



Memorandum

Workshop 8. Health and Protected Areas

Il Picchio Hotel, Pescasseroli, Italy. 2 October 2010. (EUROPARC Conference 2010)

SUMMARY

The task for this workshop was to discuss and give three answers each to two questions related to the conference topic, "Living together. Biodiversity and Human Activities: A Challenge for the Future of Protected Areas" :

- 1) What are the most important challenges that '*Health and Protected Areas*' face to ensure people and biodiversity can live together?
- 2) What practical activities could be carried out to enable protected areas to contribute to and develop '*Health and Protected Areas*' in the future.

Conclusions

Question 1 /Challenges

- Communicating that the health of the environment is linked to the health of people. This has been forgotten.
- Getting the support and understanding from the medical sector
- In order to maximize health benefits, nature has to be accessible at low or no cost
- Create strong partnership and cooperation with all sectors that are related to nature and health.
- The term "Protected Area" is difficult in some areas, cultures and situations. It is better to talk about "parks" and "green spaces", "the outdoors", "nature", etc.
- We ourselves need a strong understanding of ecosystems services/ benefits (including health). Only then we can deliver strong messages to other sectors, the public, etc.
- Reaching unaware non users.

Question 2 / Practical Activities

- Form partnership with other organizations – especially health sector
- Share and multiply existing good practices and innovations! Bring pioneers together! Nourish good ideas! Make a commitment to propagate the Healthy Parks Healthy People body of knowledge + use of webpage: <http://www.hphpcentral.com/> Start in our own organisations!
- Evidence: Package what already exists! Adjust to different target groups (special lists for medical doctors, etc. other groups)
- There is a lack of category 5 evidence (long term, clinical evidence). Support and encourage build up of such evidence in any way we can!
- Marketing together with business whose products profile to protected areas.

All presentations are available for downloading, here: <http://www.europarc.org/library/conference-presentat/europarc-2010-pres/>

Below, you will find the main comments and questions that were raised during the workshop.



Participants

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1. Introductions and ice breaker by Rapporteur Rolands Auzins.

2. What has been done within the EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic and Atlantic-Isles Sections so far? Presentation by Lena Malmström. (Available as PP presentation)

Four meetings/seminars:

- Public health and experience of nature – the role of protected areas. Maribosøerne, Denmark. 27-30 May 2008.
- Naturally better – how protected areas can help deliver health and wellbeing. Wallingford, England. 26 March 2009.
- Workshop Healthy Parks, Healthy People EUROPARC Conference 2009, Strömstad, Sweden.
- 1st Working Group meeting Gut Siggen, Germany. 19-20 July 2010.

It is mainly during the latter two that the two sections have really come together and started thinking of a common working group.

So far, discussions have attempted to define the current situation, important issues, problems, etc. Now it is time to concretize and move into the action phase.

Questions and comments:

Have people in the other sectors (health) had similar general discussions and meetings? We should find out!

In order to get our agenda across, to get funds, we need to provide real figures!

One idea is to make lists of things that can be done by certain target groups. Eg lists for medical doctors: 1. Prescribe physical activities 2. Work together with you local nature interpreter/wilderness coach...

People within medical sector may think negatively of nature and the environment: "Nature = zoonoses".



3. Report from the Healthy Parks Healthy People Congress in Melbourne (April 2010), by Matti Tapaninen.

Proceedings available on <http://www.healthyparkshealthypeoplecongress.org/> .

Research articles etc on the brand new site: <http://www.hphpcentral.com/>

Most participants of the network are from the English speaking world. We must increase participation also from other parts of the world.

Leading up to the Healthy Parks Forum in London 2012, we must also increase participation from Europe.

1. Key message to deliver: People are part of nature!
2. Integrate Health and Sustainability. Health aspects must be integrated into sustainability tools
3. Nature deficit disorder: New generations loose contact with nature.
4. Ecosystem services are not known
5. Evidence? It is there!
6. Organisations need to unite in order to make our and natures voice clear.
7. Equalities: PA's can play an important role - as long as they are free of charge and open to everyone. Important democratic aspect.
8. The economic dimension of sustainability – numbers need be communicated!
9. We see an increased focus on urban parks. Because that is where people live. And that is where we can reach non-users. Threshold experience for many people.
10. Message: there are many different messages.
11. Ambassadors, famous faces, are useful.

There was also a workshop run by Dan Bloomfield , EUROPARC Atlantic- Isles, during the congress.

Main outcomes:

1. We need a desktop study – information from all parts of Europe
2. Networking. Go from discussions to activities!
3. Lobbying in Brussels. Parks and protected areas are not mentioned in the documents!

Questions and comments:

We need to figure out our unique selling points of our areas! Warning: the term “protected areas” can be perceived as something negative! That is why the US National Park Service choses to promote “green spaces” – that’s where people are going to go after dinner: to local parks. That’s where the power is! Work with locals, municipalitie , etc - all layers up to thenational level.

Is there a lack of evidence? It is true that there are NO LEVEL 5 category evidence (long term, clinical evidence) of the health benefits of outdoors. Thus, we must build 4 and 5 scale medical evidence!

Perception of danger is related to familiarity.

Build a community with organisations that have the contacts with health/medical sectors! We do not have to, and should not, do all the work from scratch.



