



Using the connoisseur method during the introductory phase of landscape planning and management

Helena Mellqvist*, Roland Gustavsson, Allan Gunnarsson

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Faculty of Landscape Planning, Horticulture and Agricultural Science, Department of Landscape Architecture, Planning and Management, Sweden

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Communicative management planning
European Landscape Convention
Landscape management
Landscape planning
Local connoisseurs
Urban forestry

ABSTRACT

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) has called for a broad anchoring in all sorts of landscape issues in local society. The connoisseur approach aims to improve communication in decision making processes by ensuring that personal and local knowledge on people, and their knowledge and feelings of everyday landscape is considered in projects on landscape development. The approach described here was tested in three Swedish case studies. Two were part of the European NeighbourWoods research project: the Skrylle Recreation Forest in south-west Sweden and the Ronneby Brunn area in south-east Sweden. Two areas that are heavily used for recreation by groups unrelated to the management of the forests. The Tinnerö area near Linköping was included as a third case. Our approach involved identifying and testing methods for introductory phase of management planning and countryside development.

The methods developed in the connoisseur approach included in-depth interviews during field walks, walk-and-talk encounters, designating favourite places and routes on maps and management meetings between connoisseurs (local people, planners, and experts). Such concrete methods, which benefit from being mainly conducted outdoors, sought to empower local people, nurture a sense of belonging to a place and the management process, raise awareness of the local landscape and its potential, and identify shared values. The connoisseur approach proved to be a useful tool in the introductory phase, by clarifying the varying interests of local user groups, and was successful in creating links between the user groups, manager team, local politicians and administrators. Although unfamiliar to many people, the connoisseur method may effectively complement standardized, expert-dominated, top-down concepts of planning.

© 2012 Elsevier GmbH. All rights reserved.

Introduction

The need for new communicative approaches

The Swedish landscape as well as the European landscape as a whole, has changed physically and so has people's relationship towards this landscape during the last century (Olwig, 2005). Pinto-Correia et al. (2006, p. 333) show how the gap between "centrally defined strategies for rural landscapes and awareness and management practices at local level" originates from a standardized European model for landscape development such as the *Common Agricultural Policy* (CAP). Local knowledge and engagement should be better integrated into the development process for landscape (Selman, 2004; Sarlöv Herlin, 2012) so that practice-oriented methods may harmonize better with the values and attitudes of people towards a local landscape. One challenge to policy makers and administrators is the acknowledgement that participation does not

imply a "complete delegation of powers to local communities" (Jones, 2007, pp. 615–616). Public input, rather than substituting for official decision making, should be used to complement it.

Consideration of local resources is especially important where land is intensively used by different groups of people, such as recreation and tourist areas, city forests, nature parks, and green belts that link city centres and housing developments with the countryside. Ownership patterns of this land may not coincide with the pattern of the users. Managers need to understand the potential of an area on scales relating to place, landscape, forest stands, and individual biotopes, based on this complexity, and the appreciation of both users and land owner (Gustavsson et al., 2004; Konijnendijk et al., 2005). Consequently, when searching for new methods to use in landscape development, a whole series of qualities and contexts in various combinations can be relevant; including methods which can meet demands from international and national requirements on public participation and a search for bottom-up approaches to combine with existing top-down approaches. Among these, a connoisseur approach may be an effective strategy.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +46 40415469.

E-mail address: helena.mellqvist@slu.se (H. Mellqvist).

The beginning of the connoisseur approach

The connoisseur approach was first suggested in a multi-disciplinary landscape research project by the Danish philosopher Arler (2000). Arler identified a connoisseur as somebody who through personal experience can judge which values in a place may be associated with natural qualities. Experts have come to dominate the field of planning and landscape management and have been given the power to assess the qualities of a place. Nature conservation practices use preconceived natural or landscape types with no or little relation to the inherent qualities in local areas.

Arler does not question this development but suggests there is an imbalance or something that has been forgotten. He recommends that landscape policy makers consult “connoisseurs” who have significant personal relationships with, and experiences of, specific areas that make them more qualified to identify, evaluate and discuss the values and qualities of these particular landscapes. Such a consultation-based process is also one of the goals of the *European Landscape Convention (ELC)*, which states that it is necessary to ‘define landscape quality objectives for the landscape identified and assessed, after public consultation’ (Europe, 2000, art 6D). The ELC aims to strengthen the relationship between people and their everyday landscape (Europe, 2000, art 6D). The Man and the Biosphere Programme (UNESCO, 1995) are another example of conventions and directives advocating a bottom-up approach to plan and manage the landscape.

