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Understanding Concepts of Place in Recreation Research and Management

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Abstract

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Over a 3-day weekend in the spring of 2004 a group of scientists interested in extending understanding of place as applied in recreation research and management convened a working session in Portland, Oregon. The purpose of the gathering was to clarify their understanding of place-related concepts, approaches to the study of people-place relations, and the application of that understanding in recreation management for the purpose of integrating perspectives from different disciplines, discussing approaches to understanding and measuring sense of place, and other questions around the study and application of place-related concepts. Topics that generated the most discussion included how social processes influence place meanings, how place meanings are shared and negoitated within social groups, and when and how place meanings and attachments focus, reduce, or avert conflict in natural resource planning and management. This collection of papers is a result of that meeting.

Keywords: Place, sense of place, place attachment, recreation management.

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Chapter 1—Introduction: Gathering to Discuss Place

Linda E. Kruger and Troy E. Hall

Interest in Place Is Growing in Research and Management Applications

Increasing numbers of managers and scientists are recognizing the importance of understanding the meanings and attachments people have for places that are special to them and are designing ways to incorporate this knowledge into resource planning and management. This is important because people create "bonds with a locale based on a sense of place that involves sentiments extending beyond the use value of the land" (Eisenhauer et al. 2000: 438). In other words, attention to places has expanded beyond the notion of settings as clusters of attributes that are valued primarily for the commodities or activities they offer. More attention is being focused on the role of specific places and how they influence people's recreation and tourism choices, participation in stewardship and volunteer activities, and the acceptability of resource management decisions, for example. The geographical specificity and variety in place meanings and attachments have created a new challenge for resource managers, whose traditional planning processes are based on assumptions that locales can be functionally grouped into interchangeable, generic types. In response, managers and researchers are designing ways to understand and map local knowledge and meanings of places and other social and cultural information for use in planning and management.

In recent years, social science researchers have explored place as both an influence on and as influenced by a variety of factors and contexts, including public involvement, conflict, recreation management, recreation use, resource planning and management, community capacity, and resilience. As a result, the concepts of sense of place, attachment to place, place meanings, place dependence, place identity, and place-based planning are appearing more frequently in academic literature, agency publications, and even in the popular press. Place-oriented approaches to natural resource planning and management and community visioning are receiving increasing attention from academics, policymakers, citizens, and resource managers. In academia, place is considered in landscape architecture, environmental ethics, environmental psychology, rural sociology, human geography, and the humanities. A variety of methods are used to explore the meanings, experiences, attitudes, and behaviors that enable us to understand place and the relationship of people to their environments. There is a sizable and growing literature on place and related concepts (see Farnum et al. 2005).

Understanding symbolic dimensions of environments is critical to understanding the implications of environmental stasis or change and why conflicts over resource management become so contentious (Krannich et al. 1994). Recognizing the socially constructed nature of these symbolic meanings associated with settings and locations people care about is also important, because it draws attention to the role of social groups and processes in the formation, perpetuation, and change of sense of place over time (Brandenburg and Carroll 1995, Greider and Garkovich 1994, Kemmis 1990).

Slowly, planning processes are recognizing the importance of meanings and values people ascribe to places and the emotions, experiences, benefits, and satisfaction people experience in places (Galliano and Loeffler 1999). Place-based planning processes provide a venue for managers to interact with people who live, work, and play in a place and care about it. This is important because planning in itself is a place-making or meaning-creation process wherein certain meanings and values are privileged in certain geographic spaces (Galliano and Loeffler 1999, Williams 1995, Williams et al. 1992). Place-based planning that engages the public enables an understanding of what Clarke (quoted in Galliano and Loeffler 1999: 24) calls "the interactive unity of people and place." Knowledge of the politics of place can help managers understand natural resource conflict and better evaluate potential effectiveness of decisionmaking processes (Cheng et al. 2003). Understanding contested meanings of place is important for managers because sense of place and place meanings are often connected to attitudes and expectations about appropriate and inappropriate management or use. Paying attention to both shared and contested meanings may lead to more productive dialogue.

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An Exploration of Place

In the spring of 2004, the Pacific Northwest Research Station's Focused Science Delivery and Human and Natural Resources Interactions Programs sponsored a workshop in Portland, Oregon. The workshop brought together a group of scientists (app. 1) interested in synthesizing and extending understanding of place and applying these ideas specifically to recreation management on public lands. The group identified the following objectives:

- Clarify place concepts.
- Clarify approaches to the study and application of our understanding of people-place relations to natural resource management.
- Integrate perspectives from different disciplines.
- Discuss approaches to understanding and measuring sense of place.

