

Integrating wetlands into tourism planning for the sustainable development of communities and the environment using Ridge-to-Reef ecosystem approach

Arch. Celestino Ulep, President¹

Contributors: Amy Leccionones¹, Kristofferson P. Reyes¹, Aaron Julius Leccionones¹, Zenaida M. Ugat¹, Jose Carlo Quintos¹, Darry Shel Estorba¹

¹Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands, Inc.

Presentation Outline

- I. Wetlands and Tourism
- II. What is Ridge-to-Reef Approach
- III. Current Practices of Tourism in Wetlands
 - Bali (Indonesia)
 - Ha Long Bay (Viet Nam)
- IV. Methodology for Tourism Planning using Ridge-to-Reef Approach at Bacnotan La Union
- V. The case of Bacnotan, La Union
- VI. Ways Forward for integrating wetlands into tourism planning

I. Wetlands and Tourism



Worldwide, wetlands offer significant opportunities for tourism and recreation, generating income for governments, for the tourism industry itself, and for local communities as well. (Ramsar & UNTWO, 2012)

I. Wetlands and Tourism

“Tourism can also be an innovative mechanism for funding nature conservation and poverty reduction in wetland areas... an opportunity for communities to develop sustainable economic strategies... on the other hand, tourism can impact wetlands: habitat loss, pollution, over-consumption of water, and visual or noise impacts.” (Van der Duim, R. & Henkens, R. 2007)



I. Wetlands and Tourism



Underground river in Palawan



Batlag Falls in Tanay

Sustainable tourism can be defined as:

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”. -UNEP & WTO, 2005

II. What is Ridge-to-Reef Approach?

An integrated resource management approach which recognizes the interconnections of social and natural systems from the mountain 'ridges' of volcanic islands, through coastal watersheds and habitats, and across coastal lagoons to the fringing 'reef' environments... (Pacific R2R –Ridge to Reef, 2018)

