

Protected Areas Governance in Belize: A Triple Bottom Line Evaluation and Decision Analysis

Biallas, Shella

Belize 2006-2008

University of Washington - School of Public Affairs

This analysis is focused on the delicate balance between protecting valuable ecosystems in the tropics of Central America, supporting rural communities as they struggle to overcome poverty, and meeting the economic development goals of a small, formally agrarian country. Specifically, this analysis will examine how the primary environmental decision makers in Belize might create protected areas management that meets the social, economic, and environmental goals being promoted by the international community as well as by the national government.

This work builds on several key policy recommendations that were highlighted in the Belize National Protected Areas Plan concerning the management of the protected areas and will seek to answer the question: How can the primary environmental decision makers in Belize capture the economic benefits of ecotourism while balancing the social, economic, and environment goals laid out in the National Protected Areas Systems Plan?

The intended audience for this study is the environmental decision makers in Belize: the Minister of the Environment and the Director of the Institute of Archaeology. In addition, the international NGO's and ecotourism operators that work in Belize and other developing countries will also benefit from the results of this research.