- Discuss how place meanings and sense of place form.
- Explore the influence of scale and how to understand sense of place at multiple scales.
- Identify institutional factors that interact with sense of place by facilitating or impeding social justice, discourse, power shifts, and meaning changes.

Over a 3-day weekend (April 30–May 1), the group discussed place-related concepts, the process of forming place meanings and attachments, and methods and tools to study and measure sense of place, attachment, dependence, identity, and satisfaction. The group developed a list of research questions (app. 2). The following questions held the highest degree of interest for the group.

1. How do local and nonlocal social processes interact to influence the creation of place meanings? The group recognized that stakeholders of varying types and proximity to places hold meanings for and attach value to places. Past research has not typically spanned different populations to understand whether and how those who live in proximity to a resource develop place meanings that differ from those held by people who live elsewhere. For instance, differences may arise based on the direct experiences local residents have, whereas citizens who have never visited may have meanings that derive primarily from symbolic awareness of "national forests."

2. How do relevant management groups (e.g., demographically defined groups, activity groups, gender groups, ethnic groups) differ in place meanings? A major point of discussion in the group focused on the extent to which meanings are shared and the processes by which they become shared. Whether and how meanings are shared within and between stakeholder groups has important implications for the ways managers can learn about and use place information in making resource decisions.

3. How do meanings for specific recreation and tourism sites become negotiated within social groups? Much research has focused on describing the place meanings or level of place attachment that visitors or local populations have. Much less is known about the processes by which such meanings consolidate. In particular, there has been a lack of attention to the way power and social resources operate to impose certain meanings.

4. Under what conditions (planning and management activities) does a place attachment and place meaning focus, reduce, or avert conflict? Many authors have promoted place-based planning as a more sensitive, fair, and/or effective way to make decisions about resource use. However, the group recognized a need to

evaluate such assertions, which would include close attention to defining "success" and identification of the types of procedures that are more or less "successful."

In addition to identifying research questions, the group acknowledged the need for tools, processes, and conceptual frameworks that enable managers to access, assess, inventory, and monitor sociocultural meanings of places and incorporate socially relevant meanings into social inquiry and planning processes. These new tools would supplement current approaches, accommodating participation by diverse interests and integration of a variety of types of knowledge. They would provide a venue for expression and negotiation of meanings. Managers are leading the way in exploring a variety of processes, activities, and forums to access meanings people hold for places. By studying these management activities, we can extend our understanding of place-based processes and better answer the question "What processes work in what situations and why?"

Near the conclusion of the gathering, many of the participants were interested in continuing the dialogue and writing and publishing a collection of papers. This collection of seven papers is a product of the gathering. It provided an opportunity for participants to draw on each others' collective knowledge and the perspectives shared during the workshop, begin to address what the group identified as important needs, and move research on place in new directions. In the first paper, Dan Williams provides a conceptual guide to distinguish among approaches to place and explains why resource managers should care about the relations people develop with places. He draws together the wide range of efforts, classifying them into four approaches to the application of place concepts to management of natural resources. In her paper, Pat Stokowski describes sense of place as a social practice and calls for a focus on interpersonal communication as the primary vehicle for social interaction. She recommends attention to alternative theories that are more social and that move beyond internal psychological phenomena to incorporate social interactions and social context. She also discusses how reconceptualizing place to be more social can foster new ways of thinking about and addressing resource management issues. Rich Stedman focuses his contribution on the notion of place meanings, suggesting that they should be distinguished from the evaluative concept of place attachment. He notes that managers create and influence the kinds of meanings that people attribute to a place through management activities that alter the landscape, provide for some experiences and exclude others, and through communication and interpretation. He presents findings from a study of property owners in Wisconsin to illustrate his themes. Bill Stewart also focuses on place

meanings. In contrast to Stedman's more individualistic perspective, his comments echo Stokowski's emphasis on a more social approach, recognizing that places take on meaning through lived experience that includes conversation and interactions with others. He acknowledges the importance of venues that provide opportunities for articulation and negotiation of place meanings.

