

Management Challenges in World Heritage Karst Areas.

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Abstract

Karst values in the broadest sense are best protected by legislative reserve measures. Where governments have had karst areas entered on the World Heritage list, protection and management should measure up to international standards. These standards have been developed by international agreement but they do not necessarily have the same meaning in all cultures and communities. Often the resources are not available to effectively manage protected areas. The underlying issues of management of karst areas include both physical constraints and those of human use. These constraints are exacerbated in areas with World Heritage standing, as areas with outstanding natural and cultural values are often under increased human usage pressures.

Increased tourism exacerbates the cultural pressures on longstanding communities living in such karst areas. Increasing numbers of visitors and the need for improved infrastructure to service them continues to create problems of priorities for management. Conflicts may arise between managers and local communities, local governments or other management agencies. The different agendas of all stakeholders need sensitive solutions for World Heritage management objectives to be fulfilled.

This paper will outline challenges as perceived for management in World Heritage areas illustrated by a range of examples from Australia, Asia and Europe.