4. Andrew Bachell, Operations Director, Scottish Natural Heritage (Presentation available as PP Presentation). www.snh.gov.uk

Economic driver for government: The more healthy your lifestyle, the less you'll cost society. *Outdoor* activity is often cost-efficient (investments in protected areas are cheap).

Scottish Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer (Scottish Government's principal medical adviser with direct access to Ministers):

"Today's issues are less about toxic or infectious threats but rather the capacity of ugly, scarred and threatening environments to foster hopelessness and stress, discourage active healthy lives and healthy behaviours." 2008

Scottish Natural Health Service supports the health initiative by:

- Creating paths and encouraging any kind of physical activity: Get off the bus one stop, etc etc...
- Creating places that are attractive and safe
- Providing information
- Providing opportunities and supporting organisations – children's groups, elderly...

Key trends:

- Main types of activities: everyday, countryside visits, volunteering, commercial leisure
- Key constraints: time, health and mobility
- Key trend towards re-localisation of recreation
- Provision should focus on
 - more & better accessible local green space and local path networks
 - (fewer) high quality countryside destinations
- On-going interventions required - targeted campaigns are important!
- Action on health outcomes

Focus on high quality places (compare also with Finland)

"Green Exercise" focuses on:

- Walking and relaxation
- Sport and recreation
- Practical conservation
- Rehabilitation and recovery

SNH uses a market survey service to check the efficiency of communication efforts. Aim for fewer activities - more people!

Next steps:

- Developing a key set of messages about health and the outdoors – for health professionals & environmental
- Exploring approaches to strengthen evidence base and how to use it to inform policy and practice on the ground
- Developing a more co-ordinated approach to funding for key initiatives like Paths for All, Green Gym etc
- Greening the NHS estate ie hospital grounds etc
- Promoting green prescriptions!

Q's and comments:



Is there a monitoring system to measure how successful your activities are? We measure the amount of activity. There is evidence that people take up the activity. Meanwhile, the health authority should measure health effect: How many prescriptions? Effects?

How to deal with higher level of pressure on nature?

Which area of the health service (family doctors,.. etc) is the most effective to approach? We don't know. Its important to try to make good contacts at the policy level, all across. In time, one will have to go more to the local level also.

Social aspect is important, to be part of a social group. That's where walking groups etc. some in. Train guides to pay attention to and help those in a group who are not so strong! Then they are more likely to carry on!

Most important activities in the future?

(US) Engage in kids!

- Employ landscape architects to create green playgrounds etc. Try to always incorporate some piece of natural space.

- Sports activities: In the US we see a drop off after 11 yrs. But, not among kids who are engaged in wilderness activities!

- Inspire kids! Somebody needs to inspire them. In the US, there is a program "Teacher-Ranger-Teacher". (US teachers are trained to be rangers during the summer, they then create curriculums for the autumn)

Funding? National lotteries have been used in some countries (DK). Different situation and splutions in different countries.

Evidence: Packaging for easier communication! Make targeted lists, leaflets etc to communicate the role of protected areas

Education!! Parks are free of charge, but still visited mainly by middleclass, educated people. Investments in urban parks! Green spaces close to people's home proved: More positive people gives longer life expectancy. (Burns)

Many messages should be turned into one main message (use a wide range of more specific slogans, for different target groups).

People in the health sector are needed to say that Green Prescriptions are not expensive and very risk free. (Medical professionals need to put risk assessments into drug prescription). Make contacts.

Reach out to medical universities! They are the next generation of med physicians.

Corporate wilderness programmes. Economic incentives for businesses/employers.

Green prescriptions: Is there a difference in how well-known and used these are within the mental and physical health sectors? The awareness needs to be raised in both!

Medical institutions can invest on their own land. Successful examples where the hospital's own lawn has been renovated and used by staff/patients. Simple and cost efficient solutions for better environment and faster rehabilitation.



Unprivileged groups, groups with no experience of parks, outdoor activities.

Have we got the right PA's in place for people?

There should be green areas, outreach, activities for all 4 groups:

<i>Aware users of protected areas</i>	<i>Aware non-users of protected areas</i>
<i>Unaware users of protected areas</i>	<i>Unaware non-users of protected areas (Most difficult to reach!)</i>

What activities work, i.e. makes people leave the sofa and go outside?

- Who gives the message is important! A medicine saying "Change or die" does not help (statistically proven). Mental change among professionals needed. Instead one piece of motivation -often a short term thing s a. "I want more energy to play with my children.." – can do the trick.

- How do you give someone immediate return from their walk? Explain something about something that they see, tell about history, culture, landscape, nature, Make walk pleasant and not only focussed on health, weight-loss...

- Leaflets and other info material is often distributed to people who already go to nature reserves. Eg. "Go wild with your child!" – leaflets distributed by SNH in Scotland reached only people who already go to nature reserves. Now, they try again and hand out leaflets in underprivileged areas.

Id all groups, contact points, list activities: Schoolchildren, elderly...

Volunteering – health – climate adaption plans should be integrated.

One could launch research prizes for student theses. We propose the themes.

- 1. There are pioneers around the world – Bring them together. Share practices. Organise workshops.*
- 2. Nourish those ideas: Any type of investment to help them grow. Thy will inspire innovation. People support what they create.*
- 3. Illuminate them!*

There is always something that's working now! Focus on it! Highlight on the programmes that are working.