Gerard Kyle and Cassandra Johnson bring attention to the importance of understanding the meanings different cultures ascribe to the natural environment and the role these understandings play in attitudes, behaviors, and preferences. There have been few attempts to integrate the perspectives of the growing populations of ethnic and racial groups into the management of public lands. The authors present a framework for understanding the cultural dimensions of place meaning that incorporates self-identity, cultural identity, and place identity. Lynne Manzo adds to the literature on place attachment and sense of place by locating the development of place meanings in social and political processes and sheds light on experiences that make people value places and why some people use places that others do not. Like Stedman, she notes that it is important to pay attention to the messages that management actions, interpretation, and communication convey to a variety of audiences, including those of different cultures. She calls for a more holistic perspective that integrates physical, social, political, and economic domains as well as multiple levels of analysis and includes an array of different methodologies in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of people-place relations.

In the final paper, Tony Cheng and Linda Kruger review an experimental, adaptive approach to forest planning from the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests plan revision process. The process that is presented provided an opportunity for shareholders to contribute to the production of information and knowledge about the local landscape and people-place relations. The activity itself is described as a place-making process and is one example of a variety of place-based planning processes that are being applied around the country.

These papers present overlapping, and in some cases divergent, perspectives. It is our hope that readers will find them interesting and useful and that the ideas presented will provoke discussion and further attention to this important topic.

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Chapter 2—Pluralities of Place: A User's Guide to Place Concepts, Theories, and Philosophies in Natural Resource Management

Daniel R. Williams[1]

Abstract

Place ideas are capturing increasing attention in recreation and natural resource management. But there are important and sometimes incompatible differences among the various concepts. In this paper I describe some of the reasons for the growing interest in place concepts and distinguish between four basic approaches: attitude, meaning, ethical, and political. My aim is to provide a guide to managers so they can better appreciate the implications of these different approaches. Finally, I try to highlight throughout how and why these ideas apply to recreation and natural resource management issues.

Keywords: Place concepts, place meanings, environmental philosophy.

Introduction

In the English language the word "place" is a common but complex term that, in recent years, is showing up more prominently in the technical vocabulary of natural resource management. Place concepts are finding their way into technical documents including the Forest Service's *Handbook for Scenery Management* and a 2003 draft *Recreation Resource Management Plan Revision Technical Guide*. Likewise, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently published *Community Culture and the Environment: A Guide to Understanding a Sense of Place,* and place ideas are popping up in texts on ecosystem management. Managers increasingly talk about managing for "sense of place" and "special places," measuring "place attachment" among recreation visitors and community residents, and instituting collaborative "place-based planning" processes (Kruger and Jakes 2003).

In the resource management literature, "place" has surfaced along with "ecosystem," "community," and "landscape" as geographically tinged alternatives to the more traditional term "resource." Professional interest in these ideas is growing even though their seemingly elusive, murky, and controversial nature would make

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them difficult to plug into quantitative decision models and geographic information systems (GIS) databases. Despite these difficulties, talk of place resonates surprisingly well with professionals and the public involved in the management of wildlands, regional tourism planning, as well as community issues of sprawl, open space preservation, and community development.

In this paper, I describe the underlying richness and variety of place ideas that are being discussed and debated in natural resource management and related fields. My goal is to provide a guide to managers so they can better distinguish among differing approaches to place that are sometimes hard to discern within the din of superficially similar terminology. I do not intend to give a taxonomic account of terminology, but rather explain some of the important assumptions underlying various formulations of place concepts. Along the way, I will try to address the question of why place ideas have captured so much attention and highlight how and why these ideas apply to natural resource issues.

My interest in a place perspective goes back to the late 1970s when I was working with colleagues at Utah State University on what we called "relationship to resource" as a way to understand outdoor recreation behavior (Williams and Schreyer 1981) and conflict (Jacob and Schreyer 1980). Drawing on geographer Yi-Fu Tuan's (1974, 1977) writing about "topophilia" (love of place) and the "experience of place," we suggested recreationists may at times develop "feelings of possession" for the resource, that these relationships can serve as powerful symbols of self-identity, and that with these strong ties and feelings for a resource come strongly held social norms and expectations about what kinds of uses and behaviors are deemed acceptable in that setting. Recreation conflict resulted, at least in part, when diverse users held strongly to different norms about what uses and behaviors are appropriate in a setting. Yet, as I suggested at the time, "few studies in wildland recreation recognize the importance of the meaning the user attaches to the place" and how these meanings developed over time (Williams 1980: 1).

