

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONFLICTS OF GOOD INTENTIONS: A PERSPECTIVE



"The most important thing in the development of a plan for Pak Phanang is to clearly define the roles of various agencies, to avoid overlapping, and to enable active and realistic execution."

A conclusion from the Community Workshop on Coastal Issues in Pak Phanang, August, 1991

NOTE TO READER

October 1, 2006

THIS IS A SEARCHABLE PDF DOCUMENT

This document has been created in Adobe Acrobat Professional 6.0 by scanning the best available original paper copy. The page images may be cropped and blank numbered pages deleted in order to reduce file size, however the full text and graphics of the original are preserved. The resulting page images have been processed to recognize characters (optical character recognition, OCR) so that most of the text of the original, as well as some words and numbers on tables and graphics are searchable and selectable. To print the document with the margins as originally published, do not use page scaling in the printer set up.

This document is posted to the web site of the
Coastal Resources Center,
Graduate School of Oceanography,
University of Rhode Island
220 South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island, USA 02882

Telephone: 401.874.6224
<http://www.crc.uri.edu>

Citation:

Boromthananarat, S., Cobb, S., Lee, V. (1991). Coastal Management in Pak Phanang:
A Historical Perspective of the Resources and Issues. Hat Yai, Thailand:
Coastal Resources Institute, Prince of Songkla University

This document is posted to the web in eleven segments to retain the highest possible quality.
The complete set of files are:

PakPhanang_Title.pdf

PakPhanang_Chapter1.pdf Introduction

PakPhanang_Chapter2.pdf Local Climate: Is It Changing?

PakPhanang_Chapter3.pdf Fresh Water: A Prime Concern

PakPhanang_Chapter4.pdf Sedimentation: The Bay Is Filling In

PakPhanang_Chapter5.pdf Rice : The Traditional Source of Prosperity In Trouble

PakPhanang_Chapter6.pdf Fisheries: Can They Survive?

PakPhanang_Chapter7.pdf Boom and Bust: Cycle of Trade and Prosperity

PakPhanang_Chapter8.pdf Conflicts of Good Intentions: A Perspective

PakPhanang_Chapter9.pdf Putting the Pieces Together

PakPhanang_Chapter10.pdf Appendices and References



The government has had, for many years, a policy of active assistance for the people of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province and the Pak Phanang area. The central government, the army, the provincial governor all spend millions of baht on projects to revive the economy of the region. Just last year, in addition to large government investments in roads, schools and public health clinics, the cost of projects to assist in natural resource management exceeded 4 billion baht in the Pak Phanang area. Examples of these projects are listed in Table 8.1.

The government has acted over the years with the best intention: to assist the rural people in economic development; to safeguard public health and safety; and to

maximize yields from natural resources. However the last 30 years, assistance projects and resource plans have been concerned with only one sector. Plans were developed and projects implemented by individual agencies without the benefit of coordination or integration that is so essential for effective natural resources development and management. In a review of Thailand's experience in coastal management, Kiravanich and Bunpapong (1989) state that... *"sectorial planning has been routinely used (since 1982) for directing the management of fisheries, mangroves, mineral resources, tourism, harbor/port development and oil and gas extraction."* The same is true of other important activities in the coastal zone such as mangrove use, rice production, forestry (rubber plantations), flood control and water supply. Lack of coordination of government policy formulation and implementation has increased the conflicts over the use of resources and has been a powerful factor in influencing the boom and bust cycles in the region. There are more than 25 government agencies with some responsibility for coastal land use.





Table 8.1. Selected Central Government Projects in 1991 that Affect the Coastal Region of Pak Phanang.

