An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Pak Phanang, Thailand. The image shows a main road running through the town, with various buildings, including a prominent yellow one. A water tower with a blue logo is visible on the right. The town is situated near a body of water, with a bridge or pier extending into it. The sky is overcast.

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER: The Need For An Integrated, Consultative Planning Process

The challenge for Pak Phanang is to diversify and build the economy of the area, to maintain an appropriate mix of resource uses, and to effectively manage natural resources in order to promote sustained prosperity for the local people. In the past, uncoordinated, sectorial planning and government expenditures amplified Pak Phanang's boom and bust cycles of prosperity. The boom and bust mode results from reliance on single economic sectors (see Figure 7.1). When times were bad for rice, or for fish, or for shrimp, wholesale alteration of natural resources, and widespread economic and social displacement resulted. In order to break this cycle and move toward a diversified, sustainable economy, an integrated, consultative planning process is needed. The process must include not only coordination among the various agencies of national government, but also coordination and consultation among national, provincial and local government. At each major phase of planning and implementation, agencies need to consult with one another and with the local people. It is essential that local community leaders representing a variety of livelihoods and interests be actively involved in the process.

NOTE TO READER

October 1, 2006

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University of Rhode Island
220 South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island, USA 02882

Telephone: 401.874.6224
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PakPhanang_Chapter4.pdf Sedimentation: The Bay Is Filling In

