

As mentioned in the Preface, the authors draw on their own experiences as wildlife professionals, their associations with other wildlife managers, published literature, and agency reports. Prior to writing the novel, the authors held 2 workshops with managers to identify key questions the managers had about their work and role in society and published 2 professional journal articles that addressed these key questions (Riley et al. 2002, 2003). *Thinking Like a Manager* was intended to take the next step and present important elements of successful wildlife managers' philosophies and practices. I believe this intention was accomplished.

Thinking Like a Manager is a unique approach to address-

ing the integration of biological and social sciences into wildlife management. It is a quick and easy read and would appeal to anyone actively involved or training to be in the profession. Although my area of expertise is not in the human dimensions field, I found the book to be very effective and educational. Furthermore, it was entertaining and a welcomed change from reading the usual journal article or technical report. The authors did an excellent job of organizing the book and were able to revisit the key concepts in the book without making the reader feel as though they were being repetitive. Furthermore, the authors provided a glossary of key terms that are highlighted in the text to alert the reader. *Thinking Like a Manager*, especially in combination with the 2 journal articles mentioned above and articles from the authors' suggested readings list, would

be an excellent resource for professional training workshops and college courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

LITERATURE CITED

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