

EAI Seminar Series

Autumn seminar report

Europarc Atlantic Isles Section of the Europarc Federation
Embracing Iceland, the Republic of Ireland and the UK

Managing landscapes: more outcomes, less outputs?



Edinburgh

3 - 4 November 2009



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Atlantic Isles

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Introduction



Martin Lane

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Across the protected area sectors we have become well versed in number crunching over the last few years, clearly measuring and articulating our outputs. Calculating the numbers of outputs and overall percentage of increase or decrease in activity or condition has become the norm.

Much less time has been given to considering the overall outcomes arising from activity. Yet it is the outcomes that count and stand the test of time. Areas of activity where numbers cannot be readily generated and compared year-on-year have similarly been overlooked. Attaching a number to a landscape is notoriously difficult and consequently they have tended to lose out in terms of some investment decisions.

This seminar drew upon experience from the UK and mainland Europe and included a series of thought-provoking presentations and discussions, with much to consider for how we all develop an outcome-based approach in the future. It is clear that managing landscapes with the focus on outcomes rather than outputs is a new challenge and we are still in the early stages of applying this approach.

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In summary

Ian Jardine, Chief Executive, Scottish Natural Heritage

- We should be challenging the ways protected areas are valued.
- We need to come up with a set of indicators to measure (e.g. carbon sinks etc), because if we don't, others certainly will.
- There are good examples across Europe of how protected areas are working creatively to win support for landscape protection.
- It is essential to break down the 'silos' within which departments and organisations tend to work. There is a pressing need to work together between government agencies and between departments within government. We have to make a concerted case for future support of protected areas in order for them to have a bright future.
- It is time to widen the engagement across government – departments which haven't previously been involved with the debate on landscape should be brought in.
- The power of EUOPARC lies in the access it has to an enormous range of expertise through its members and the potential breadth of its view. It is in a good position to help develop new mechanisms to measure the value of protected areas; to engage with a very much wider audience and to support communication across Europe.

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Managing landscapes: more outcomes?



Richard Wakeford

Director General,
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Overview

Richard challenged us all to take a new approach to measuring and quantifying success in protected landscapes in the new circumstances climate change and natural resource shortages will increasingly cause.

Key points

- The shortcomings of GDP as a measure of success and progress are now well recognised – wealth does not equate to wellbeing. An ‘ecosystems services’ approach highlights the harder-to-measure benefits that protected areas provide in terms of, for example, water quality and storage, carbon capture and cultural and well-being benefits.
- Future greenhouse gas emissions targets are extremely low compared with current emissions. In 2050 Scotland must be emitting only what is currently emitted by rural land use (excluding forestry). People will continue to want to fly to Malaga for holidays - so the energy ‘ration’ available for managing land will drastically reduce and the future rural landscape will be very different. This major challenge requires big changes in thinking and working. Discussion about the landscape changes this will bring is now becoming mainstream and does not have to be negative.

- Protected areas have an important role in delivering all the governments’ strategic objectives. With evolving outcomes and better informed indicators, protected areas can become leaders in the changing world. First class countryside management should be a demonstration for other areas – producing energy, food, clean water, forestry products; using their capability to help change visitors’ mindsets in the way the global agenda demands.

Conclusion

It is vital to build on and exploit the assets you’ve got. The situation we find ourselves in is a not a level playing field. We’re on the brink of a steep downhill slope. Preventing a disastrous slide requires new roles, relationships, values, behaviours and approaches to working.

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A new way of working?



Michael Starrett
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Overview

In the recent boom and bust, Ireland experienced dynamic economic growth and severe landscape damage. The recent Landscape Conference was an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of this decade. A clear conclusion: current legislative frameworks are inadequate. Positive conference outcomes included political commitment to a national landscape strategy and to changes to the planning laws.

Key points

- We need to flip the switch and think about a different way of working. The economic crisis gives the impetus and opportunity to change faster.
- Landscape includes all aspects - natural and cultural. Its management ought to be a force for integration between different interests.
- Landscape is defined in the European Landscape Convention as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. Protected areas have to be ‘de-expertised’ and communities given more ownership of landscapes and policies.

- Ireland currently shows a stark example of what happens to landscape and environment when turbo-charged development takes place in the context of a weak planning system and poorly developed environmental policies.