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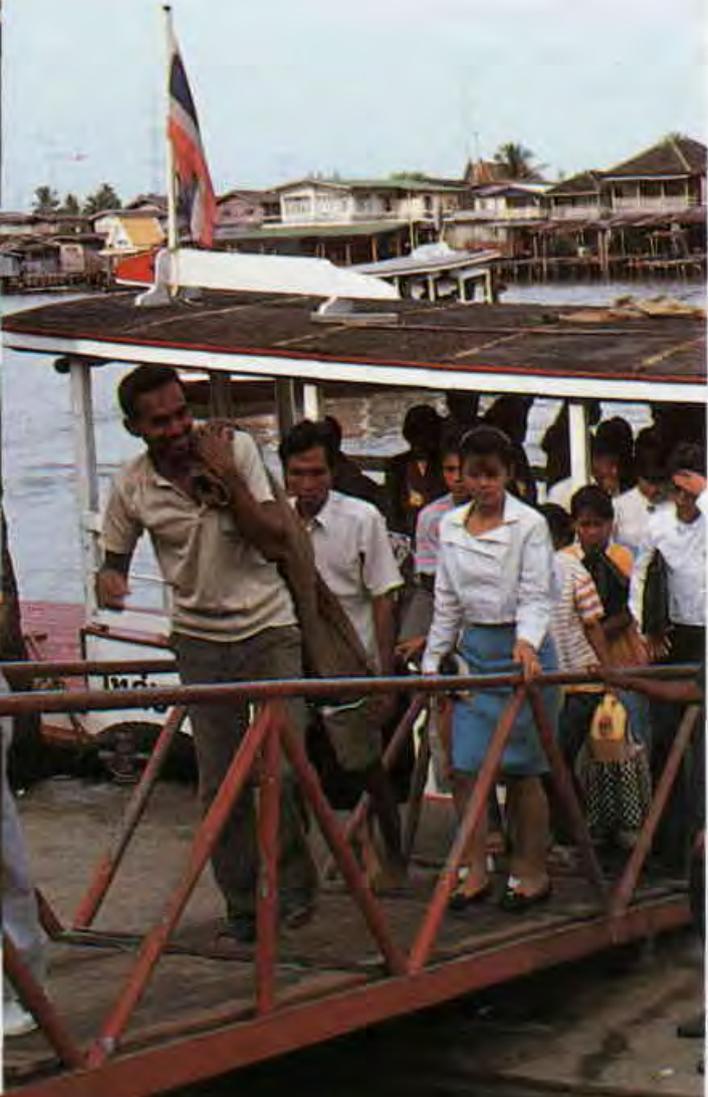
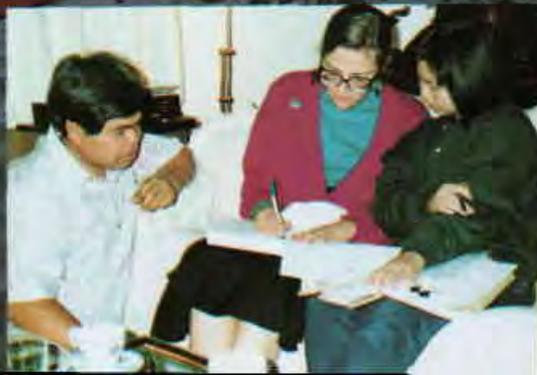
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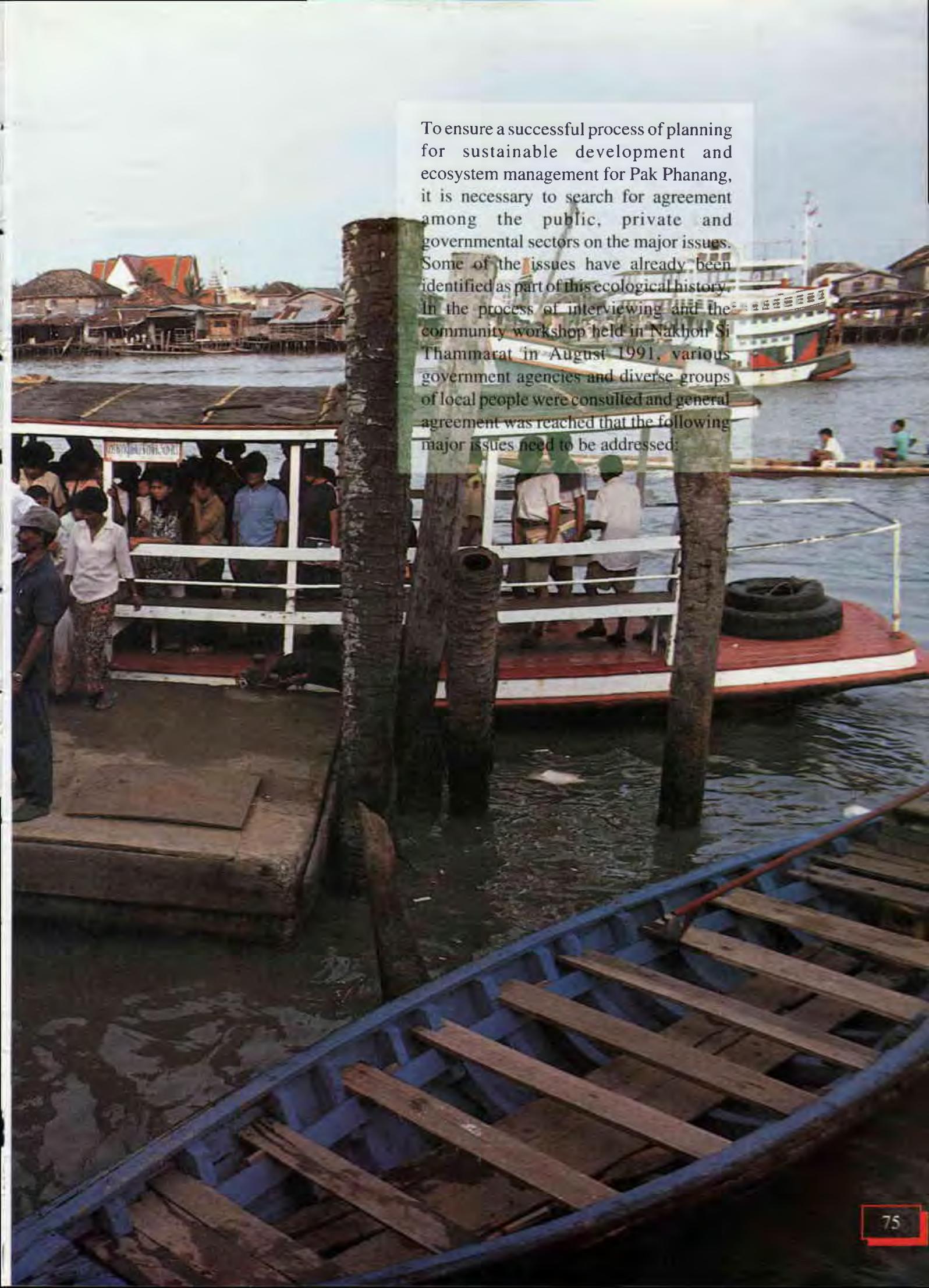
PakPhanang_Chapter7.pdf Boom and Bust: Cycle of Trade and Prosperity

