

Departmental Papers

Central American Refugee Planning: Analysis of the Regional Response (with a Special Focus on Costa Rica) and Universal Lessons on Refugee Planning

Julie Locascio

Since the 1970s, two to three million refugees have been displaced from their homes in Central America and have dispersed around the region (not including the even larger number who have migrated to the U.S. or elsewhere). The majority of these refugees are displaced within their own countries. Because of the complexities of Central American politics, refugees from the region have elicited a highly mixed response, ranging from humanitarian to indifferent to hostile. Individuals and agencies trying to serve these refugees or resettle them are faced with a myriad of constraints.

Central American population movements have become extremely voluminous and significant, and continue to pose an unprecedented challenge to economists, relief workers, administrators, politicians, communities, planners and others. This paper describes the history of international refugee planning, examines the roots of population movements in Central America, surveys the range of regional responses to Central American refugees, analyzes the response to these refugees in the context of international relations and agreements, analyzes the Costa Rican model of refugee planning in detail, makes recommendations for a better response to Central American refugees, and summarizes universal lessons learned about refugee planning.

Tradeoffs and Controversies in the Siting of Wildlife Refuges: A Case Study of the Roanoke River in Eastern North Carolina

Seth McKee

While they may be supported by environmentalists and nature lovers, the establishment of wildlife refuges sometimes causes controversy among residents of surrounding areas. While some support them for economic or environmental reasons, others fear negative economic impacts, restrictions on the use of surrounding land, and decreased land values.

This dynamic was apparent in the recent establishment of federal and state wildlife refuges on the lower Roanoke River in eastern North Carolina. Some local residents supported the refuge idea, citing the need to protect rare wetlands habitat and the tourism benefits that could accrue from their protection. Others were opposed, focusing on landowner and hunters' rights as well as the potential for a stifling of economic development in the area.

This paper focuses on the issues involved in the controversy, both as they were perceived by local residents and as

they can be assessed using environmental, land use and economic data on the area. Conclusions are drawn in a "lessons learned" format, in the hope that government agencies and private conservation organizations will take them into account in future efforts at natural areas protection.

Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act: Limitations and Recommendations

Rob Wilson

In the 1970s and 1980s, the decreasing water quality and diminishing fish yields of the Chesapeake Bay became an issue of national concern. In response to the declining status of this multi-state resource, efforts have been made to promote the development of regional land use protection measures. Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, and the EPA signed the historic 1983 Chesapeake Bay Agreement. The agreement recognized the decline of the Bay's natural resources and set in motion a coordinated regional campaign to improve the Bay's condition. The 1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement further supported protection of the Bay by addressing water quality, animal and plant life, and the impact of population growth and development.

Virginia's 1988 Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act was one of the efforts to promote regional protection through land use controls. The act calls for a cooperative approach between the state and local governments, leaving the locality with most of the responsibility for implementation. The act established the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Board to oversee Virginia's role in the preservation process. The Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department was created to assist the board, and to provide financial and technical assistance to localities. The act allows for the board to select designation criteria and performance criteria to help determine lands sensitive to the Bay's water quality, and consequently to protect these areas. The intent of the act is that localities will delineate their respective Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas and then adopt a local management plan for the protection of these areas.

By reflecting on the endeavors of James City County and the cities of Williamsburg, Hampton, and Newport News, this paper concludes that Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act is limited in its effectiveness. Limitations occur as localities are given too much discretion in defining their preservation areas and determining their management programs. Local decisionmaking is impaired by the difficulty of balancing immediate local land use and development concerns against the long-term regional environmental interest. Finally, the Act does not guarantee uniformity of result, thus failing to comprehensively address the Bay's problems.