

A New Governance Model for the Sustainable Use of the Coastal And Marine Environment: Lessons Learned from the Central Pacific Coast of Costa Rica.

V Solis Rivera, P Madrigal Cordero¹

Abstract

The coastal and marine environments of the Pacific Coast in Central America present a cultural and historical use of their rich natural resources. The original human populations living in these areas continue being environmentally, socially, culturally and economically vulnerable.

The biological and cultural richness of these areas has deteriorated at a very accelerated rate for many reasons. The causes include irresponsible artisanal and industrial fishing, massive tourism development, the boom in coastal real estate development, etc. These causes have engendered a loss of the cultural identity of the marine and coastal communities and their traditional knowledge associated with using these resources.

The sea is and always has been a well of common access. At present there is an experience underway on Costa Rica's Central Pacific Coast that evidences that this may become a potential benefit, if we are open to recognizing new forms of governance where the communities of artisan fishermen and fisherwomen participate in management and decision making for the areas where they have traditionally gone about their business, establishing voluntary norms for their sustainable use and management.

CoopeTárcoles R.L., with the support of CoopeSoliDar R.L, is the first artisanal fishing community in Costa Rica that has prepared and applied a local Code for Responsible Fishing and a database for their activity. It is currently moving forward for recognition of the first community marine area for responsible fishing in Costa Rica.

This initiative motivates innovative management and decision making and a form of community governance for the coastal marine resources, for those goods that are held in common, recognizing and maintaining their nature as such.

The resources continue under a common set-up, not establishing exclusive rights, but voluntary norms that allow for the conservation and sustainable use of the coastal and marine resources, with the assistance of a state that recognizes the traditional rights for fishing in these communities.

¹ CoopeSoliDar R.L Associates. www.coopesolidar.org

Keywords: *Responsible artisanal fisheries, Protected areas, community governance. Coastal and marine ecosystem governance. Pacific coast. Costa Rica.*

CoopeTárcoles R.L. is a cooperative involving small artisanal fishermen and women that was founded 22 years ago in 1985. It has several objectives: directly market the artisanal fishing product, eliminate brokers, obtain better prices, encourage better labor conditions, create sources of employment, share knowledge about fishing, and raise the stakeholders' organizational level and degree of participation.

These individuals' primary activity over the years has been fishing for snook (*Centropomus vidris*), seabass (*Cynoscion sp*), snapper (*Lutjanus guttatus*), sharp tooth smooth-hound shark (*Mustelus dorsalis*), and whole fish (small fish that are consumed locally).

In 2003 CoopeTárcoles R.L., with the support of CoopeSolidar R.L, began promoting searching for sustainable natural resource and cultural forms of management as part of the objectives in the cooperative's bylaws. In Costa Rica, it is the first initiative by artisanal fishermen and women that has adopted a Voluntary Fishing Code in line with the principles proposed by the FAO and developed using its own principles and values.

Coopesolidar R.L. is a self-management cooperative for professional services for social solidarity. It is an initiative by a group of people interested in establishing meeting places for conservation and development, primarily for local communities. The cooperative's mission is to "promote novel alternatives to achieve cultural and biological wealth, contribute to improving the population's quality of life, with justice and equity, by assisting in the participatory processes for decision making from individual and collective stances, locally, nationally, and internationally." This all falls within a gamut of common ethical values involving social and cultural commitment. Coopesolidar R.L.'s work in the last several years has been centered around turning social participation into a strong point for conserving biodiversity and helping eliminate the myth that conservation with people is impossible -- it has opened the stage for new knowledge building based on a scientific knowledge approach to traditional local knowledge.

At the beginning of 2001, a relationship was set in motion between Coopesolidar R.L. and CoopeTárcoles R.L., involving mutual strength where joint working spaces have been identified in the soundness of values such as solidarity and mutual respect between cooperatives, the incorporation of the environment and sustainable development into the framework of the artisanal fishing activities and improving the quality of life of the associates and the community (Code of Ethics, 2003, in Solís, et al., 2007).

