

we are seeking this ‘best’ option and whether they agree with the criteria and their weightings. Sharing decisions is not simply about incorporating the knowledge of others, but also about accepting the utilitarian ethic that we are trying to maximize the greater good, and that we can only determine that by understanding the consequences for all those affected.

One technical aspect of goal setting that does have universal applicability to conservation decisions (and most business decisions) is the time horizon. Do you want the best decision as judged in terms of one year, 10 years, 100 years, or longer. This has been incorporated into the stability criteria of Table 2, and almost every criteria of the example in Figure 1. This is an expansion of the utilitarian perspective to sharing the decision with future generations.

Musts

Kepner and Tregoe (1976) advised that one can set some criteria to a ‘must’. When the criterion can be answered with a pass/fail, quantification is no longer an issue. In conservation treatment decisions such as Table 2, reversibility is usually set as a ‘must’ (even though we all know it is never so simple). We sometimes neglect to consider a ‘must’ because it is presumed, but a decision matrix should consider ‘musts’ explicitly, enabling their re-examination if they block a shared decision.

A second ‘must’ in Table 2 is stability, this time expressed as a minimum acceptable degree of change in 100 years. Minima need a measure of some kind in order to be usable and negotiable.

Making a decision based only on ‘musts’ is known as “conjunctive satisficing” (Hwang and Yoon, 1995; Manktelow, 2012). One accepts any option that meets a set of ‘musts’. In Table 2, Treatments A and B satisfy all ‘musts’ (reversibility and minimum stability). At that point, one can just flip a coin, or engage with the arithmetic of the decision matrix to identify the best between Treatments A and B.

Building an ensemble of different strengths

If one sets very high minima for all criteria and accepts that no single option will meet all of them, one can decide to accept options that meet some of them. This is called disjunctive satisficing (Yoon and Hwang, 1995; Manktelow, 2012). This approach emerges when each decision is part of a larger process. For example, when building a team of experts, one might accept an expert that meets some of the stringent criteria. The next expert must then satisfy some of the remaining criteria, and so on. In Hedley’s (1990) discussion of the three options (schools) for the cleaning of paintings, he proposes that the only criterion for which all options should meet a high minimum is competent implementation of their particular school of cleaning. All other criteria, such as respect for original materials, recovery of artistic intention, aesthetic integrity, respect for object history, minimal intervention,