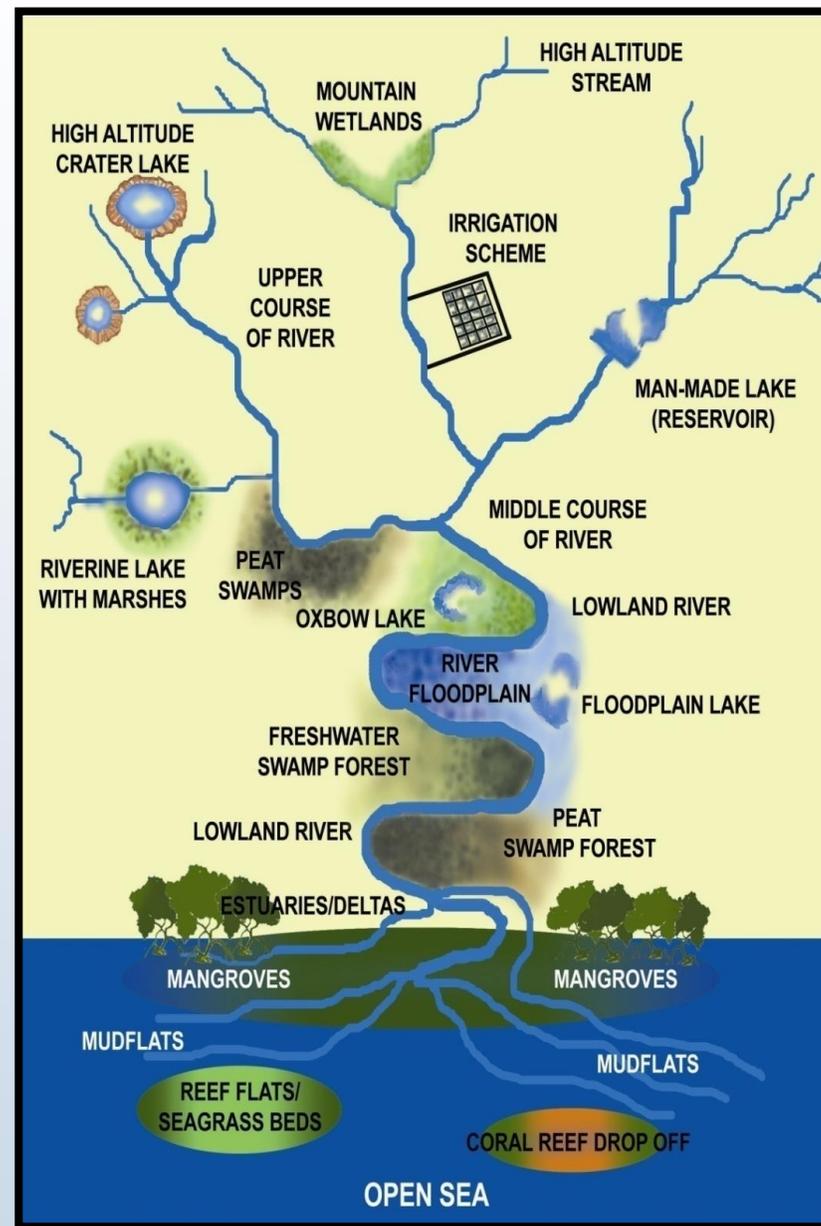


Image source: DENR-BMB

II. What is Ridge-to-Reef Approach?

“Effective ridge-to-reef management requires improved understanding of land-sea linkages and decision-support tools to simultaneously evaluate the effects of terrestrial and marine drivers on coral reefs, mediated by anthropogenic activities” (Delevaux, et al., 2018)