Beyond the issue of conflict, what really caught my attention was how the idea of a relationship to resource contrasted with the dominant "goal-directed" ideas embedded in recreation management concepts such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). I was troubled by the prevailing operational concepts of outdoor recreation in which activities and settings were viewed as collections of fungible (replaceable, substitutable) properties—properties that recreationists were thought to associate in varying degrees with their desired experience goals (hence the goal-directed model). In those days, outdoor recreation was understood in a way analogous to any other consumer good derived from the resource, in principle just as

fungible as timber, water, or forage. The very definition of "resource" dictates a capacity for finding or adapting properties to achieve some end or goal. Timber resources are ubiquitous, harvestable from virtually any place that supports forest vegetation. In contrast, the World Heritage status of Redwood National Park along California's northern coast is testimony to its unique, nonfungible character. That places could be unique did not seem to square with the goal-directed model, where the benefits that accrue to recreation participants are presumed to be substitutable from one setting to another so long as the substitute site possesses similar attributes (Hendee and Burdge 1974).

I could not imagine a substitute for my favorite places in the Desolation Wilderness, a landscape I had come to know intimately through the many visits I had made in my teens and early twenties. I could not imagine John Muir thinking that Yosemite Valley was just a big granite-enclosed playground (indeed, for Muir it was God's sacred temple). There must be some other explanation for many of the benefits and satisfactions I received from my recreational use of these places. But the dominant models of the day, based as they were in economics and consumer psychology, saw the setting as merely a collection of potentially attractive, but fungible features. The visitor's history with that setting meant very little other than to suggest frequent visitors should be more satisfied because they would be more likely to have "accurate" expectations about the setting features.

The outdoor recreation resource is a collection of specific places, each with its own unique history and set of rituals and meanings.

As a recreation participant, the outdoor recreation resource did not strike me as some kind of supermarket of potential recreation opportunities organized, packaged, and managed by recreation resource professionals for public consumption as leisure experiences. Instead it was a collection of specific places, each with its own unique history and set of rituals and meanings. Not only did the concept of recreation opportunities fail to capture much of the meaning and significance that a resource held for me as a participant, my personal reflections were reinforced by an emerging critique of traditional goal-directed, consumer choice models within the field of consumer behavior research (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, Ölander 1977, Olshavsky and Granbois 1979).

The essential difference between an approach to understanding recreation behavior from a resource and consumer perspective versus an approach potentially involving deep emotional and symbolic relationships to places is one of recognizing that at least in some important respects places are not fungible. Certainly, in many instances recreationists' relationship to a resource may be such that they view it as a source of goods and services and therefore perceive places as ultimately tradable

commodities. But any given place likely has some unique value and meaning (e.g., there is no substitute for the Grand Canyon experience), at least for some recreationists (fig. 1). The argument I have been making here is only that consumer relationships are not sufficient to capture the range of meanings and values recreationists are likely to assign to places, particularly those places that, from experience, they have come to know intimately. Although the place approach does not deny instrumental meanings, it is ultimately more inclusive and more easily accommodates the resource/commodity approach than the reverse.

In one guise or another, my research has continued to emphasize the relationship to place (in contrast to consumer/goal-directed/resource models) as a basis of outdoor recreation participation and choice. The basic idea I have been exploring is that people value their relationships to leisure places just as they might value enduring involvements with certain people or particular "free time" activities. We choose recreation places not merely because they are useful settings for pursuing outdoor recreation activities, but to convey the very sense of who we are.

The Popularity of "Place"

Interest in place ideas extends well beyond the academic margins of recreation resource management. Even in the broader culture of scientific management, which has historically dominated natural resources, such seemingly difficult-to-quantify concepts have become a popular refrain (see Beatley and Manning 1997, Grumbine 1992, Hansson and Wackernagel 1999, Waage 2001). Although place ideas have

National Park Service

Figure 1—The Grand Canyon experience represents a unique value and meaning.

been widely used in geography, architecture, and regional planning since the early 1970s, the growing emphasis on collaborative ecosystem management has amplified interest in place concepts within the natural resources field. For that matter, the popularity of place is more than a recent fad of academic rumination: place ideas also have currency within the wider public imagination (Kunstler 1993, Spretnak 1997). There are a number of societal and resource management reasons for their growing appeal.