The cooperatives initiated a process involving reflection and action on governance in relation to the marine territory within this framework. It specifically involved the assets that need to be mentored and held publicly, such as the sea. The main questions that we have attempted to answer little by little revolve around the following subjects:

1. Can property in the public domain contribute to local strengthening in Costa Rica under the current legal system?
2. What are the governmental and local offices that are suitable for proper governance of the assets in the public domain to achieve a benefit and equity in distributing the wealth derived from their use?
3. Do examples and technical tools exist that make it possible to build new knowledge including traditional and scientific knowledge to ensure sustainable fishing management within an arena where the resource is respected and used sustainably?
4. Is it possible to develop voluntary management norms that enable organized fishing to win back the artisanal fishermen and women's cultural identity and long-term conservation of the marine diversity in Costa Rica?
5. Can community governance come up with new business initiatives and even innovative businesses that ensure that this good governance is sustainable and that it improves people's quality of life?

Our work revolves around providing some responses to these concerns based on practical experience.

1) The Social, Cultural, and Monetary Context: Artisanal Fishing in Costa Rica²

In Costa Rica, productive artisanal fishing is a major source of food, income, and employment for a large number of families (INCOPELCA, 2004). However, research carried out in the last several years³ confirms that on the Pacific coast

² Taken from Solís, V. 2007, Pesca artesanal responsable y sus aportes a la conservación de la diversidad marino-costera: Surgimiento de actividades económicas alternativas para la participación de este sector en el desarrollo local en el Pacífico de Costa Rica. Work proposal. Working document.

³ CoopeSoliDar R.L., 2007, Consideraciones sociales del sector pesquero artesanal sobre el Corredor Marino de Conservación del Pacífico Este Tropical: primeras ideas para la incidencia social, San José, Costa Rica; CoopeSolidar R.L. 2006. Tárcoles: una comunidad de pescadores artesanales en Costa Rica, aportes a la conservación de los recursos marino costeros del Golfo de Nicoya San José, Costa Rica; CoopeTárcoles R.L., 2005, Nuestro Código de Pesca Responsable, San José, Costa Rica. CoopeSoliDar R.L., 2004, "Recogiendo saberes y fortaleciendo valores", EDITORAMA S.A., San José, Costa Rica, 102 pp. CoopeSoliDar R.L., CoopeTárcoles R.L., 2004, Código de Conducta para la pesca responsable. Desplegable para pescadores y personas interesadas en el tema, San José, Costa Rica. CoopeSoliDar R.L., 2004, "Discussions on the Ethics and Conservation of Fisheries Resources by Local Communities on the Costa Rican Pacific Coast", Knowledge Marketplace Reports, 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress, Bangkok, Thailand, 17-25 November, 2004.

most of the artisanal fishing communities still live in poverty and their lifestyle is strictly related to coastal marine resources. (CoopeSoliDar R.L, 2007).

This highly vulnerable situation has also been pointed out in the State of the Nation Reports, research analyzing the country's conditions, with the worsening that occurred in 2006 and 2007. It identified, on the Pacific coast alone, the existence of more than 20 projects to build marinas, without even mentioning the mega-development projects involving tourism and real estate.

The real estate and tourism developments and marina construction are blocking the access that the coastal communities traditionally had to the coastal marine resources, prohibiting access to natural resources, their nutritional security, their livelihood, their culture, and the natural resources upon which their development is based. Nevertheless, as may be seen in Tables 1 and 2, these communities' contribution is vital to the national and Central American economy.

Table 1. Artisanal Fishing: Pacific Coast Catches

Year	Pacific Coast (Metric Tons)	Guanacaste (Metric Tons)	Gulf of Nicoya (Metric Tons)	Quepos (Metric Tons)	Golfito (Metric Tons)	Caribbean (Metric Tons)
2000	21,593	13,647	3,053	2,806	2,087	1,050
2001	22,811	14,298	2,244	3,872	2,398	796
2002	19,787	11,524	2,468	3,656	2,140	622
2003	15,985	10,366	2,655	2,307	657	557
2004	12,074	5,508	3,198	2,548	820	535