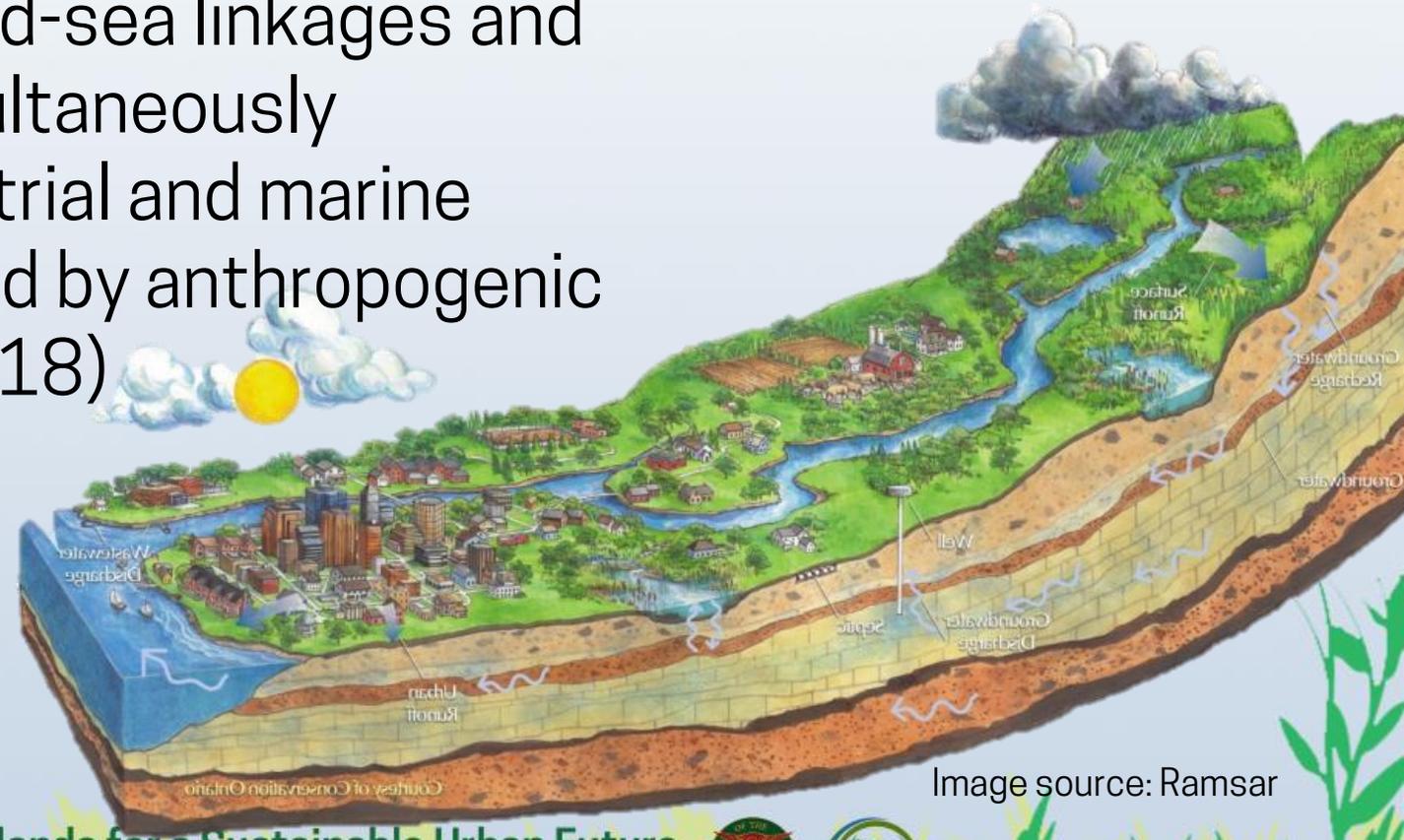


Image source: Ramsar

III. Current practices of Tourism in Wetlands

Bali, Indonesia



Image source: Ramsar

Bali, Indonesia Snapshot (WWF):

- About 3, 263, 000 live in Bali – approx. 1.4% of Indonesia’s total population
- 80% of Bali’s population relies to some extent on income-generation tourism industry
- The estimated number of foreign tourists visiting Bali in 2007 is 1, 700, 000

Safeguards and protects the authenticity of the Cultural Landscape of Bali World Heritage Site with its unique subak system



Image source: <http://www.bali-indonesia.com/>

III. Current practices of Tourism in Wetlands

Ensure all stakeholders have a common understanding and appreciation of the Outstanding Universal Value to promote the safeguarding and protection of the World Heritage Site according to sustainability principles

Develop a visitor management system that minimizes negative impacts and enhances the visitor experience

Encourage the development of sustainable tourism products and services that respect the local cultural values

Sustainable tourism strategy for the cultural landscape of Bali Province

Empower local communities to directly engage in sustainable tourism to improve their welfare

Ensure all development (relating to tourism, infrastructure, housing, etc) supports and strengthens the authenticity of the Cultural Landscape of Bali Province, minimizes negative environmental impacts, enforces land use policy, and strengthens site management and monitoring through collaborative and participatory efforts

Source: UNESCO & Republic of Indonesia

III. Current practices of Tourism in Wetlands

Halong Bay, Vietnam
inclusive growth for tourism indicators

Economic Dimensions

- Supply chain and backward linkages
- Ownership patterns and economic leakage
- Employment patterns
- Tourist expenditures

Institutional dimensions

- Institutional and institutionalized networks

Social dimensions

- Local participation and collaboration

Source: Hampton, Jeyacheya, & Hong Long (2017).

III. Current practices of Tourism in Wetlands

Halong Bay, Vietnam



Image source: <https://www.getspabulous.com/halong-bay-vietnam-a-serene-healing-experience/>

Six strategies for sustainable tourism development in Halong area

Strategy 1: Enhancement of management capacity for sustainable tourism development

Strategy 2: Development of legal and institutional framework, and policy for supporting ecotourism

Strategy 3: Protection of tourism resources

Strategy 4: Development of sustainable tourism products

Strategy 5: Upgrading service and quality of tourism facilities and business

Strategy 6: Propaganda and promotion of sustainable tourism

Image source: Hampton, Jeyacheya, Hong Long (2018)

IV. Methodology for Tourism Planning using Ridge-to-Reef Approach at Bacnotan La Union

Historical and cultural planning will use a landscape approach that enriches and enhances the connection of town, people, heritage, and environment. Additionally, the development plan will integrate zoning, land use, infrastructure development, the national system of standards for tourism enterprises, heritage and environmental protection imperatives, disaster risk reduction and climate change in a manner that encourages sustainable tourism development.