A leading sociological explanation is a general reaction against the commodified view of nature that has dominated our modern, technological society (Macnaughten and Urry 1998). Some see a broad public disenchantment with the tendency to reduce places to mere resources (Spretnak 1997). Treating nature as a collection of products or commodities to be sold, or isolating properties of the environment in order to study them scientifically leaves many people, lay and professional, with a sense that the larger whole, the "place" itself, has somehow been lost along the way. This was much of the reaction described in the Forest Service's own critique of the first round of forest planning (Larsen et al. 1990). Although ecosystem management attempts to put the silvicultural/forest management science of the first round of forest planning into a broader spatial and historical context, it has not fully addressed the richness of human meanings and relationships to the land that people express and want to see represented in the planning process. Place, in contrast, is seen as encompassing both natural and social history.

Although ecosystem management attempts to put silviculture and forest management into a broader spatial and historical context, it has not fully addressed the richness of human meanings and relationships to the land that people express.

A second, sociological explanation for the increasing discussion of place can be found in public angst about globalization and the accelerating pace of change in society. The look and layout of most American communities has undergone rapid change in recent decades. Concerns about the character and quality of places have increased with the spread of mass culture and consumption through entertainment and retail goliaths like Time-Warner[2] and Wal-Mart. To many people, the social, technological, and economic forces of globalization appear to have weakened local distinctiveness. In addition, relatively inexpensive transportation and new information technologies mean people can experience more parts of the world through international trade, travel, and the media.

Ironically, these forces of homogenization have made place more important, not less (Harvey 1996, Mander and Goldsmith 1996). With the onset of globalization, what were once taken-for-granted, subconscious meanings of a place now

[2] The use of trade or firm names in this publication is for reader information and does not imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture of any product or service.

come to the surface and seem threatened by nearly every proposed change to the local landscape. Efforts to introduce new land uses—whether theme parks, prisons, wildlife preserves, timber harvests, land exchanges, or shopping malls—become symbols of external threats to the local sense of place (Appleyard 1979). These proposed new uses express the sense of place defined by the outsider (e.g., the scientist, government official, or special interest group) and thus represent the power of the outsider over the local.

At the same time that globalization threatens local control over place, it invites more and more stakeholders to make claims on what a place means and how it should be used (Massey 1993). In other words, a more global (pluralist) culture supports a more expansive set of place meanings. Ironically, some of these more distant claims may be to appreciate a place (e.g., as wilderness or a world heritage designation) in ways that go beyond traditionally prescribed meanings for commodity development. In this way, globalization is sometimes seen as a benign force for the protection of sense of place otherwise threatened by indigenous or corporate exploitation rather than a dangerous and destabilizing force reshaping places from afar (Williams 2002b).

A final and related reason is simply that the meanings of many remote recreation places have become more apparent, complex, and thickly layered with intensification of public use. A sense of place is partly about building up a personal history with a locale. In the early days of public lands management, relatively few people had direct experience visiting specific places on national forests, rangelands, and parks. They were largely unknown and unused in the modern sense. With few claims and norms for how a place ought to be used, both users and managers had more latitude to define appropriate use and meaning. Today, with the expanding wildland-urban interface and large metropolitan populations within easy reach of wildlands, there is far greater potential for competing senses of place to be established and fought over. Where only hearty hikers and anglers once tread, a host of relative newcomers (off-highway vehicle [also known as OHV] users, mountain bikers, target shooters) now compete for access (fig. 2). These high-powered and high-tech newcomers bring with them conflicting ideas about what constitutes desirable or acceptable use and establish their own attachment to and sense of the place.

Under the earlier conditions, it was easier to manage places as settings or opportunities to fulfill specific goal-directed experiences. Because fewer visitors had much history in the landscape, and the variety of users was smaller, managers

Maria Stiefel

Figure 2—Off-highway vehicle users now compete for access to public places.

had more latitude to negotiate meanings and norms for use and to zone potentially competing uses. As places become increasingly accessible and popular among a wider diversity of users and interests, it has become much more difficult to manage for any particular experience on a given piece of ground. Now, in this era of high-intensity use among a greater plurality of users, the concept of place helps managers recognize that users form allegiances to specific places (with specific meanings attached) as well as norms of appropriate use and management. These meanings sometimes can accommodate a wide diversity of other users and sometimes not.

As places become increasingly accessible and popular among a wider diversity of users and interests, it has become much more difficult to manage for any particular experience on a given piece of ground.

