

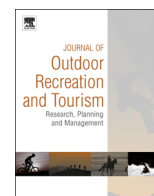


ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](http://ScienceDirect)

# Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jort](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jort)



## From rhetoric to knowledge based actions – Challenges for outdoor recreation management in Sweden



Marie Stenseke\*, Anderas S. Hansen<sup>1</sup>

Human Geography Unit, Department of Economy and Society, School of Economics, Business and Law, University of Gothenburg,  
P.O. Box 630, SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 16 December 2013

Received in revised form

15 September 2014

Accepted 15 September 2014

#### Keywords:

Outdoor recreation

Nature conservation

Recreation planning

Recreation management

Sweden

### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how outdoor recreation is considered in the context of strong biodiversity conservation ambitions, and discusses the challenges associated with outdoor recreation management in two protected areas in Sweden. The research employs qualitative techniques such as interviews with key actors and examinations of documents. The results show that while the two planning processes show a sincere engagement and effort spent on outdoor recreation management, no clear strategies for or systematic treatment of outdoor recreation became apparent. Worse, clear deficits in knowledge and relevant competences have been identified, and generally available scientific knowledge about outdoor recreation has not been utilized. Concerns of outdoor recreation are typically addressed by biologists, instead of professionals with training in any of the social sciences or planning disciplines. Apparently these fundamental deficiencies with regards to outdoor recreation can only be improved if it is recognized as a land use interest in its own right. In order to improve management and planning processes, outdoor recreation needs to be institutionalized, and receive its own management guidelines and formal process agendas.

### MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The consideration of outdoor recreation in Sweden's landscapes and protected areas lacks behind international standards. Currently it is not considered as a separate land use or planning objective, and modern recreational benefits of provision for health and wellbeing and the high esteem of outdoor recreation by the general population are ignored. Improvements would require a professional implementation process which should consider:

- Area specific databases on outdoor recreation activities, including their spatial distribution;
- A dedicated training and education in outdoor recreation planning and management (instead of it being an additional task for ecologically trained managers);
- A strengthening of outdoor recreation research;
- The mandated development and implementation of outdoor recreation related guidelines and monitoring plans; and
- The development of specific frameworks sensitive to various ecological conditions (e.g. water based landscapes or forests).

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +46 31 786 13 89; fax: +46 31 786 13 98.

E-mail addresses: [Marie.Stenseke@geography.gu.se](mailto:Marie.Stenseke@geography.gu.se) (M. Stenseke),  
[Andreas.Hansen@geography.gu.se](mailto:Andreas.Hansen@geography.gu.se) (A.S. Hansen).

<sup>1</sup> Tel.: +46 31 786 13 91; fax: +46 31 786 13 98.

## 1. Introduction

The need for appropriate landscape planning and management of recreational activities is widely acknowledged (Manning, 2011; Pröbstl, Wirth, Elands, & Bell, 2010). The prerequisites differ, however, due to physical landscape characteristics in different types of areas, including essential aspects such as nature, cultural heritage visitor pressure and experiential qualities. Immaterial

factors such as land use history, traditions, values, legal accessibility to land and the political process are also significant prerequisites for landscape planning and management (Andkjær, 2012). This paper investigates how aspects of outdoor recreation<sup>2</sup> are considered in a context of strong biological diversity preservation ambitions, based on case studies from two protected areas in Sweden.

Outdoor recreation and nature protection have been intertwined since the birth of nature conservation during the 19th century in the USA and Western Europe. Outdoor recreation and nature protection share commonalities in their history of ideas, spatial areas of interest, shared policy agendas and landscape quality demands (Sandell & Sörlin, 2008). The establishment of the world's first national parks was a response to both public desire to spend leisure time in what was regarded as pristine nature, and the perceived need to protect certain landscape qualities from threats introduced by industrialization and urbanization (Jongman, 1995; Mels, 1999). With increasing urbanization, coupled with more leisure time for ordinary people and increased economic welfare, the opportunity to engage in recreational activities for the general public became increasingly important as a driving force in nature conservation (Andkjær, 2004). In the 1920s and 1930s, green areas with spaces became a feature in urban and regional planning (Jongman, Kùlvik, & Kristiansen, 2004), and when comprehensive nature conservation policies were formulated in Northern Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, outdoor recreation aspects were included (Jongman, 1995), implying a double mandate for nature conservation agencies.