The overall approach to this project is community-based tourism development master planning. It will employ Ridge-to-Reef and other ecosystem approaches including the wise use of coastal areas and other natural and wetland resources. This approach makes natural resources centre stage in complementing all existing tourism resources.

IV. Methodology for Tourism Planning using Ridge-to-Reef Approach at Bacnotan La Union



V. The Case of Bacnotan La, Union

- Rivers and waterfalls
 - ✓ Annual fluvial parades in celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia (Baroro Beach)
 - ✓ River boat cruise for diners
 - ✓ River farm
 - ✓ kayaking



V. The Case of Bacnotan La, Union

- Beaches and coves

Integration of tourism activities with conservation and protection of beaches and turtles



V. The Case of Bacnotan La, Union

- Beaches and coves



- ✓ Nesting areas of sea turtles in Brgy. Tammocalao and the surfing area in Brgy. Quirino (Marine Protected Areas)
- ✓ Picturesque view and waves perfect for surfers
- ✓ Rock cliff
- ✓ Wetland Learning Center & Marine Research Center envisioned

V. The Case of Bacnotan La, Union

- Dam/ Lakes

Bussaoit Dam

This man-made dam forms a lake over time and is possibly the largest man-made lake in the province of La Union. The site has the potential to be a good spot for camping, fishing, and other recreational activities.



Image source: www.pagnapagna.com

Tourism that considers local economic development, culture, and wise use of resources

V. Ways Forward for integrating wetlands into tourism planning (Ramsar & UNWTO, 2012)

National, regional and local planning and policies are key factors in environmental conservation and in ensuring that tourism contributes equitably to the development of local economy

Development plans for tourism should be integrated with wetland management plans for biodiversity conservation and compatible with the objectives for conservation and wise use of each site.

Wetland management planning and plans are essential tools for resolving the multiple issues arising from activities in wetlands, including tourism

Offering enriching experiences at wetlands is important for attracting tourists but needs careful planning to ensure that visitation rates and activities are ecologically and socially sustainable.

Meaningful involvement of local communities in decision making is a central element of both wetland wise use and successful tourism.

Communication and education about wetlands help to raise awareness about wetland values and wetland biodiversity, and win support from tourists and others for wetland conservation.

References:

- Delavaux, JMS., Whittier, R., Stamoulis, KA., Bremer, LL., Jupiter, S., Friedlander, AM., et al. (2018). *A linked land-sea modelling framework to inform ridge-to-reef management in high oceanic islands*. *PLoS One* 13 (3): e0193230. Retrieved July 17, 2018 from <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0193230>.
- Hampton, M., Jeyacheya, J., Hong Long., P. (2017). Can Tourism Promote Inclusive Growth? Supply Chains, Owership, and Employment in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam. *Journal of Development Studies*. 54:2. 359-376. DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2017.1296572
- Pacific R2R – Ridge to Reef (2018). *What is Ridge to Reef?*. Retrieved July 17, 2018 from <https://www.pacific-r2r.org/about-us/faqs#faqnoanchor>
- Project Management Board & JICA Expert Team (2013). *The Proposal of the Environmental Protection for Sustainable Tourism Strategy in Halong Bay*. Project Completion Report. Volume 2. Retrieved July 17, 2018 from http://open_jicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/1000021863_01.pdf
- Ramsar & UNWTO (2012). *Destination Wetlands: Supporting Sustainable Tourism*. Madrid, Spain
- UNESCO, Republic of Indonesia (Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Tourism, & Bali Provincial Government) (undated). *Sustainable Tourism Strategy: Cultural Landscape of Bali Province – The Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana Philosophy*. Retrieved July 17, 2018 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002609/260977e.pdf>
- Van der Duim, R. & Henkens, R. (2007). *Wetlands, Poverty Reduction, and Sustainable Tourism Development: Opportunities and Constraints*. Wetlands International: Wageningen, Netherlands

Thank you!