Four Approaches to Place in Natural Resource Management

As implied above, the popularity of place concepts comes, in part, from people drawing on varying place ideas to bolster a particular view of how a place should be developed, managed, or preserved. But what at first appear to be common or compatible approaches, may represent diverse, if not contradictory, viewpoints (Patterson and Williams 2005). Thus, it is important for managers to recognize some of the variations in use and meaning of these concepts. In this section, I will highlight some of these differences by describing four more or less distinct approaches (or discourses) underlying the application of place ideas to the management of natural resources. But before I begin, let me recap some features that most place concepts tend to share in common.

At a basic level, most place concepts emphasize a holistic and spatially and temporally explicit view of resources. Just as ecosystem management attempts to put traditional forest management science into a broader spatial and historical context, place and sense of place ideas pay more attention to the human or social history of a particular locale. Among academic geographers, the term "place" is also used to denote a more holistic notion in comparison to a more abstract notion of space or geographic location (e.g., in a coordinate or Euclidean space). Space is little more than location or container. It is only when we begin to fill it up with particular events and meanings does a space become place. Each place, thus, is unique from every other place in the particular pattern of events and meanings that come to be associated with it.

Beyond a general desire for a more holistic and historical understanding of place, however, my attempt to organize place discourses into four categories is meant to emphasize the differences among them that often go overlooked. Still, although there are some incompatibilities that need to be recognized, these discourses are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and hybrid views are possible.

Place as an Attitude Object

The most straightforward approach is to think of place or, more typically, place attachment as something akin to an attitude toward a geographic locale or resource (Jorgensen and Stedman 2001, Stedman 2002). Attitudes are assessments of whether some object or behavior is considered a good or bad thing. For example, a person may hold attitudes toward an agency, a political candidate, a consumer product, a behavior (e.g., smoking), or a concept (e.g., wilderness or wildfire). These attitudes are usually built upon various beliefs about the object (e.g., smoking causes cancer, wildfires damage watersheds) and presumably determine one's behavior toward the object.

Attitudes involve strength as well as valence (positive or negative reaction). Thus, there is a natural tendency to measure the strength of individuals' attachment toward any particular resource. Much of the work on measuring place attachment in recreation and tourism implicitly or explicitly follows the attitude tradition. A common approach to place attachment has been to build on concepts (e.g., consumer loyalty and product involvement) found in literature on consumer behavior (Bricker and Kerstetter 2000; Jones et al. 2000; Kyle et al. 2003, 2004; Warzecha and Lime 2000; Williams and Vaske 2003; Williams et al. 1992). Although this does not explicitly draw from attitude theory, consumer loyalty and product

involvement can be considered a kind of "brand" attitude. In any case, Stedman and colleagues have made an explicit plea to study place attachment as an attitude (Jorgensen and Stedman 2001, Stedman 2002).

In natural resource management, place ideas are sometimes used to characterize one type of attitude among many potential attitudes or beliefs people might hold toward a resource (Williams and Stewart 1998). For example, the term "sense of place" is sometimes used to describe varying degrees of specialness or authenticity of a place. In this case, landscapes can be compared and ranked by the strength or integrity of their sense of place and management actions evaluated by how this sense of place is enhanced or diminished (see also the later discussion of place as a philosophy of environmental ethics).

There is important value in the attitude approach, in part, because it ties place attachment to well-established concepts and methods in social psychology. For example, social psychological research has developed relatively direct methods for measuring the strength of attitudes and provides insights into how attitudes form and how they change. It also makes place attachment highly compatible with the traditional consumer-utility (benefit) approaches to natural resource management—strength of attachment becomes one factor in a multifactor consumer decision framework.

Place attachment reminds resource managers that the public is involved with specific places under their jurisdiction, not just land uses classified as one type of opportunity or another to be allocated to various uses during a planning cycle.

In terms of managing natural resources, place attachment is also attractive because it attempts to quantify the strength of connections between people and geographically specific places directly rather than trying to establish such connections indirectly in terms of how well they fit or function in satisfying specific recreation goals. This is significant in two ways. First, people often care passionately about the management of specific sites in ways not easily captured as in an inventory of fungible properties. Place attachment reminds resource managers that the public is involved with specific places under their jurisdiction, not just land uses classified as one type of opportunity or another to be allocated to various uses during a planning cycle. Secondly, place attachment reminds managers of something the consumer approach often misses. People not only evaluate products and services as satisfactory or unsatisfactory, they come to cherish some as prized possessions and symbols or markers of identity (Belk 1988).