Source: Fishing Statistics Department – INCOPESCA

Country	Main Species	Main Forms of Fishing	No. Estimated Boats	No. Estimated Fishermen/workers
Costa Rica	Coastal bottom dwellers, coastal deep sea fish	Hooks, dragnets, drag lines	3,500	30,000
El Salvador	Lobster, shrimp, fish	Drag lines, gill nets, lines with hooks	21,112	210,000
Guatemala	Fish, mahimahi, sharks, shrimp, lobster	Hand lines, hooks, dragging, snorkeling	5,500	25,000
Honduras	Lobster, shrimp, crab, fish	Drag lines, gill nets, hooks, snorkeling	11,000	220,000
Nicaragua	Shrimp, fish (hawkfish, snapper), large deep sea fish, mollusks, crustaceans, bottom dwellers	Gill nets, hooks, free diving, traps, shrimp nets	14,000	110,000
Panama	Crab, lobsters, clams, octopi, shrimp, fish	Gill nets	6,600	110,000

Source: FAO/OSPESCA, 2006

Thousands of Central Americans depend directly or indirectly on artisanal and farmed fishing. This activity is recognized as a source of employment for small fishermen and women since it brings in money and is also a major factor in their being able to feed themselves.

Efforts have been fruitless that have attempted to include artisanal fishing at the national and/or Central American level in a commercial, social or environmental dynamic to gain access to the benefits of its contribution to development, improving the quality of life, or recovering, in a dignified fashion, the art of fishing as an important activity in national development.

Fishing workers in Costa Rica continue to be an excluded and vulnerable sector in the marine-coastal development model. The exclusion occurs at the social and economic level so an innovative approach is needed so it can be included respectfully and in a dignified fashion in the local development processes. It needs to become involved in strengthening environmental management and in transforming socio-environmental conflicts so it can become stronger in the medium term.

2) Arisal of the Coopesolidar R.L. - CoopeTárcoles R.L.⁴ Association

⁴ Taken from Fonseca M, V. Solis Rivera. “Principios y valores éticos en la construcción de una relación de asociatividad y alianzas: Hacia el establecimiento de nuevas formas de trabajo para la transformación de conflictos socioambientales. Una reflexión desde la práctica”, Report presented at the Third Regional Forum on Socio-environmental Conflicts in Latin America, 20-21 February, 2008. Quito, Ecuador.

A key element that has made the association relationship between our two cooperatives possible came about because of the organizations' own structure: cooperative companies based on values and strengthening the capital stock.

As has been defined in the national context, cooperatives are voluntary associations of parties and not of capital, where individuals are democratically organized, where the motivation lies in work and production, distribution and consumption, service and not profits (Article 1, Cooperative Association Act, No. 6756)

A relationship involving association is a wager by the Coopesolidar R.L. and CoopeTárcoles R.L. associates on developing better, more efficient means of relating the two organizations based on strengthening the value of solidarity between cooperatives, incorporating environment and sustainable development within the framework of artisanal fishing and improving the quality of life of the associates and the community.

The association has been an outstanding and innovative learning experience for both organizations in the economic, social, and environmental fields and the spirit of the cooperatives has been strengthened. This experience has proven that transparency, effective communications and ongoing enthusiasm are possible in order to protect the sea and make rational use of the natural resources underlying fishing.

This involves applying participatory methodological tools including: previous informed consent (PIC), codes of ethics, letters of understanding, building and integrating knowledge, participatory zoning of the sea and its resources, strategic planning, etc. These factors have all defined the steps to follow in the association relationship. In addition, a long process involving technology transfer and capacity enhancement has been developed that has made it possible for us (the CoopeTárcoles R.L. fishermen and women and the Coopesolidar R.L. associates) to have better tools that are applicable to the subject of socio-environmental conflict transformation.

This relationship has enabled joint progress on diverse fronts, including two keys for reflection: on the one hand, begin a process to recognize the first marine community area for responsible fishing to be able to advance toward recognizing a form of community governance of the coastal marine resources; on the other hand, a business commitment to creating sources of work involving social and environmental responsibility based on developing a business, including: The Por la Mar R.L. Consortium (taken from Solís, et al., 2006) (See Appendix 1.).

Criminal Law has many limitations. There are other alternatives for the Law to be fulfilled and apply. The conviction part of the convincing, the reasons that do not show the need to do something. Voluntary instruments guide us toward

working on convincing people to change or reinforce their attitudes so that their activities are oriented toward the objective accepted as being important (Madrigal and Solís, 2007).