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>Cost</i> (million baht)
Irrigation Dept.	● Khlong Lamai Basin, storage	139
	● Khlong Tum Phra Basin, storage	241
	● Khlong Kok Yang Basin, storage	294
	● Hvai Num Sai Basin plan storage for 92,000 rai irrigation	330
	● Ta Payom Basin Plan, storage for 21,500 rai irrigation	130
Irrigation Dept. and Nakhon Si Thammarat Province	● Dredge 1.4 million cubic meters sediment, four canals connecting to Tha Noi Swamp	38
Irrigation Dept.	● Dredge flood control canals and Khlong Din Daeng and Khlong Ka Toon Reservoirs with storage for 200 million cubic meters	2,470
Highway Dept.	● Road to fish landing port	69
	● Road between BoLo and Kuan Nong Hong	41
	● Road #4013 East to West Pak Phanang	175
	● Road from Pak Phanang to Chian Yai	50
The Airport Authority	● Airport at Nakhon Si Thammarat	224
Fisheries Dept.	● Conversion of 4,000 rai to intensive shrimp ponds	190
Ministry of University Affairs	● Construct Nakhon Si Thammarat University	70
Municipal Water Works	● Reservoir for drinking water supply for Pak Phanang	50
TOTAL		4,511



There are a multitude of resource development plans for fisheries, mangroves, tin mining, rice production, and shrimp aquaculture for the Province of Nakhon Si Thammarat. However, the lack of collaboration and coordination both among government agencies and between the government and the people of Pak Phanang during the planning process resulted in conflicting management priorities. This problem is made more difficult by the separation of resource planning divisions from implementation divisions. Planners do not have the authority or capability to enforce implementation of management strategies. Implementers often do not understand or support the plans prepared without their participation.

Administrative authority and continuity at the provincial and local government levels is limited. Governors, the highest provincial authorities, are appointed by the central government, not elected by

local vote. They are transferred to different provinces every few years. Their short tenure does not allow sufficient time to develop and implement integrated resource management strategies which have longer time frames. In addition, the provincial government is far removed from central government. Village headmen, who are elected, have authority only over very limited areas, and rarely are involved in central government plans or projects. As a consequence the local people feel isolated and confused. In circumstances such as this, it is difficult to generate a regional, integrated approach to resource management and economic development. Thus, even though the government has been trying hard to assist local economic development, and has invested billions of baht, Pak Phanang, there is still a lack of awareness and a sense of frustration on the part of local residents that government doesn't care and is not attending to their needs.



CONFLICTING POLICIES: SOME EXAMPLES

Many people and agencies are trying to do the right thing but with contradicting results. For instance, the Irrigation Department has a policy to increase rice production in the Pak Phanang region. Consequently, they are building at least four major reservoirs to provide freshwater irrigation to millions of rai of rice fields. Many new fields will be located in the upland portion of the watershed of the Pak Phanang River. This impact considering the water balance in the whole ecosystem, it is likely that holding freshwater in the uplands will make the salt water intrusion problem worse and decrease the productivity of the lowland rice fields of farmers near the coast. At the same time that the Irrigation Department is spending millions of baht to channel fresh water to rice fields, the Provincial Electricity Authority and High Way Department are subsidizing

electrical power and roads to help shrimp farmers and inevitably lead to the conversion of rice paddies and mangroves to shrimp farms.

The Forestry Department is trying to stop clearing of mangroves, which by definition are public lands, and, in some places, has set up conservation areas. They are also actively planting mangroves on newly formed intertidal areas. In some of these same mangrove areas, shrimp farmers are clearing and constructing aquaculture ponds.



One specific example in West Pak Phanang helps illustrate the problem. Based on concerns expressed at a local meeting, the government decided to construct the Bang Thuat irrigation project to promote rice farming in an area of 1,000 rai for about 100 families. Then six shrimp farmers came into the area and started 180 rai of shrimp ponds. Now there is a disagreement over whether the khlong should have salt water to supply the shrimp pond or freshwater to irrigate the rice. Shrimp farmers break the lock on the irrigation gate to open it and let salt water flow into the khlong. Every week or so an irrigation official comes back, shuts the gate and replaces the lock and chain. Conflicts like this are common occurrences throughout coastal Pak Phanang.

