

Marine Spatial Planning: The Cultural Values of our Coasts

First published 13th November 2015

This is an article that was published in the Penguin News (on 16/10/15) as part of a series of 4 articles on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and was written by Denise Herrera, research assistant at SAERI, leading the study on 'Mapping Cultural Coastal Values' as part of the Darwin Plus-funded project 'MSP for the Falkland Islands' and supervised by Dr. Amélie Augé (SAERI) and Dr. Kate Sherren (Dalhousie University, Canada).



The view into Hill Cove and Saunders – a value of natural beauty.

You might know this already, but the coastline is probably important to you. Or so an ongoing study part of SAERI's Marine Spatial Planning project is trying to find out.

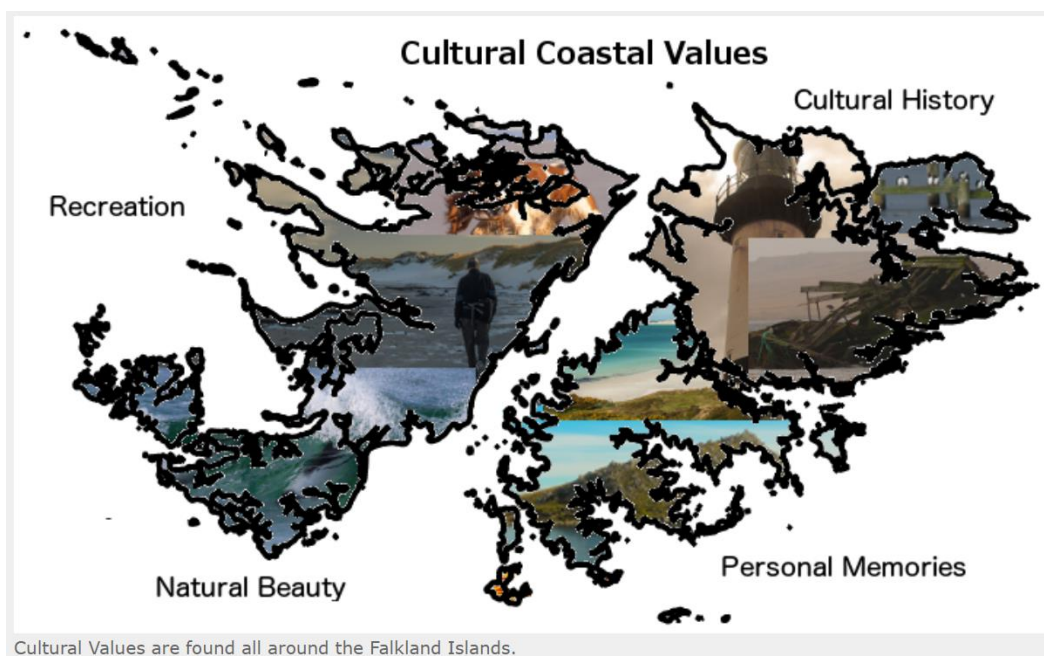
There are many reasons why a place might be important to you; you have memories there, there are important historical artefacts such as a shipwreck, close to your heart, or it could simply be the place where you like taking your dog for a walk or enjoying the sunset over the sea. These intangible "values" are what we call cultural values. They are what shape the community and give it an identity. What would the Falklands be without the hordes of people who, each mid-winter, take to Surf Bay for what can only be identified as an act of madness?

The study is focused on the coasts and is part of the Marine Spatial Planning project, developing management tools for the sea, introduced in last week's

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edition. This study is not only important to fill a gap in knowledge but also to ensure your personal values are included alongside economic and environmental values. Cultural values are often overlooked by decision makers, but should be equal to other values when making any decision: would you want a waste storage facility next to your favourite beach?

The Falklands have not only got a unique seascape and coastline, but also have a unique community – YOU! We can easily map fishing activities or the location of a penguin colony, but mapping cultural values is more challenging. This is where we need the input from the community. With members of the community pointing out their favourite areas and explaining why these areas matter to them, we can create a series of maps highlighting the areas that contain key cultural values, to be incorporated in Marine Spatial Planning.



The study is now underway; many people living in camp have already been able to participate during fieldtrips, but we are now looking for participants from Stanley (or more people from camp who happen to be in Stanley in the next few weeks). You will simply be asked to highlight your top 15 favourite places along the coast on a map and say why they are important to you; participation is anonymous and voluntary. Surveys are done in person and take about 30 minutes. If you are over 18, have lived here for more than 5 years and would like to take part please contact Denise on 61090 or e-mail dherrera@fisheries.gov.fk to arrange a time. For more information about this study or the Marine Spatial Planning project, please visit the SAERI website.