PakPhanang_Chapter8.pdf Conflicts of Good Intentions: A Perspective

PakPhanang_Chapter9.pdf Putting the Pieces Together

PakPhanang_Chapter10.pdf Appendices and References





To ensure a successful process of planning for sustainable development and ecosystem management for Pak Phanang, it is necessary to search for agreement among the public, private and governmental sectors on the major issues. Some of the issues have already been identified as part of this ecological history. In the process of interviewing and the community workshop held in Nakhon Si Thammarat in August 1991, various government agencies and diverse groups of local people were consulted and general agreement was reached that the following major issues need to be addressed:



A photograph of a tropical landscape. In the foreground, there is a calm body of water reflecting the surrounding greenery. On the left, a small wooden structure with a thatched roof is partially visible. The background is filled with lush tropical vegetation, including several tall palm trees. The overall scene is serene and natural.

DEFINE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Conservation and Allocation of Freshwater: The conservation and allocation of freshwater is not a new issue to the people of Pak Phanang. The issue continues to have very high priority in the area. Not only is freshwater scarce, but changes in the uplands, combined with the growth of shrimp farming are intensifying the concern over the supply of freshwater for drinking and bathing. The issue of freshwater is a critical one to the growth of the economy, as well as to public health. Population growth of municipal Pak Phanang probably is limited by freshwater supply. Finally, choices must be made about which areas will receive freshwater irrigation for rice, and which areas will receive salt water irrigation for shrimp farming.



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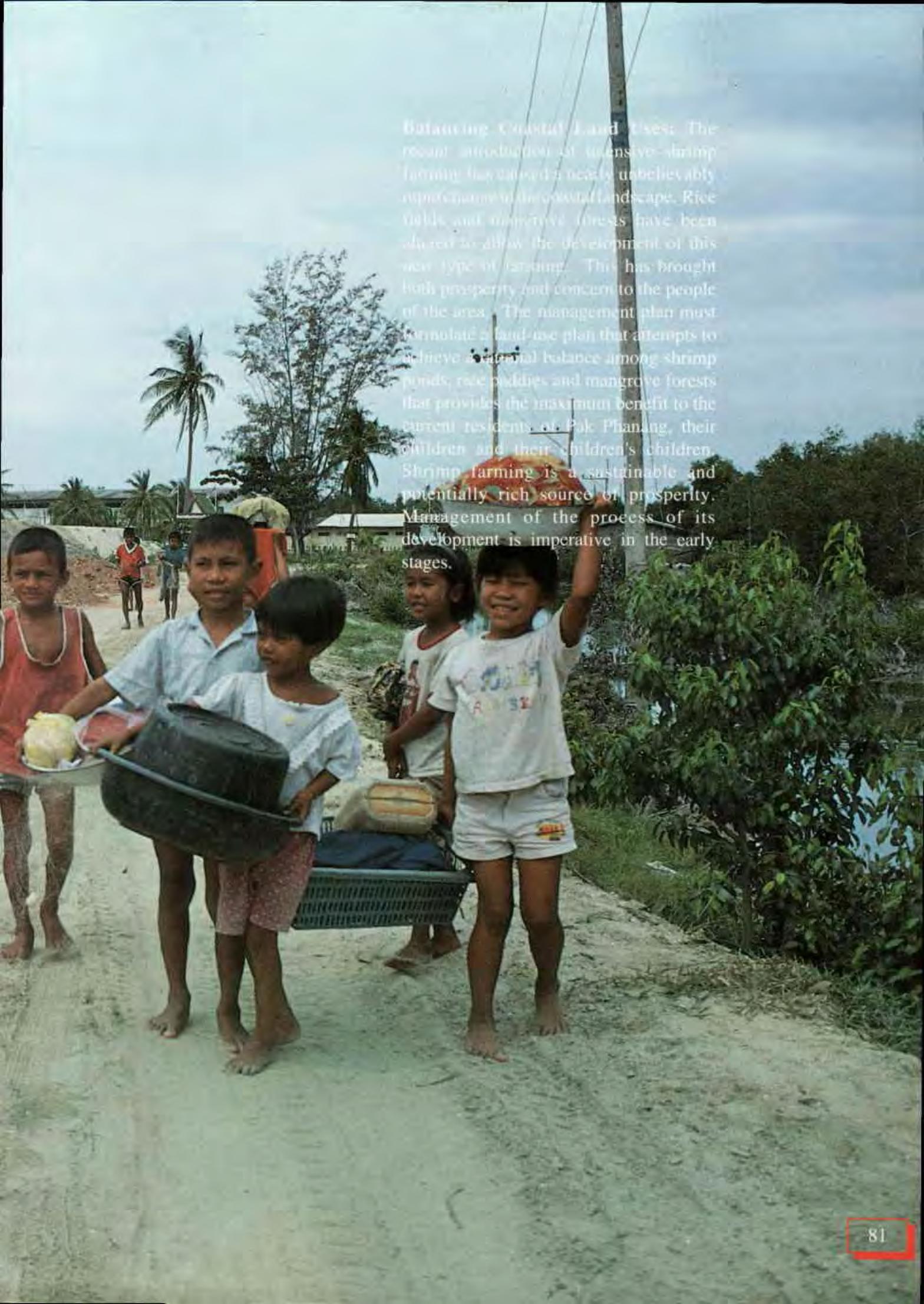
Environmental Degradation of Pak Phanang River System:

