Book review

COASTAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Robert Kay and Jacqueline Alder. Taylor & Francis, London, 2005, ISBN 978 0 4153 1772 6, £90.00, 400 pp.

This book provides a guide to the theoretical concepts behind coastal planning processes, the tools and techniques available to coastal planners and managers, and the development and implementation of coastal planning frameworks. It is the second edition, updating the first published in 1999.

The text is split into six chapters. The introductory chapter discusses the definitions of coastal zones used in management plans and provides a brief history of coastal management and planning, with particular attention given to the issue of sustainability. The section on the history of coastal management and planning would have benefited from further detail. Elaboration on the historic role of legislation and coastal zone 'ownership' and 'responsibility' would be of great interest and provide a wider context in which to understand current coastal management systems.

Chapter 2 highlights current and arising issues faced by coastal managers at a very high level. This chapter does not examine any issues in depth and only raises awareness of the range of issues to the reader. The chapter acts only to highlight the complexity of issues in this sector of management and indicate the need for compromise in decision making. The reader should refer to other documents if detail is required.

Chapter 3 discusses the principles and concepts of coastal planning management and key terminology. Management approaches and theories that are common to other forms of environmental planning are presented. These techniques and concepts provide the basis for coastal management systems practised today. This chapter provides an interesting background to the discussion of management planning processes and plans found in chapter 5. The organisation of management systems, including the roles of government, institutions and other stakeholders, are also discussed.

Chapter 4 presents a range of techniques and tools used in coastal management and planning, which are highlighted using real-world case studies. Major techniques are grouped into administrative, social and technical, although it is highlighted that some techniques contain elements of more than one group. Such tools discussed include the role of legislation, community-based management, environmental impact assessments and economic analyses. This chapter provides an excellent overview of the tools available to managers. Again, if detail on any of these techniques is required the reader should refer to other documents.

Chapter 5 describes coastal planning processes and plans. This chapter combines the concepts introduced in chapter 3 and the tools discussed in chapter 4. The majority of the chapter focuses on the design, development, implementation and evaluation of coastal planning frameworks. In particular, integrated geographical coastal management plans are used as the basis for discussion with numerous real-world examples given.

Chapter 6 draws together the main findings of the book and outlines future directions for the management and planning of the coast.

This book would not be useful to all coastal practitioners. The focus of this book is primarily on management and, as with any managerial reference, the read is often dry. The theoretical discussions, although providing context to the classifications of coastal planning systems in chapter 5, are quite extensive and it is felt that chapter 3 could be made more succinct.

In summary, this book will only be of professional relevance to academics, managers and planners within governmental departments and international organisations that are directly involved with the development of planning management systems for the coast.

LOUISE TRIM