3.1) Development of the Community Marine Area of Responsible Fishing in Tárcoles, A Different Community Governance Model

The Community Conservation Areas are a form of governance⁵ oriented toward recognizing the contribution by the indigenous people and local communities in managing protected areas and natural resources. Under this form of governance, the authority, responsibility, and control involved in managing a protected area lies with the representatives of the indigenous or local communities, based on their matter-of-course right or effective traditional norms in relation to their lands and natural resources. The community is traditionally or legally the owner of the land and its natural resources and has dedicated them to the conservation objectives of an IUCN category (Borrini-Feyerabend, G., 2007).

The international discussion on this subject has been expressed in the primary global forums such as the World Parks Congress, Durban (2003); the World Congress of Nature, Bangkok, Thailand, 2004; and the World Congress on Protected Marine Areas; IMPACT 1, Australia 2005. In addition, the countries that are part of the Convention on Biological Diversity have promoted the initiative, indicating how important it is to promote this form of governance within the Protected Area Work Plan.

Costa Rica still does not have an example of where a protected area is recognized under the community governance model, according to the CBD's Protection Area Commission Work Plan. The process of recognizing and creating the "Community Marine Area for Responsible Artisanal Fishing" located across from CoopeTárcoles R.L. in the Canton of Garabito, Puntarenas, is perhaps one of the most advanced initiatives.

⁵ "Governance refers to the interaction among structures, processes and traditions that determine how to exercise power, how decisions about public issues are made and how citizens and other stakeholders express themselves. It has to do with power, relations, and accountability, who has the influence, who decides and how accounts are rendered." (Abrams et al., 2003.)

The decision by artisanal fishermen and women involves fighting for consolidating a form of community governance materialized after discussing the different types of existing ownership and possible marine governance scenarios, such as: governmental, private (concessions), co-management, and community.

Once the different scenarios were clarified based on their marine usage tradition, the CoopeTárcoles R.L. artisanal fishermen and women agreed that the sea and its resources are a right of all the users, so long as they respect the responsible usage norms; therefore, a community marine area is the most appropriate form of governance and was defined as:

“The Community Marine Area for Responsible Artisanal Fishing is where not just the CoopeTárcoles R.L. associates can exercise their rights to artisanal fishing; rather it includes all artisanal fishermen and women who pledge to practice responsible fishing (Community Marine Area for Responsible Fishing, Tárcoles, General Usage Norms, 2007).

The work on recognizing the area has included using diverse tools and participatory research and information compilation techniques. This is in addition to preparing a design for a conflict prevention, negotiation, and political dialog process. The following details some of the methodological guidelines and tools used:

A) Building Knowledge for Decision Making

To compile information and contribute to strengthening local capacities, work began in mid-2005 on building a fishing data table to collect information about daily fishing catches, the fishing process, the main fishing spots, and the moon's influence.

The data are taken from each fisherman/woman and compiled by a local fisherman/woman who tabulates the information and enters it into a computer. Then the data are analyzed jointly by CoopeTárcoles R.L. and Coopesolidar R.L., making it possible to make decisions and take actions oriented toward sustainable fishing management. Socializing

Integrating scientific and traditional knowledge has improved the development of a local data based managed by CoopeTarcoles R.L fishermen, the information now permits the strengthening of their enterprise and the information for local management of the small fisheries

this information from month to month has been another major element in building knowledge.

This work has also made it possible to provide feedback with timely information to the state institution responsible for marine issues, e.g., they have recommended monitoring fishing for manta rays or the need to carry out participatory research on lobster on Costa Rica's Pacific coast.

B) Participatory Zoning

Zoning the community marine area for responsible fishing has been a very interesting exercise that has made it possible for the CoopeTárcoles R.L. artisanal fishermen and women to build a vision, objectives, and common direction in relation to their work.

Through open meetings with the artisanal fishermen and women, a map of the fishing spots, the types of fishing used, and the areas with the greatest environmental vulnerability was built. Once the geographic marine spaces were defined, it was double checked against the information compiled in the database.

Then a process involving geo-references was begun with the artisanal fishermen and women for the sites using GPS. Once the geographic coordinates were defined, the information was integrated with the geographic information system to create area maps.