Changes in Pak Phanang Bay were a second, major, concern of the residents. The local fisheries no longer yield abundant, large fishes. The fisheries of the Bay probably will never recover to their former, essentially unfished, levels. However, appropriate management of the fisheries resources will allow a sustained yield for the residents of the area. Sedimentation shoals the bay and impedes shipping.

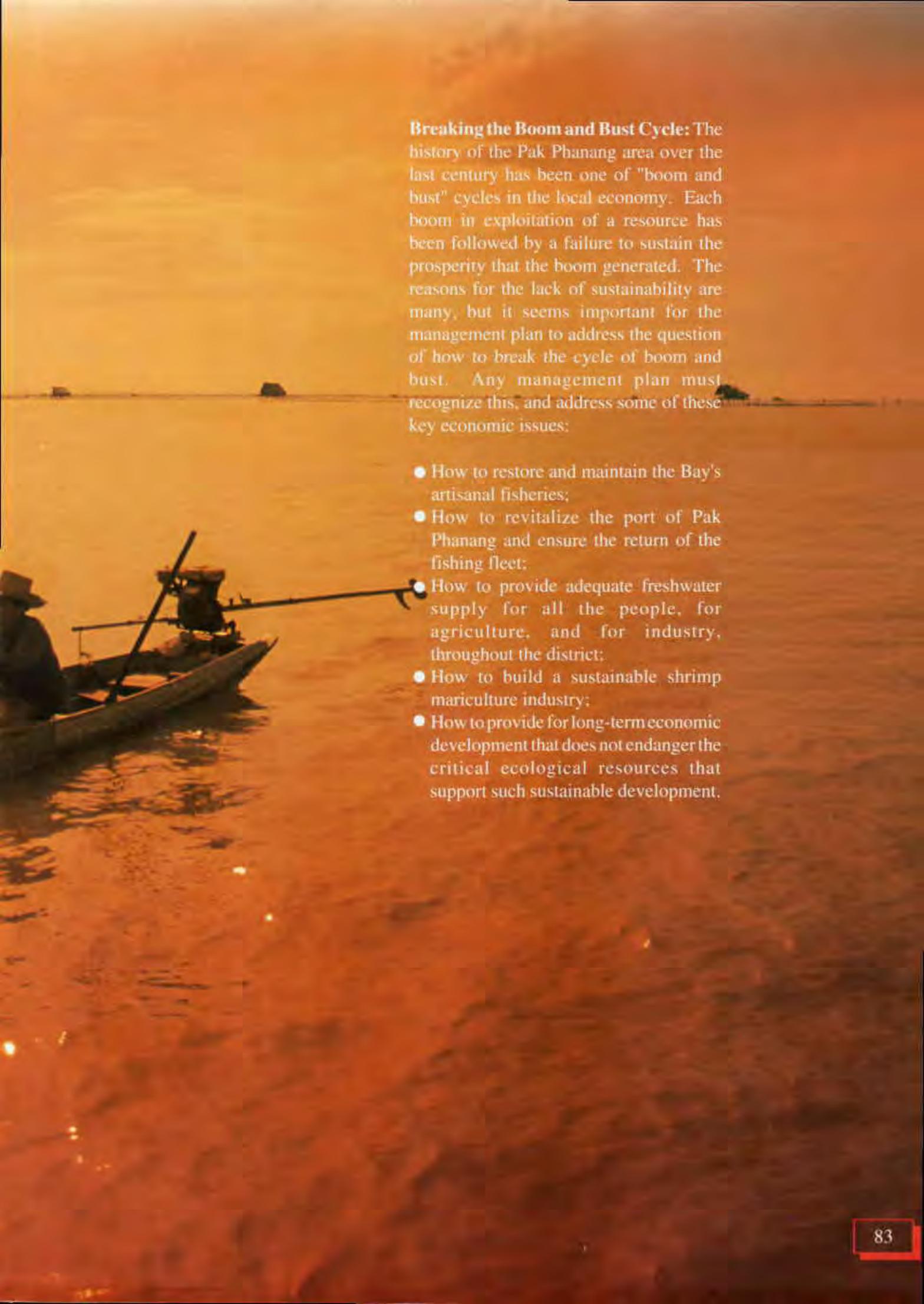
Sedimentation is a process that has a long geological history, and that cannot be changed greatly by human intervention. Learning to deal with and manage the sedimentation in the bay will have to be part of any management plan, however. Another issue for the Bay is the influx of pollutants from surrounding communities and agricultural areas, and the loss of mangrove habitat on the flats surrounding the bay. Both of these are ecological issues that have long-term ramifications on the health of the ecosystem of Pak Phanang Bay. They must be addressed in the management plan in such a way that sustainable economic and social development is possible for the people of the area.