Shrimp farming provides another example of how good intentions of government, if not well coordinated, may result in more problems than solutions for the people of the coastal zone. For instance, mangrove areas are owned by the government and they are intended to be public conservation areas. The Forestry Department is charged with managing all forest lands, including mangrove forests. Protected regions of forest include national parks, wildlife conservation sanctuaries and non-hunting areas. Recognizing the environmental value of mangroves, the Forestry Department has designated extensive tracts of mangrove as conservation areas around Pak Phanang Bay. (See Figure 8.1). They stopped the harvesting of mangroves and

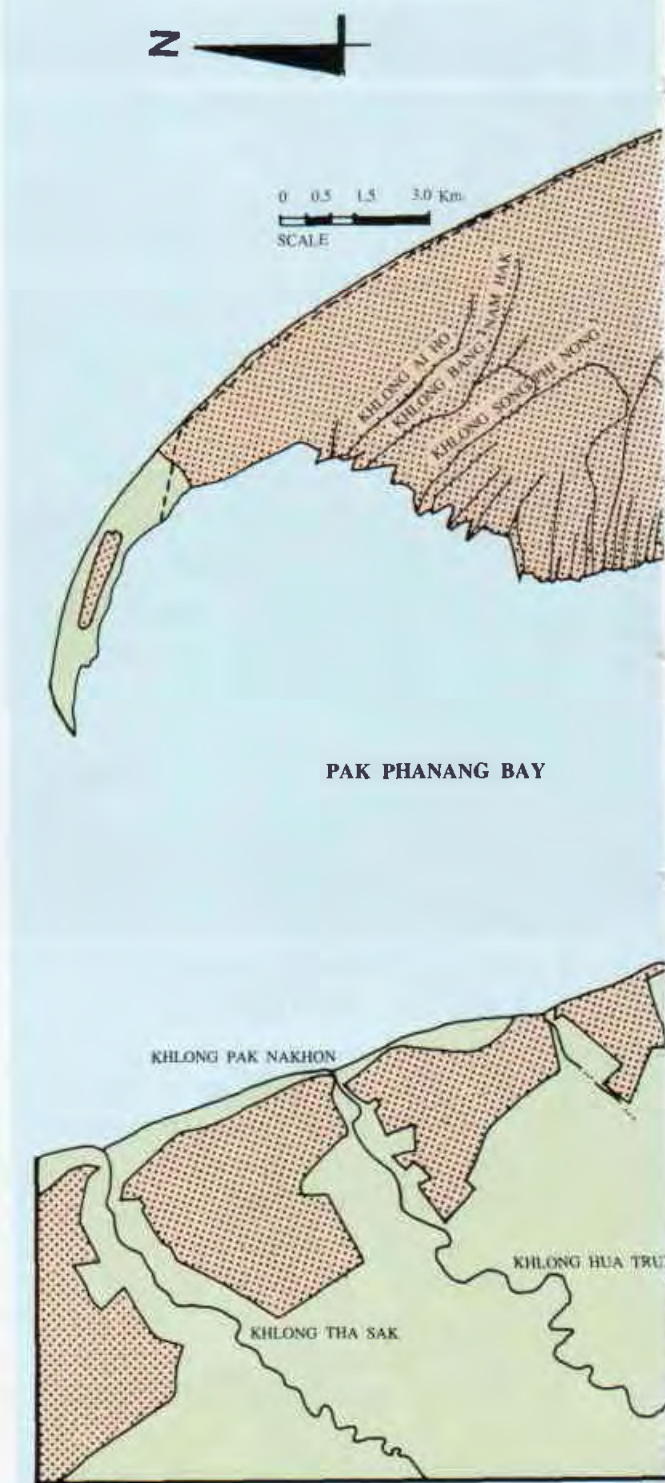


Figure 1.8. Map





have a protection policy of no hunting and no cutting. However, much encroachment of mangroves has occurred as a result of an aggressive national policy to assist rural development. Local people who move into a mangrove area and clear the forest to make improvements are then entitled to apply for a land use certificate.

With four main ministries and three support ministries with primary goals of rural job creation, programs for land titling, natural resources and environmental development and financial subsidies to actively promote rural development, it is not surprising that a decrease in the quantity and quality of natural resources has occurred. As stated in a report of the Office of the National Environment Board, *"Deriving benefits from natural resources without considering their limited availability has led not only to the depletion of various kinds of natural resources, but also to the problems of conflict and pollution."*

As a consequence, all the areas shown in Figure 8.1 as designated conservation areas are not in fact all protected areas. The mangrove areas around Khlong Pak Nakhon have people and shrimp farmers living within them. These problems of encroachment into forest lands, encroachment into mangrove areas, and land titling programs for squatters, are major problems not only in Pak Phanang, but throughout the country.

of mangrove conservation areas in Nakhon Si Thammarat.