Conclusion

A top-down designating system will no longer work – legislation must empower and enable communities to achieve landscape management and conservation which matters to them.

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Integration of the landscape dimension¹



Audun Moflag
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Overview

General facts and figures about Norway; and the division of responsibilities in its territorial administration. The notion of landscape according to the European Landscape Convention; implications. Pilot studies on the implementation of the specific Article 6 measures through municipal and regional planning.

Key points

- In Norway, we have magnificent nature and beautiful landscapes.
- But Norwegian local communities often appear as a huddle of coincidences.
- The European Landscape Convention is an eye opener. It tells us what landscapes are and mean. Therefore, to us the convention is not so much about preserving landscapes of outstanding beauty. We turn our main focus to the everyday landscapes - where people actually live and work.
- Local and regional authorities carry the main responsibility for managing land use and landscape.
- Implementing the specific measures of Article 6 seems to be a good strategy in their future policies and community development.

Conclusion

More work is needed on appropriate methodology and practical tools. Local self government and expert knowledge should be bridged. Awareness and knowledge are improved by landscape quality analyses and evaluation – guided by landscape specialists and with active involvement of the citizens. Information and inspiration we may seek through European co-operation.

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The European Landscape Convention
www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Landscape/default_en.asp



¹Into comprehensive territorial development strategies

Delivering the ‘Parks and Benefits’ project²



Olaf Ostermann

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Overview

After some theoretical thoughts about outputs and outcomes the presentation looked at the example of ‘Parks and Benefits’, an INTERREG project in the Baltic Sea region. The project is introducing and strengthening sustainable nature tourism approaches and communicating the mutual benefits to protected parks and to their surrounding regions for regional development and sustained natural development.

Key points

- Our most desired outcome is better nature conservation by well-functioning protected areas.
- Outputs that achieve more awareness, cooperation, effectiveness or communication of protected area’s values and benefits are probably good steps in that direction.
- ‘Parks and Benefits’ is a project that tries to deliver some of these.
- The red line in this project is the implementation of the European Charter.
- Requirements of EU-funding force us to think in formal steps.

Conclusion

Don’t aim for less outputs, rather aim at the right ones - which translate into outcomes!

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²Within the Baltic Sea Programme Interreg IVB involving 8 partner organisations

Landscape policy after ELC³



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Overview

The presentation explored the philosophical implications of the European Landscape Convention's (ELC) definition of landscape as an interaction between people and the environment. Dutch landscape policy development over the last 40 years has been expert-dominated, but is moving towards wider public involvement. The role of planning and (landscape) architecture, even on a regional scale, retains typical Dutch characteristics.

Key points

- Landscapes are shaped and changed - for good or ill - by national, regional and local policy, but overall by people's actions.
- Landscape is not the environment or people's perceptions – it is the interrelation between the two. Both sides are always developing and changing. Accessibility is a top priority to ensure the contact between both sides.
- When the Netherlands ratified the ELC, in 2005, NGOs became more effective - co-ordinating their efforts to influence government policy within the Landscape Manifesto Group: *"You yourself are the landscape"*.

- National landscape types are defined centrally but recent decentralisation has given more autonomy at local/regional level.
- Landscape quality has been made central to development control.

Conclusion

Landscape and nature policy were historically set by experts: a very top-down mechanism which needs to change and get much closer to ordinary people. Campaigns such as 'Een mooier landschap maak het mee' (a beautiful landscape do it yourself/ together/ experience it) are popularizing this approach.

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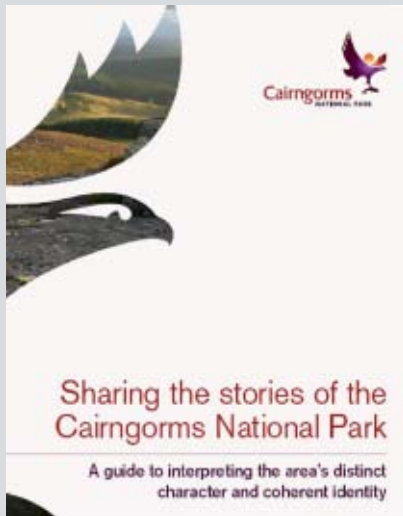
Useful web links www.minInv.nl
www.minvrom.nl www.rijksbouwmeester.nl
www.coe.int
[www.milieuennatuurcompendium.nl/
onderwerpen/nl0012-Landschap.html?i=12](http://www.milieuennatuurcompendium.nl/onderwerpen/nl0012-Landschap.html?i=12)

³Landscape between environment and citizen

Working towards a 'Wiki' national park⁴



Murray Ferguson
Head of Visitor Services
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Authority, UK



Overview

Every organisation says they work in partnership with others. But for the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) the stakes are perhaps higher – the whole success of the national park depends on a wide range of people and organisations contributing towards the long-term vision.

