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Environmental risk in coastal zones: Approaches and requirements for adequate coastal assessments

Undertaking environmental risk assessments for coastal environments is usually a complex, potentially conflict-ridden exercise. Human populations in countries are usually concentrated along coastal zones if they have significant areas of productive and accessible coast and a history of exploitation. They are naturally prone to multiple use conflicts, potential over exploitation and politics. This session will begin with a short presentation on environmental risk in the urbanized, industrial and recreationally popular Cockburn Sound, Western Australia. This case study will outline a basic approach to environmental risk assessment stimulated by a State Government Auditor General report on environmental management for the system. It will introduce how climate change and contaminant inventories can reveal important sources of environmental threats that need to be factored into any risk assessment. This presentation reviews environmental risk frameworks, the range of situations and degrees of complexity that shape assessments (contexts), essential components identifying and organizing existing and missing information, appreciating politics-social/cultural factors, megatrends and common factors influencing assessments, resources to undertake adequate assessments-more on information and integration and synthesis. It will close on the importance of cultivating champions, providing good information for decision making and how all together the process can be like the effort to search for the Holy Grail.

Biography

Thomas H Rose has over 25 years' experience working on migratory fish, trophics, eutrophication, estuarine ecology and developing and managing estuarine and coastal restoration and environmental management programs. He has extensive experience in environmental impact assessments, monitoring and analysis, working with stakeholders, community, researchers and industry and has worked with government to better understand environmental risk, undertake partnerships to help improve coastal land use and impacts on coastal resources. He has worked on multiple uses of coastal environments and has been an advocate of adaptive approaches to issues and solutions and more clever use of decision support systems to help transition to more sustainable coastal zone economies.

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