Still, it is debatable whether place attachment is best thought of as an attitude toward a place. The question is whether place attitudes adequately characterize the relationships recreationists hold toward certain places. At one level, place attachment has all the hallmarks of an attitude in that it involves both valence and

strength and it does little harm to treat it as such. But part of the reason for considering place attachment is to address something deeper and more fundamental than is typically associated with attitudes. People do not usually characterize their relationships to cherished objects, home, or family in terms of attitudes. To say that I have a favorable attitude toward my wife and children would seem to degrade the emotional intensity of these relationships. In any case, even if place attachment is something broader than an attitude, it is certainly likely to predict or explain more specific attitudes toward the place.

In my judgment, an attitude approach to place does not do justice to the broader concerns that motivate professional and public interest in the concept of place. Something important is lost when place attachment is reduced to an attitude. The idea of attitude tends to be narrowly evaluative and judgmental and lacks the holistic, emotive, and contextual qualities of the place idea that was part of its original appeal (Altman and Low 1992). Likewise, place as attitude poses little challenge to the dominant utilitarian (commodified) view of nature in which natural landscapes (places) are reduced to a collection of parts.

Place as Relationship and Meaning

The second approach involves the relatively straightforward recognition of a broader range of meanings that people associate with a place than with a resource (Williams and Patterson 1996). As resource management has moved toward recognizing more holistic, systemic, and contextual qualities, it is increasingly concerned with capturing the full range of meanings the public ascribes to places—meanings that may differ widely across individuals and social groups and evolve over time. In the long-standing tradition of utilitarian resource management, the legitimate meaning of a resource was necessarily limited to the tangible and fungible commodities that it could provide. The value of a resource was defined by the uses or products that could flow from it. Even uses that we sometimes think of as "intangible" such as recreation were rendered more tangible by thinking of them as products or services supplied by the resource.

The term "meaning" is used to convey a deeper notion than attitude by emphasizing the "relationship" between a person or group and the place. The notion of relationship implies past experience or history with the site as well as connectivity or identification. In addition, whereas attitude necessarily occurs in the individual mind, meaning often refers to a shared or collective belief. In effect, emphasizing meaning expands the narrower psychological approach of attitudes by recognizing

the sociocultural nature of (often intangible) ideas, symbols, beliefs, and values that characterize the relationship between the person or group and a place.

Our relationship to a place serves as a testimonial to who we are. This can occur at both an individual and cultural level (Williams 2000). At an individual level, a place like Desolation Wilderness in California is an indelible part of me, an expression of both my personal and professional interests. At a cultural level, we designate places as wilderness or national parks as a way to sanctify them as special places marking important events in our collective American history. At either level, social interactions, shared experiences and stories, and broad cultural narratives are important in creating, modifying, and transmitting place meanings within a population.

In the place-as-meaning approach, sense of place sometimes refers to the intangible meanings and symbols that are hard to recognize or articulate (and hard to quantify), especially if one is unfamiliar with the place or is an "outsider" to the social world that associates particular meanings with the place (Hester 1985, Williams and Stewart 1998). As an example, those schooled in the Anglo-professional culture of resource management often have a hard time recognizing place meanings of people from minority/ethnic communities (Williams and Carr 1993). But even the smaller differences between long-time locals and recent-arriving managers who otherwise share cultural backgrounds may create barriers to understanding the meaning of places. One of the features of ecosystem management, for example, is to give greater consideration to local ecological knowledge. Place effectively extends this edict to include local social and symbolic meanings. This is not always easy, as even insiders sometimes may lack full awareness of these qualities until some event or proposal threatens them (Hester 1985).

An approach emphasizing place meanings, particularly shared cultural meanings, is sometimes distinguished from the idea of place attachment or place identity. Most places have shared meanings, but the intensity with which individuals hold or identify with those meanings likely varies. Gettysburg National Battlefield, for example, is rich in meaning for America society, but some Americans identify more strongly with these meanings than others. For some people, it may be that their ancestors fought in the Civil War. For others who may be history buffs, they take great interest in knowing the details of the events that occurred there. As managers, we generally need to understand the range and variety of meanings the public assigns to a place, as well as how their intensity differs across stakeholders and constituencies (Brandenburg and Carroll 1995).