Balancing Coastal Land Uses: The recent introduction of intensive shrimp farming has caused a nearly unbelievably rapid change in the coastal landscape. Rice fields and mangrove forests have been altered to allow the development of this new type of farming. This has brought both prosperity and concern to the people of the area. The management plan must formulate a land-use plan that attempts to achieve a natural balance among shrimp ponds, rice paddies and mangrove forests that provides the maximum benefit to the current residents of Pak Phanang, their children and their children's children. Shrimp farming is a sustainable and potentially rich source of prosperity. Management of the process of its development is imperative in the early stages.





A photograph of a person in a small boat on a body of water at sunset. The person is wearing a hat and is positioned in the lower-left foreground. The water is calm, reflecting the warm orange and yellow light of the setting sun. In the distance, there are some small structures or trees on the horizon. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

Breaking the Boom and Bust Cycle: The history of the Pak Phanang area over the last century has been one of "boom and bust" cycles in the local economy. Each boom in exploitation of a resource has been followed by a failure to sustain the prosperity that the boom generated. The reasons for the lack of sustainability are many, but it seems important for the management plan to address the question of how to break the cycle of boom and bust. Any management plan must recognize this, and address some of these key economic issues:

- How to restore and maintain the Bay's artisanal fisheries;
- How to revitalize the port of Pak Phanang and ensure the return of the fishing fleet;
- How to provide adequate freshwater supply for all the people, for agriculture, and for industry, throughout the district;
- How to build a sustainable shrimp mariculture industry;
- How to provide for long-term economic development that does not endanger the critical ecological resources that support such sustainable development.

FOLLOW A CONSULTATIVE PLANNING PROCESS

Gaining consensus on clear objectives for future development in the region will be critical for the success of a management plan. The need for coordinated, consistent actions on the part of government, especially national government, is a refrain that is repeated in interviews of rice farmers, shrimp farmers, businessmen, local community leaders and by government staff themselves. CORIN and the Prince of Songkla University can help with this process. We can create forums for consultation and put forward ideas for effective resources management. In addition, CORIN activities in research, training and public education will be an important component for promoting integrated resources management in Pak Phanang. This Ecological History is a first step in the attempt to undertake long-term planning, with the goal of sustainable development for the Pak Phanang area.

