



Research Note

Outdoor recreation and place attachment: Exploring the potential of outdoor recreation within a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve



Thomas Beery*, K. Ingemar Jönsson

University of Kristianstad, School of Education and the Environment, Man and Biosphere Health, Elmetorpsvägen 15, 291 88 Kristianstad, Sweden

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Biodiversity
 Kristianstad Vattenrike Biosphere Area
 Multifunctional landscape
 Outdoor recreation
 Place attachment
 Proximate access

ABSTRACT

This study investigates outdoor recreation participation within a multifunctional landscape, a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve. The reserve, the Kristianstad Vattenrike located in southern Sweden, has made a deliberate effort to make the experience of biodiversity possible for residents and visitors. Recreation is a key part of the biodiversity conservation effort in the area, represented by the infrastructure of the Kristianstad Vattenrike's 21 visitor sites. Given the biosphere reserve context, this study investigates the question of whether there is a relationship between outdoor recreation participation and place attachment. Survey data was collected using concurrent application of multiple sampling strategies including both probability and purposive sampling of local adult residents of the biosphere area. Quantitative analysis showed a significant positive relationship between the level of outdoor recreation participation and place attachment. Qualitative data supported this relationship with more details about place attachment within the studied area. The study confirms a relationship between place attachment and outdoor recreation and provides insight into how the biosphere reserve context supports this relationship. The results of this study show that significant biodiversity management in close conjunction with outdoor recreational opportunity can be achieved and provides opportunities for human engagement and experience of biodiversity.

Management Implications: This research can help managers design recreational settings that support biodiversity conservation goals. Our research found that:

- A leading motivation for outdoor recreation participation is nature experience and this motivation can be used by managers to highlight a biodiversity conservation interpretive message in the design of outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- Providing proximate access to nature based outdoor recreation, to support deliberate and direct experience of biodiversity, is an important component of engaging the public in biodiversity conservation.
- Recreation proximity alone will not create public engagement in biodiversity conservation. However, proximity as a part of a deliberate institutional design including biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and logistic support for research and monitoring may be critical for public engagement.

1. Introduction

UNESCO Man and Biosphere program reserves are established, in part, to serve as opportunities for global challenges to be considered on local scales in order to make important links between local, regional, and global concerns/efforts tangible. These areas are viewed as "... places that seek to reconcile conservation of biological and cultural diversity and economic and social development through partnerships

between people and nature" (UNESCO, 2016: Biosphere Reserves – Learning Sites for Sustainable Development section, para. 2). The biosphere reserve program emphasizes three key functions in this partnership effort: biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and logistic support for research and monitoring (UNESCO, 2016). While positive human engagement in nonhuman nature can take many forms, place attachment may be an important element of this Man and Biosphere program (MAB) idea of partnership.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: thomas.beery@hkr.se (T. Beery), ingemar.jonsson@hkr.se (K.I. Jönsson).

The Kristianstad Vattenrike Biosphere Area (hereafter referred to as KV) is one of 669 biosphere reserves in 120 countries within the MAB program (UNESCO, 2016). The translation of the name *Vattenrike* into English is *water kingdom*, thus acknowledging the wealth and importance of aquatic systems in the region. The KV features the lower Helge River watershed and coastal regions of Hanö Bay of the Baltic Sea, an area of over 100,000 ha and corresponding almost directly with the boundaries of the Kristianstad municipality. The Kristianstad municipality has a population of 81,000 residents with 37,000 living in the city center of Kristianstad (Mårtensson, 2015). The biosphere area is noted for extensive and ecologically sensitive wetlands, productive agricultural land, and one of the largest reserves of groundwater in Northern Europe (Olsson, Folke, Galaz, Hahn, & Schultz, 2007). The KV is especially well suited for questions of outdoor recreation and place attachment given a particularly strong organizational emphasis on public experience of place, which can be seen in the key outreach message of the biosphere area, which states: “The best way to learn and understand the landscape values is achieved by providing experience and knowledge in place” (Vattenriket, 2015).