The participatory zoning also made it possible to identify new stakeholders that share the marine resources and latent conflict areas, in particular with the fleet of shrimp drag boats and other artisanal fishermen and women whose fishing has a high environmental impact. This information was used to prepare and discuss negotiation scenarios with the artisanal fishermen and women in relation to the different stakeholders.

The participatory zoning progress has made it possible to geographically mark off the sectors considering the type of coast, existing natural resources, the type of fishing used, the parties using the resources, areas of conflict, and fishing practices. This information is a fundamental element in developing the small fishery management plan and specific responsible management norms for each part of the community responsible fishing marine area.

C) Norm Preparation and Political Impact

As was mentioned previously, in Costa Rica there is no precedent to recognize the community conservation marine areas; therefore, no norms existed that would make it possible to recognize the area.

Faced with this outlook and based on a request by Coopesolidar R.L. and CoopeTárcoles R.L. for the INCOPELCA⁶ Board of Directors to promote a concrete initiative, the Executive Director of the Costa Rican Institute of Fishing and Aquaculture (INCOPELCA), created a commission made up of representatives of INCOPELCA, the Ministry of the Environment and Energy (MINAE), Coopesolidar R.L., CoopeTárcoles R.L. and other NGOs linked to marine conservation, such as (Conservation International, MARVIVA, AVINA) to prepare a national proposal to make it possible, not just for CoopeTárcoles R.L., but for other communities and organized groups that comply with certain suitability conditions, to ask the INCOPELCA Board of Directors to create community marine areas for responsible fishing.

The national proposal preparation process has been slow and complicated; on the one hand, the legal competence for INCOPELCA and the state in general had to be established to be able to recognize this type of area. On the other hand, being able to define a norm that would respect the rights of all citizens living in the country without excluding any sector during the drafting process had to be taken into consideration.

Within the framework of the association relationship, the work on preparing and negotiating the proposal made it possible for each of the organizations to make its own contributions: For example, Coopesolidar R.L. contributed by preparing the technical contents referring to Costa Rica norms and compiling and analyzing the primary advances in the area globally. For its part, CoopeTárcoles R.L. contributed by identifying the particular attributes of the artisanal fishermen and women: their history, fishing traditions, local needs, etc. All this input was taken to the Work Commission so it could be used to prepare the definitive proposal. The INCOPELCA representatives made the technical and legal proposal workable as defined within the institution's responsibilities. Both the Coopesolidar R.L. and the artisanal fishermen and women's representatives participated in all the commission's working meetings.

Although the proposal prepared coming from the Work Commission does not faithfully follow what is defined internationally as a community conservation area, it has made it possible for the country to move toward a more participatory governance proposal, which in a country with a centralized orientation such as Costa Rica must be viewed as positive.

⁶ The INCOPELCA Board of Directors is a decision-making body made up of representatives from the fishing sector and governmental institutions, and is presided over by the Executive President

The bylaws proposed for setting up the responsible fishing marine areas were approved in a meeting held by the INCOPECA Board of Directors on April 4. Since then, work has begun on presenting the community marine area for responsible fishing in Tárcoles for recognition and establishment.

These bylaws attempt to recognize the right to work, participation, and a healthy and ecologically balanced sound environment for the artisanal fishermen and women.

The responsible fishing marine area definition that is established in the bylaws follows: "This is an area with important biological, fishing or socio-cultural characteristics that regulate fishing particularly to ensure that the fishing resources may be enjoyed in the long term and where INCOPECA may count on the support of coastal communities and/or other institutions in conserving, using, and managing it."

It defines a procedure where the applicant organization takes the lead by providing, for example, records and historic information that show the biological, fishing, socio-cultural, and environmental importance underlying the creation of such an entity and its regulation mechanisms in a determined marine area, a base line with socio-economic conditions for the members of the interested organization, and a map indicating the zone's geographic coordinates proposed by the National Geographic Institute. It includes participatory zoning with the support of INCOPECA or other institutions or organizations in the areas set aside for fishing, and total or partial fishing ban areas; details about the types of fishing (commercial, sports, tourist, etc.); quantity, number and types of fishing; ship modes; first catch figures; or any other information relevant to the proposal's viability.

Once the application has been analyzed and accepted, INCOPECA proceeds to issue a Fishing Management Plan setting up the particular characteristics and regulations for fishing or aquaculture in the area.

