

EAI Seminar Series

Spring seminar report

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

Protect and prosper – optimising the economic benefits of designated landscapes



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Oxford, UK

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Atlantic Isles

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This report features edited highlights of the presentations. To see the full powerpoints please go to www.europarc-ai.org

For details of the next EUROPARC Atlantic Isles seminar, contact Richard Blackman richard.blackman@europarc-ai.org



Seminar organisation and report by



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Introduction



Martin Lane

Chair,
EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

The topic of the value and effect of protected areas is not a new one. For a while we have been increasingly aware of the unregistered economic worth of the places we look after, and the need to do something about quantifying this.

However the subject has taken on a whole new meaning over the past 12 months. Given current economic challenges, it was timely to focus on articulating the issues in this seminar, which also looked for actions.

Attended by 35 protected-area and associated professionals, the event mixed practical approaches with rigorous academic thought. Active participation evidenced by a set of future actions reflected EUROPARC's key strength of working together. Feedback indicated the seminar's success: over 90% of participants said the event had been beneficial and met their objectives.

Although they represented a range of areas, participants' feedback shows that the topic is of wide ranging importance: "information gathered from seminar/networking will greatly benefit future work with protected areas"; "made good contacts for the development of visitor payback; acquired useful data for use in bids" and "case studies and other experiences very enlightening".

In three workshops seminar participants discussed a range of ways forward. Full details are on pages 9-11. Broadly, their recommendation was that EAI co-ordinate action to promote the economic worth of protected areas by: building a robust shared evidence base; identifying and communicating effectively with key audiences; and sharing best practice.

In the light of economic circumstances, EAI has been reviewing its current strategy and work plan over the past few months. The importance for the protected area community of promoting the economic (and other) benefits is resonating ever more loudly. This seminar has given EAI a number of ideas to put into practice in the near future to ensure that the body of experience and expertise that we as a network collectively have is shared to enhance management and used to promote the significance of our protected landscapes for sustainable development.

Part 1: INPUT

Fresh air and far horizons - how can these be valued properly by decision makers?



Ruth Chambers

Deputy chief executive,
Campaign for National
Parks, UK

*“Prosperity does not conflict
with protection.”*



Fresh air and far horizons - how can these be valued properly by decision makers?
(photo – Ruth Chambers)

Overview

Designated landscapes are good for the economy; proving this with an evidence base is critically important. Update on current research and data, the political outlook and opportunities.

Key points

- CNP's *Prosperity and Protection* research report on the Yorkshire and Humber region showed that the three protected areas studied were powerful drivers in the regional economy and are valued by businesses for their high quality landscapes and as workplaces¹.
- Other recent research from Wales (2006), Peak (2008), Broads (2008), and Cairngorms (2010) confirms that designated landscapes are strong economic drivers and there are direct links between business health and high quality landscapes.
- Ecosystems provide priceless yet highly undervalued services including carbon lock-up and water provision.
- The current and emerging political context and spending review means proving economic worth remains vital for public

policy makers and campaigners.

Opportunities include influencing Treasury 'Green Book' guidance and the search for “big ideas” and localism.

Conclusion

Designated landscapes enhance economic performance, offer new opportunities for investment and employment and improve wellbeing. There is a clear role for Defra/WAG/agencies to assess benefit and value. Prosperity and protection is an enduring concept, which needs constant promotion. Protected areas need to speak the right language, and ensure that less tangible benefits are not neglected.

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¹ Providing 34,000 jobs and £1.8 billion of sales

Economic impacts of national parks - experiences from Germany



Julius Arnegger

Researcher and lecturer,
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In the Bavarian Forest 46% of those surveyed said that the fact that the area was a national park was important in making them decide to visit.

“Protected areas should invest in increasing visitors’ understanding of them as evidence shows they will spend more in the area as a result.”

Overview

Tourism in protected areas can create considerable income for adjacent communities.

Key points

- Based on face-to-face visitor surveys, the study measures the structure, size and economic impact of tourist expenditure in the six German national parks Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer, Bayerischer Wald, Eifel, Murtitz, Hainich and Kellerwald-Edersee. It found day-trippers spend between EUR 7 and 13 per day, whereas overnight visitors spend between EUR 37 and 57.
- The proportion of visitors with high national park affinity, for whom the existence of the national park is the primary reason to come to the region, varies between a maximum of almost 46% in Bayerischer Wald to a minimum of nearly 11% in Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer. Higher affinity tourists provide higher income. Parks should invest in increasing visitor affinity so visitors will behave better and spend more.
- Between 49% and 51% of tourist expenditure is captured as direct and indirect income. The total impact of tourism ranges between EUR 525 million in

Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer to EUR 1.9 million in Kellerwald-Edersee, reflecting the national parks’ distinct trajectories as tourist destinations.

- In order to increase the economic benefits accruing from national parks regional policy could aim at a qualitative upgrading of tourist services, increased marketing of the unique national park label and the promotion of a diverse regional supply base.

Conclusion

National parks have the potential to be major destinations in German tourism, especially if marketing is enhanced, and can contribute considerably to regional economies, especially in peripheral and structurally weak regions. Economic monitoring must be based on sound knowledge of visitor structure and correct sampling, and should be used to establish benchmarking.

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Chartered protected areas – just the business



Wilf Fenten
Managing Director,
EUROPARC Consulting

“By the end of 2010, in 15 Charter areas, there were 245 Charter partners, committed to protected-area purposes.”



Protected-area partners in business can provide premium products for premium landscapes

Overview

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism's Part II is being increasingly used to foster the development of the right kind of business in protected areas.