Over the last three decades, the maintenance of biodiversity has become a central objective within nature conservation. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), established in 1992, has been a powerful force on a global level for the conservation and protection of biological qualities, with significant implications for landscape management and planning. With a focus solely on biodiversity issues, recreational aspects are missing in the CBD. Natura 2000, a network of conservation areas, is the major contribution by the European Union towards the fulfilment of the CBD (European Union, 2013a). Sweden stands out as a country very active in biodiversity conservation (Terstad, 1999). Biodiversity has become a political buzzword on the national arena, and the central objective in nature conservation programs (Sandström, 2008), confirmed in the Environmental Code, the National Environmental Quality Objectives, and in a number of action plans. Consequently, topics related to biodiversity have been placed high above outdoor recreation in the Swedish political agenda since the 1990s (Emmelin, Fredman, Jensen, & Sandell, 2010; Wolf-Watz, 2010).

In recent years, Sweden has also witnessed a renewed interest in outdoor recreation (Ankre, 2007; Lundmark, 2009). Outdoor recreation aspects have now been articulated in political documents, culminated in the first governmental proposition on outdoor recreation in Sweden from 2010 (Swedish Government, 2010). Thus, a rhetoric on outdoor recreation exists, but what is the situation when it comes to implementation? Does the rhetoric find resonance in practice? After decades of strong focus on biodiversity in nature conservation in Sweden, it is important to investigate how outdoor recreation aspects are considered in landscape management and planning today (Petersson-Forsberg, 2014). Answers to this question will help to clarify the prerequisites for the development of appropriate outdoor recreation management.

This paper aims at identifying the present conditions and challenges for outdoor recreation management in Sweden, focusing on outdoor recreation as a land (and water) use interest. We begin by discussing some theoretical aspects and implications from previous research. Next, the issue of outdoor recreation in the Swedish political and administrative system is outlined. We then present two case studies of recent nature conservation planning processes: Kosterhavet and Mount Kinnekulle. Based on the results, we finally discuss the conditions for improved outdoor recreation management in Sweden, with implications also for countries with similarly strong biological diversity ambitions in landscape management and planning.

## 2. The issues of framing and knowledge

Two related issues have fundamental implications for the management of outdoor recreation: (i) how outdoor recreation is contextualized and framed and (ii) what knowledge and competence is recognized and involved (cf. McCool, Nkhata, Breen, & Freimund, 2013). As for framing, a pertinent issue of importance for the perception of outdoor recreation in relation to nature protection is the understanding of 'nature conservation' as a phenomenon. 'Nature' is an inevitably subjective concept. In the wake of ambitious conservation objectives and the increasing numbers of protected areas, research on nature conservation as a discourse as well as the political implications of underlying perceptions of nature has increased (cf. Castree & Braun, 2001; Cronon, 1995). A number of scholars have investigated and analysed nature conservation from a landscape management point of view, revealing biases and preconceived notions that have profound effects on how outdoor recreation management is perceived (e.g. Gill, Waitt, & Head, 2009; Katz, 1998). Planning and management perspectives are traditionally based upon a natural science point of view, which affects the integration of outdoor recreation with nature conservation (cf. Latour, 2004). Through maps, texts and images, planners of protected areas set goals for the areas, including what is to be protected as nature and what is to be regarded as (acceptable) outdoor recreation. Subsequently, these understandings among planners and managers also promote certain outcomes, such as trails, fences, visitor centres, subdivision into zones and plans for management (Mels, 1999). The issue of bias in understandings and perceptions, leads to the second aspect: the knowledge base for management.

It is important to acknowledge that all management depends on knowledge and its practical application. Regarding monitoring, Kajala et al. (2007, p. 22) state that the 'better the quality of the information, the better the opportunity for good management', and discuss the effects of outdoor activities in protected areas in terms of social, economic and ecological impacts. The social impacts, which are the sole focus of this paper, can be described as the experiences people gain when performing outdoor activities in nature (Bell, Tyrväinen, Sievänen, Pröbstl, & Simpson, 2007). For instance, a widely acknowledged myth in nature conservation claims that quality nature experiences demand areas with rich natural features (Emmelin, 1997). Several studies show, however, that biodiversity qualities are not necessarily essential to experiences of 'nature', despite a considerable divergence in recreational preferences between individuals and groups (Emmelin & Fredman, 2001; Gundersen & Frivold, 2008; Stankey, McCool, Clark, & Brown, 1999). Consequently, from a recreation management point of view, it is vital to recognize the number of visitors and address what motivates people to be outdoors. For example, it is critical to understand what activities visitors engage in and what kind of expectations they have. This awareness includes an understanding of differences between individuals and user groups and of the

<sup>2</sup> In this paper 'outdoor recreation' will be used to cover the Swedish word 'friluftsliv', although the terms have slightly different meanings. See Beery (2011) for a discussion on the relationship between the two concepts.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/92395>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/92395>

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