Key points

- Management arrangements in the Cairngorms are different to most other UK national parks. The CNPA tries to be as 'hands off' as possible – and 'hands on' only when it can make a real difference.
- A key distinction is made between the work of the authority (the small organisation) and the overall success of the national park (the UK's largest).
- This brings significant benefits and new challenges. Can 12 different ranger services really work effectively together?
- This approach fits with the spirit of the times, especially the current interest in mass collaboration and interactivity.

- To be successful it needs:
 - continual political engagement
 - significant buy-in from all parties to the long term vision
 - context-specific leadership and a willingness to work effectively across boundaries, geographic and organisational, from a wide range of players.

Conclusion

The Cairngorms National Park has only been in place for six years but shows encouraging signs of collective progress. An appropriate metaphor for it is the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia. A wide range of seemingly unconnected participants actively contribute making it bigger and more worthwhile than any individual could.

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⁴in the Cairngorms

A trust as a mechanism⁵



Bill Wilson

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Mark Wootton

Countryside Manager,
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Overview

The Lomond Hills Regional Park (LHRP) is delivered jointly by a partnership between Fife Council and Fife Coast & Countryside Trust (FCCT). The council entered into a services agreement with FCCT in June 2009 whereby the Trust delivers a range of functions, including the Regional Park Partnership and Ranger Service.

Key points

- The LHRP partnership was formed in 2002 to bring together land managers, community groups and user groups.
- Key land managers are directly engaged in delivering access management functions, for which they are paid.
- The partnership is an informal arrangement, which does not have budget holding powers but is seen as having a primary role in decision making in the RP. It has delivered a strong sense of ownership of the designation.
- The services agreement with FCCT is already facing the challenge of diminishing budgets from the Council. Advantages include financial flexibility. Difficulties will include avoiding indicators becoming targets.

Conclusion

There are no simple answers when budgets are shrinking. The aspiration that the Trust could access significant funding not available to the Council will require time to evaluate. It will be important to focus on outcomes, not just the outputs.

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Useful web links

www.fifecoastandcountrysidetrust.co.uk/
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⁵in a regional park context

Some key thoughts from the discussions: responses and calls for action from participants

Workshop 1

What from the conference so far has made the strongest impression?

- “European Landscape Convention – what’s happening in the UK, where are our detailed landscape strategies?” “There is a great lack of awareness of landscape in UK and Ireland.”
- “Move away from measuring GDP and towards measuring well-being, (gross national happiness?)” “Need to be brighter about what protected landscapes can do for society: economic, health, water management, carbon sequestration, food security, etc.” “Changes of mindset needed – among public and politicians.” “Remove the word ‘economic’ from the target of ‘economic growth.’”
- “Good definition and measurement of outcomes particularly important if Designated Landscapes are to fulfil potential to act as test beds/ best practice for policy and practice in rural areas.”
- “As well as being relevant and appropriate, outcomes must be presented in ways that are meaningful to people, not esoteric. Visual representation of desired outcomes a powerful tool – landscape is largely appreciated through the eye.”

- “Considering outcomes and their measurement is an important part of the business planning process – not just something we measure after action. Thinking through how we measure them is a key test of their importance and achievability.”
- “Outcomes must be ambitious and we must be brave enough to articulate what the ‘new’ landscapes should look like rather than look simply to how they have been in the past.”
- “Debate so far is reactive to the political agenda: ‘How much Landscape can we afford?’ Wrong question – it’s like asking, ‘How much Health can we afford?’ – we need to make a bolder case.”
- “Moving towards outcomes requires us to use champions and communities.”
- “Aim should be to abolish protected landscapes – all landscape shd be valued.”
- “Indicators must fit with outcomes and the effort required in their measurement must be proportionate to its usefulness. Often it is more resource-intensive to measure outcomes than outputs.”
- “Outcome indicators must encourage and facilitate cross-government working – not reinforce silo mentality.”