What is innovative about this initiative is that there is nothing that is exclusive or that creates exclusive rights. On the contrary, fishing in these areas will be allowed for members of the applicant organization and any other fisherman or woman so long as they have a current fishing license and follow the regulations set forth in the Fishing Management Plan defined for each area.

Along with the applicant organization, a Follow-up Commission is appointed to ensure that the Fishing Management Plan is applied.

Parallel to the national proposal preparation process, the work done by Coopesolidar R.L. and CoopeTárcoles R.L. includes an analysis process involving possible scenarios and conflict situations. The purpose is to identify the

best way to negotiate the area and reach agreements with other users and to identify actions based on the responses obtained when the responsible fishing marine area in Tárcoles is presented.

The most complicated point in this process involving political impact was the analysis of the state competencies and the areas of participation in making decisions about common property such as the sea. The initial proposal implied the state recognizing artisanal fishing in the Tárcoles area for more than forty years and consequently, their rights to have access to the coastal marine resources. This stance met with resistance at INCOPECA because it considered that authority over public property, the sea, pertained exclusively to the state that exercises its right of domain in making decisions. It is precisely this position that is included in the bylaws, since INCOPECA is the entity that sets up the responsible fishing marine areas; however, the creation of a Follow-Up Commission with the participation of the applicant organization was accepted.

3.2 Creation of the Por la Mar Consortium: Sharing Risks

After several years of maturation in relation to the association relationship, on August 7, 2007, the Consorcio Por la Mar R.L. consortium was created.

The Consorcio Por la Mar R.L. represents a long-term bet (one-one) between the two cooperatives. It is an auxiliary business cooperative body legally created by the two cooperatives where its committees and decision-making structure are made up of representatives from each of the two cooperatives.

This consortium is attempting to consolidate a business initiative oriented toward developing tourism to be able to share experiences and events lived involving artisanal fishing through guided visits to demonstrate responsible artisanal fishing.

This initiative's vision is: Share the experiences and events lived in responsible artisanal fishing in Tárcoles, showing Costa Ricans and foreigners that the fishing workers do it honorably and responsibly. Its mission is: Share the responsible fishing trade as a worthy way of life that contributes to biological and cultural conservation of the marine coastal resources as something that is good for society.

The consortium may be a good example of what is called an inclusive business.⁷ It is an innovative instrument that will make it possible, over the long term, to not

⁷ *A business may even be an entrepreneurial initiative that, without losing sight of its profit-making objective, contributes to overcoming poverty by including low-income people in the chain of value. Thus, a business even links the entrepreneurial sector to low-income men and women, seeking mutual benefit. Businesses even are characterized by providing guarantees of sustainability (economic, environmental, and social) over time. Application implies building a trusting relationship among the parties based on active, equitable collaboration (for more information see <http://wbcsd.typepad.com/wbcsdsny>; <http://www.cecodes.org.co/boletin2007>).*

depend on international aid, ensuring sustainability in the processes that are undertaken by both cooperatives: the responsible fishing community marine area, creating new knowledge based on local research and techniques, and sustainable fishing management by CoopeTárcoles R.L.

Final Thoughts

The subject of this year's conference, the "Global Commons" refers to local experiences in coping with global challenges.

The problem involving the decrease in fishing resources is recognized. Different studies call for taking actions to prevent fisheries collapsing in the short and medium term. The oceans have been considered to be common property and access has been open to the different users without clearly establishing any restrictions so that it is used rationally.

The differences in each type of fishery are related to how they impact the environment. The fishing sector is not homogeneous; it includes diverse sectors with different characteristics.

The definition of what is understood to be artisanal fishing is fundamental to be able to distance it from other fisheries with greater environmental impact. Artisanal fishing in Costa Rica is understood to take place within five nautical miles from the low tide mark. It involves using small crafts with limited autonomy and the fishing trips do not last more than 48 hours. In the words of a fisherman, with characteristic clarity, it is fishing done by hand with no help from the boat's engine.

The artisanal fishermen and women have a relationship with the coastal marine resources that make their attitude toward conserving biological diversity more open since they understand perfectly that their livelihood and sovereignty depends on these ecosystems being ecologically balanced.