Key points

- The European Charter is a flexible tool, providing an excellent framework for sustainable tourism development. Once areas have been through the first stage of the process, they become Charter areas, and go on to Part II.
- Relatively newly introduced, Part II focuses on working with businesses. It is having a profound and positive effect on those protected areas involved. How successful they are rarely depends on the amount of funds available, but reflects instead enthusiasm, inventiveness, commitment and good partnership.
- Various approaches are employed to link businesses with protected areas. Case studies were presented from Cornwall, Forest of Bowland and Brecon Beacons in the United Kingdom, Harz in Germany and La Garrotxa in Spain.
- For example, in order to become a Charter partner in La Garrotxa, a business must: be

located or be active in the defined Charter territory; not have infringed the rules of the park; be active in an area compatible with the Charter and a member of the permanent Charter forum; run an information point or authorised guide service; have an action plan for three years; and commit itself to increasing sustainability or green credentials.

Conclusion

The charter helps protected areas to closely align their processes to become part of a European network of sustainable tourism. Part II gains them better acceptance, and more involvement promoting and developing premium products for premium landscapes.

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Bowland: prosperity and protection in practice



Cathy Hopley
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UK



The "Sense of Place" project is developing a distinct identity for the area for businesses to market themselves with.

"The sustainable tourism network currently has over 100 members, and 88% of businesses market themselves as being in the protected area."

Overview

The first UK protected area to be awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, the Forest of Bowland has led the way in finding innovative and effective ways to work with businesses for the area's prosperity and protection.

Key points

- The Forest of Bowland, situated in upland Lancashire and North Yorkshire, was designated in 1964. The landscape has traditionally driven the economy – from the time of the royal hunting forests through to modern sporting estates; for water gathering and forestry; supporting hill sheep farming and dairying; inspiring creative industries and, most recently, the development of a visitor economy.
- Today the area's designation and its special qualities are used to market the Forest of Bowland as a sustainable destination. The "Sense of Place" project encourages tourism businesses to examine the riches the landscape offers, and to share their wealth of local knowledge with their visitors. A toolkit, training and web support are provided.
- Key themes are: a place to enjoy and keep special; delicious local food and drink; a

landscape rich in heritage; a living landscape; wild open spaces; a special place for wildlife; and a vibrant local economy and communities. Visitors are therefore encouraged to explore this special place in a sustainable manner, and to develop an affinity with it – thus ensuring repeat visits and increased spend within the local economy.

- Recently tourism entrepreneurs have been helped to create a social enterprise. Bowland Experience will market the area, and any profits which it generates will be used to conserve and enhance the landscape.

Conclusion

Sustainable tourism work includes developing new products and infrastructure; improving marketing; and providing business support. The work has increased the number of visitors seeing the "Forest of Bowland" as a destination – from 21% in 2005 to 33% in 2008.

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Part 2: OUTPUT

How do we tell others about the economic value of our protected areas and the true value of ecosystem services? Feedback from workshop chaired by Ruth Chambers

We can broadcast the information about these concrete economic benefits more widely by identifying and playing to the right audiences including visitors, policymakers, politicians, public and businesses.

Using peer groups to influence, we need to develop appropriate messages. Policymakers want evidence, not passion; general public want “love” and to feel good. We should go for new audiences – the “unusual suspects”; use ambassadors including children; use celebrities especially trusted ones; use stories and anecdotes; be careful to use audience-appropriate language; use social networking and new media tools; and build accurate data.

Practical actions – next moves:

- Collect good credible data – to do so will need to bring organisations together eg EUROPARC Consulting, Countryside Recreation Network, Natural England.
- Build ‘story bank’ from protected areas – could be on national parks portal.
- Develop clear leadership eg on sustainable tourism.
- Convince political sceptics that we are delivering the big society.
- Coordinate resources at EU level.
- Seek essential financial support from private sector.
- Build a business case.
- Rationalise and prioritise as organisations.
- Reach naysayers – use the right language.

Working in partnership with businesses in our designated landscapes

Feedback from workshop chaired by Wilf Fenten

We can broadcast the information about these concrete economic benefits more widely by focusing on our key audiences: political masters/decision makers, as well as the wider public and local people. We need to turn information like TEEB into more localised and simpler information.

There is a clear need for evaluation, and much skill available in academia. We need to find a way of making it more localised and simply available – a possible task for EAI.

We need to persuade our government to do wide scale independent research (cf German 65,000 sample survey) – if a respected, neutral body does it much more effective.

We need to investigate again visitor payback – can EAI help? Shared learning with businesses is needed, so they should be involved from the beginning. Visitor payback schemes should be accompanied by all relevant information so that people know where their donation is going. Schemes where the option is to opt out, rather than in, are more effective. Transferring them to an arm's length body to run could be most effective.

How do we maximise economic opportunities - through marketing, branding and a “sense of place”? Feedback from workshop chaired by Richard

Blackman

The risk is that time spent marketing is time lost doing, due to lack of resources. However, we need to market our stories externally to illustrate the value of what we do. A way of showing the value of ecosystems services could be by showing what we'd lose from these services if protected status is lost.

It is important to recognise the interconnection of the primary and secondary purposes of designation.

Practical actions – next moves:

- Share best practice in assessing the value of landscape and assets – working group could be set up. EAI to lead expertise exchange and networking for protected areas looking to assess economic value – share tools, framework.
- Investigate setting up framework of funded case studies to link up with academic research and economists looking at ecosystems services.
- Co-ordinated action to promote the economic worth of protected areas – yet don't try to value the intangibles – show and illustrate their benefits.

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