See “*The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity Interim Report*” (TEEB) – valuing landscapes. www.teebweb.org/

Workshop 2

Taking the agenda forward

Actions for government and agencies

- Acknowledge/value the environment and make a longer term vision/commitment to landscape
- Define your expectations
- Understand what ‘long-term’ actually means
- Be consistently positive about and champion the contribution of protected areas (e.g. Royal presence at opening of new national park in Norway/ Sweden) and provide adequate funding.
- Set a comprehensive and robust landscape strategy (greater focus on ELC in Norway and Holland noted). Strategy should
 - articulate national expectations/ aspirations for protected areas
 - provide a clear set of outcomes for measurement across all relevant government activity
 - set a lead and climate for horizontal rather than vertical working

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Actions for EUROPARC

- Develop a suite of realistic, interrelated outputs that are good indicators of identified outcomes by investigating best European practice. (Research, draft, circulate)
- Promote landscapes to decision-makers / public with a single voice for all the different types of protected areas throughout Europe.
- Forthcoming vision for protected areas from EAI welcomed.
- Engage a wider audience in seminars to broaden thinking– e.g. board members, volunteers. Have target groups/ beneficiaries here too and listen – rather than officers talking to each other.

- Collate, analyse and focus the good practice re achievement and demonstration of outcomes across Europe and get this to the decision makers. (From a funder)
- Produce regular press releases on international issues – ask national agencies to add – provide to protected areas to add how local actions are addressing the issue.

Actions for protected areas

- Develop a common language for working with outcomes and outputs – use it to support work planning and for making our collective case
- Look for collective outcomes where possible (UK and Eire)
- Get out of our boxes – respond to bigger issues and pursue outcomes accordingly

- Challenge funders to appreciate outcomes as opposed to outputs
- Present outputs and outcomes in simpler language
- Make time to envisage and plan for outcomes and do it creatively. E.g. non-business, agenda-less meetings; Board members lead in their areas of expertise; write a landscape descriptive letter from a son/daughter 25 years in the future.
- Become comfortable with qualitative as well as quantitative evidence. Get out of the scientific mindset. Talk to people - understand how they see and interact with it.

Field visit

Pentland Hills, Hillend Country Park / Midlothian Ski Centre & Flotterstone Glen

Alan McGregor, Manager, Pentland Hills RP, Park HQ and Susan Falconer, Senior Ranger Pentland Hills RP, Park HQ + other staff and volunteer members of the team

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A short presentation from Alan and Susan gave some background to the Pentland Hills Regional Park's 40 year gestation period, and a good insight to their approach to managing this very popular and spectacular 45 square miles of rugged countryside, lying just south of Edinburgh. They also unpacked for us some of the fierce funding challenges they are facing; the inventive ways in which they are ensuring that they make best use of their scarce and precious resources and the new ways they are exploring to measure and demonstrate success.

A dramatic and bracing chair lift ride took us onto the hill - looking down on a handful of young snowboarders on the dry-ski slope - to admire the sunlit view of Edinburgh spread out below. There we saw two habitat creation projects being worked on by volunteer rangers and the Friends of the Pentlands group, and heard from the chair of the Friends' group about the positive symbiotic relationship they have with the Park.

The four aims of the park against which performance has traditionally been measured make no mention of economic development, tourism, or health – the kind of outcomes against which public services are increasingly measured and which tend to attract funding. The team's annual work plan this year has taken the Scottish government's national outcomes and strategic objectives and attempted to align these within projects. Arguing the case for supporting protected areas in terms of the public benefits (or 'ecosystem services') they provide is not disingenuous, but takes a shift of thinking.

Over tea the discussion centred around plans for the future. Times are changing and the regional parks' managers feel clearly that they have to get bolder about promoting themselves and be less coy about their achievements. The PHRP has found the community neighbourhood partnerships to be a valuable forum in which to be active – an effective way of getting a name in the community as being an organisation which Gets Things Done. Now that the main funding source is no longer SNH but local authorities, there is a sharper need to be able to demonstrate the value of the parks and to pin work programmes to delivering services which the local authorities want. They are also developing alternative funding sources through working more with business partnerships and pursuing funding opportunities within the voluntary sector through the Friends' group's activities.

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