The relationship between artisanal fishing populations and the marine and coastal environment occurs within a social and cultural context; this relationship is what informs their cultural identity, their vision of the world.

Little has been done in Costa Rica and in the countries in the Central American region to recognize the cultural identity of the artisanal fishermen and women, their traditional knowledge, how they have used the sea, their vision of the sea, and their contribution to conservation. "The sea begins up on the mountain," is a phrase that expresses the vision of the ecosystem that this group has.

To cope with the global threat of a decrease in fishing resources, the local experiences that are occurring must be identified. The experience that we have shared today to recognize the rights of a group of artisanal fishermen and women

to access land and sea may provide input to guide us toward winning back this cultural identity, to strengthen it, and to conserve biological diversity.

Participatory decision making opportunities, knowledge creation and building, conflict transformation and resolution, political impact – these are some of the elements involved in this process.

The proposals have not been accepted in full; it has been a negotiation process in relation to recognizing existing rights because using public natural resources has met with resistance by the state's legal advisors, who maintain its public nature in a strict sense and not based on its social function and how it affects public purposes. This concept of public property affected for a common public purpose has not met with any sort of resonance in the national legal doctrine. Nevertheless, it would make it possible to participate without affecting the state's authority by strengthening the forms of governance and decision making, turning them into something more democratic.

The trip has barely begun...

Bibliography

Abrams, et al., 2003. Borrini-Feyerabend., J. Gardner and P. Heylins. Evaluating Governance: A Handbook to Accompany a Participatory Process for a Protected Area. Report for Parks Canada and IUCN/CEESP/CMGW/TILCEPA.

Borrini-Feyerabend, Grazia. 2007. The "IUCN protected area matrix"—A tool towards effective protected area systems. IUCN – WCPA. One of a series of papers for a summit on the IUCN categories in Andalusia, Spain May 7-11, 2007

CoopeSoliDar R.L., 2007, Consideraciones sociales del sector pesquero artesanal sobre el Corredor Marino de Conservación del Pacífico Este Tropical: primeras ideas para la incidencia social, San José, Costa Rica.

CoopeSoliDar R.L., Documentos internos. Área Marina Comunitaria para la pesca Responsable, Tárcoles, Normas de Uso Generales, 2007

CoopeSolidar R.L. 2006. Tárcoles: una comunidad de pescadores artesanales en Costa Rica, aportes a la conservación de los recursos marino costeros del Golfo de Nicoya, San José, Costa Rica;

CoopeTárcoles R.L., 2005, Nuestro Código de Pesca Responsable, San José, Costa Rica. CoopeSoliDar R.L., 2004, "Recogiendo saberes y fortaleciendo valores", EDITORAMA S.A., San José, Costa Rica, p. 102.

CoopeSoliDar R.L., CoopeTárcoles R.L., 2004, Código de Conducta para la pesca responsable. Desplegable para pescadores y personas interesadas en el tema, San José, Costa Rica.

CoopeSoliDar R.L., 2004, "Discussions on the Ethics and Conservation of Fisheries Resources by Local Communities on the Costa Rican Pacific Coast", Knowledge Marketplace Reports, 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress, Bangkok, Thailand, 17-25 November 2004.

FAO/OSPESCA, 2006. Características principales de la actividad de pesca, Centroamérica. Prepared by CONFEPESCA.

Instituto Costarricense de Pesca y Acuicultura., 2004. Various reports, the Department of Fishing Statistics.

Solís, V. 2007, Pesca artesanal responsable y sus aportes a la conservación de la diversidad marino-costera: Surgimiento de actividades económicas alternativas para la participación de este sector en el desarrollo local en el Pacífico de Costa Rica. Work proposal, working document.

Madrigal and Solís, 2007. Establecimiento de normas de pesca responsable voluntarias en áreas marinas: un ejemplo en el pacífico de Costa Rica. Report presented at the Congreso Latinoamericano de Áreas Protegidas. Bariloche, Argentina.

Fifth UICN World Parks Congress, Durban, September 8-17, 2003, Recommendations, WPC Rec. 5.17.

World Parks Congress. 2003. Benefits Beyond Boundaries. Proceeding of the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress. Durban, South Africa.

Web Pages:

www.coopesolidar.org

www.consorcioportamar.com

www.coopetarcoles.org