The connoisseur method assumes that local stakeholders should participate in landscape planning and management, then goes on to consider how their contributions should be integrated (Pinto-Correia et al., 2006; Bengtsson, 2010). Inspired by Arler’s reasoning, we took the connoisseur approach as a practical model to empower groups of users, collect local views, and thereby creating a more sustainable form of landscape management. The first steps in developing the method were attempted within the European NeighbourWoods research project (Janse and Konijnendijk, 2007) in two case studies (Ronneby Brunn and Skrylle). An action-orientated approach was adopted, focusing on processes and practical tasks rather than mere observation (Gustavsson et al., 2004; Janse and Konijnendijk, 2007). We consulted experientially qualified persons (the connoisseurs) and observed how they might complement administrators on the municipal and regional levels, as well as experts (generalists) with whom those landscape policy-makers had a working relationship. This approach created a specific feeling of curiosity, respect, and expectation. We also wished to strengthen the relationship between participants and managers and between participants and the landscape. It was hoped that we might gain a deeper understanding of how the places in question were used and, in so doing aid managers in adopting their management strategies to actual patterns of use. Furthermore, the method was supposed to strengthen the role of managers and make them realize how important their work is for the users of the park or recreation area. Based on this, the above, we formulated the question: How could the concept of connoisseurs be turned into an operational model?

“Sense of place”

In the design of the connoisseur method, the meaning of place is paramount. A sense of place is what characterizes a person’s relationship with a familiar area. That sense is an embodied feeling and comprehension of what is right or wrong, good or unpleasant, odd or familiar. It is a personal feeling, but that knowledge is too easy to forget easy to communicate and of fundamental importance in processes of landscape development. For landscape planners and managers a sense of the place must precede any development. Tuan (1974) characterizes the sense of place as a way of showing

respect and understanding towards people and their landscape. The connoisseur-method offers such a place focus.

Materials and methods

Three places, three cases

Both Skrylle Recreation Forest in south-west Sweden and the Ronneby Brunn area with its spa, forest park, and island in the south-east are the examples of forest areas that are heavily utilized by various groups which to date, have had little influence on the planning, development and management of those areas. A third case study area, Tinnerö, located on the southern fringe of the city of Linköping, has many physical similarities to the above two, but is a former military area. During our studies it has been transformed into a nature reserve by a formal planning process guided by experts. In all three cases we conducted brief investigations and concentrated on practical issues. Ronneby was the site we studied the most thoroughly. However, our preparation, actions, and analysis followed the same sequence:

1. Anchorage of the project on a strategic level.
2. Identification of possible connoisseurs parallel to responsible managers and local stakeholders.
3. Identification of suitable methods and structure for the process.
4. Actions, including meetings, field walks, etc.
5. Analysis and improvement of collected material.
6. Continuation of dialogue, presentations and discussions based on the results; drafting proposed solutions for future (only Ronneby).

Participants differed slightly in each of the three studies. In Ronneby Brunn they were key persons in organizations using the park area (to be compared with Selman’s “interest groups”) (2004, p. 373). Administrators and politicians were also included. In Skrylle the connoisseurs represented organizations with vested interests in the recreation area. The group of connoisseurs in the Tinnerö case were more diverse: organized and unorganized users, administrators, managers, and politicians (to be compared with Selman’s “communities-of-place”) (2004, p. 375).

The order of actions

In the case studies, three methods were used to strengthen the dialogue with the connoisseurs and determine their relationship to and understanding of the landscape: walk and talk interviews, social mapping and collage design.

Walk and talk interviews

Walking through a local landscape was calculated to take long enough time and distance to traverse the area concerned and allow an informal, more intimate dialogue to develop. The tone of conversation then becomes serious and sensuous (Jones et al., 2008; Carpiano, 2009). Being physically present makes it easier to discuss questions that might be difficult to communicate otherwise. Walk and talk interviews evoke contextually based information about how people experience their local world, combining participant observation and qualitative interviews (Carpiano, 2009). Such interviews are most powerful when combined with other methods, such as drawing maps or taking photos (Carpiano, 2009).

Walking brings out stories and reflections about little things that might not have been thought of otherwise. Skår (2010) calls this being “in the topic”. By establishing a strong connection to a physical place, the method helps people explain what makes that location special. Anderson (2004) discusses how using the body

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/94128>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/94128>

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