Note the use of the word *area* in the name, Kristianstad Vattenrike Biosphere Area. While the UNESCO MAB program designates *reserves*, the Swedish Biosphere Program has opted not to use the probable Swedish translation of *reserve* to *reservat*, but rather to use the Swedish word *område* that translates to English as *area* (MAB, 2014). This distinction emphasizes that these places are not represented as land set aside as in *protection from* people, but rather places of *protection inclusive of* people (Beery, 2014). This use of the term *area* helps avoid the problematic land-use dichotomy of conservation vs. exploitation (Colding, Lundberg, & Folke, 2006), and is a useful background to the study of place attachment in the context of biodiversity conservation. Miller (2005) notes that there has been a failure to widely communicate “the importance, wonder and relevance of biodiversity to the general public” (p. 430) and goes on to argue that in order to be successful in conserving biodiversity, the public must be engaged in the value and relevance of nonhuman nature. One of the specific messages of the KV is the significance of the area's biodiversity and the importance of engaging the public, both local residents and visitors, in this unique biodiversity. For example, the theme of biodiversity has shaped the selection and interpretive messages of many of the 21 KV visitor sites and the development of the KV Naturum (visitor center) exhibit speaks directly to the importance of this biodiversity theme (Magntorn, 2012). Consider this prominent example of public outreach from the KV, which emphasizes biodiversity via direct experience: “Few places have so rich and varied a nature as the Kristianstad Vattenrike. Here is something for everyone to experience” (Vattenriket, 2014). The message of the biosphere area is clear: the important biodiversity is to be experienced in the specific places of the KV.

This emphasis on the use of specific places for the experience of biodiversity is critical background for this research. Specifically, this study will consider the relationship of place attachment and outdoor recreation in the context of a biosphere area using survey methodology. Survey data, both quantitative and qualitative, and field observation data are considered in the overall analysis. It is hoped that the combination of multiple data analysis strategies, in conjunction with the deliberate biosphere area setting of the KV will provide results with implications for multifunctional landscape management. The next section will provide a review of relevant research into the topics of place attachment and outdoor recreation in order to serve as further foundation for this study.

2. Literature review

2.1. Place attachment

Trentelman (2009) provides an overview that traces place scholar-

ship from its roots within the work of Tuan (1974) and Relph (1976) and their exploration of the role that place plays in human identity. Place attachment subsequently emerged out of this scholarship via the works of Altman and Low (1992), who described place attachment as bonding between people and places. Since the foundational work of Altman and Low, place attachment has generated a great deal of scholarly and practical interest and consequently, there is a breadth of recent literature exploring the idea informed by research and practice within multiple traditions including the fields of environmental and outdoor education, geography, sociology, and psychology (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Kyle, Mowen, & Tarrant, 2004; Lewicka, 2011; Scannell & Gifford, 2014, 2010a; Sobel, 2004; Stedman, 2003; Trentelman, 2009; Wattchow & Brown, 2011). While place attachment is the specific place concept considered in this study, it is important to note that multiple overlapping place concepts exist, including yet not limited to, place identity, place dependence, and sense of place. For example:

- Place dependence is described as a relationship to a setting with opportunities for meeting specific needs (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981).
- Place identity presents the idea that dimensions of self are shaped by the symbolic meaning a particular place has for an individual (Proshansky, 1978).
- Sense of place has been used more generally as an attitude toward a particular spatial setting with identity, affect, and behavioral elements (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001).

Perhaps most useful for background to this study are the ideas and efforts that consider place as a multidimensional concept, incorporating noted factors such as identity, dependence, and social bonds (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005; Scannell & Gifford, 2010a; Scopelliti & Giuliani, 2004; Soini, Vaarala, & Pouta, 2012; Stedman, 2003). For example, Stedman (2003) defined sense of place as “...the meaning and importance of a setting held by an individual or group, based on an individual's and group's experience with the setting” (p. 822), and has described the development of definitions and scholarship in place meaning as encompassing the multi-dimensions of the physical environment, human behavior, and social/psychological process. Hay (1998) argues for sense of place through consideration of the social and geographical context, while also via experience and affect. Similarly, Scopelliti and Giuliani (2004) note that response to place largely arises from cognitive, affective, social, and behavior factors. Raymond, Brown & Weber (2010) highlight Trentelman (2009) categories of place scholarship: “1) the socio-cultural dimensions of place, such as community attachment; 2) the biophysical dimensions of place, with emphasis on the “setting or container”, and; 3) the integration of both socio-cultural and natural setting dynamics within place attachment research” (p. 422). Especially useful for this current study, Scannell and Gifford (2010a) define place attachment as the “bonding that occurs between individuals and their meaningful environments” (p. 1) and provide a comprehensive model to synthesize place attachment around ideas of person, place, and process. Scannell and Gifford have pulled together the various definitions and conceptualizations of the past 20 years and organized it in such a way as to create a theoretical conceptual coherence. Their model revolves around three key aspects:

- Who is attached? For example, dimensions of the individual and/or cultural group affiliations.
- How are psychological processes manifested in attachment? Specifically, affect, cognition, and behavior.
- And thirdly, what are the key features of the place of attachment? Both social and physical dimensions of specific places.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4759881>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4759881>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)