As managers, if we think of our traditional tasks of resource inventory as efforts to identify and map landscape meanings, the place perspective argues for employing a wider conception of meaning. Resource maps, in effect, describe how certain kinds of meaning are spatially distributed. Natural resource management has sought, with considerable success, to map certain tangible forms of meaning (e.g., commodity and amenity uses). As intangible meanings (e.g., cultural/symbolic, expressive, and even spiritual meanings) have become increasingly legitimized within the ecological or systems concept of resource management, the scope of resource mapping needs to be similarly expanded.

Although in theory, meaning can be mapped like other spatial properties, the problem has been that the more intangible meanings, by definition, leave few, if any, physical indicators, behavioral evidence, or cultural markers in the landscape to tell us they exist. Thus for managers to identify the full range of meanings requires an expanded set of inventory techniques (for promising examples see Brown 2005, Eisenhauer et al. 2000).

Meanings can be likened to stories about places rather than physical properties of places. The job of the resource manager is to learn about these stories and to recognize when different groups of people have different and sometimes conflicting stories. Relatively passive approaches to gathering these stories would include identifying narratives, documents, and histories about a place or consulting key informants including long-time managers (Davenport and Anderson 2005). More active approaches would be to engage the public in constructing and negotiating their various stories through various forms of collaborative planning itself (Kruger and Shannon 2000, see also the discussion below on place as a sociopolitical process).

Implicit in the place-as-meaning approach is the controversial idea of social constructionism (cf., Cronon 1996, Soulé and Lease 1995). To critics like Soulé and Lease, a social constructionist view of nature implies that people can assign a virtually infinite range of meaning to a place, and, therefore, physical or ecological reality would seem to have little influence on what a place means and how it should be managed (see also Stedman 2003). Social constructionism (i.e., meaning is not inherent in a thing, but a product of social convention) strikes some ecologists as dangerous relativism, giving license to society to make places however they choose, thereby threatening ecological systems. Ironically, others see the study of resource meanings and values as often insufficiently socially constructed and little different from the usual attitudes, perceptions, and motives that recreation managers have

traditionally catalogued (Stokowski 2002). In this view, traditional social psychological and economic notions of individually held attitudes and values are seen as insufficiently "social" in origin.

Controversy aside, in some ways the place-as-meaning approach is among the least prescriptive of the various place discourses. At one level, it merely acknowledges that place meanings exist and are often diverse, malleable, and continuously created and contested by people (including scientists and resource managers). I see it mostly as suggesting that different kinds of meanings (from traditionally recognized commodity meanings to the more elusive emotional and spiritual meanings) all have something to offer in our understanding of relationships to places. Although place-as-meaning need not advocate that any particular meanings should rule, it does help managers to see that places are complex and contested and that managers play a critical role in the ongoing give-and-take of place creation. At the same time, the fact that people do contest place meanings gives rise to philosophical arguments and political wrangling aimed at validating some meanings over others as I shall discuss below.

Place as Environmental Ethics

The third approach invokes place ideas as moral or ethical claims for protecting or restoring the presumably genuine meaning (character or personality) of a place. Accordingly, every place is presumed to have some authentic ecologically or culturally defined essence, some true and timeless character, often threatened (if not already destroyed) by larger distant forces (e.g., environmental degradation, modernization, and globalization).

This moral dialogue also is popular among certain environmental philosophers and scientific ecologists. Representing both the philosophical and ecological perspective, Grumbine (1992) suggested that humans once had an authentic relationship to place that has "atrophied" under modern modes of life. We have become alienated from our true relationship to nature, place, and community. Modernity has bred within us an "anthropocentric arrogance" and failure "to adapt to the ecological conditions that limit human existence" (Grumbine 1992: 245). Likewise, these arguments resonate with some ecologists because they appear to provide normative guidelines for how society ought to treat landscapes—that is, by following some indigenous ecological pattern (Samson and Knopf 1996).

Moral arguments also come from architects, planners, and a variety of social critics. Some planners and urban designers condemn forms of commercial development and mass culture for homogenizing the built landscape (e.g., Kunstler 1993).

For other social critics, the issue is often one of preserving some vestige of traditional community against the threat of large-scale forces of economic restructuring and the bureaucratic state (Mander and Goldsmith 1996). Within the design professions (e.g., landscape architecture) and among restoration ecologists there is a tendency to reify aesthetic and/or ecological standards for landscape management based on a presumed integrity with respect to a natural, historical, ecological range of conditions (Norberg-Schultz 1980, McGinnis et al. 1999). The core idea here is that each place, community, landscape, or ecosystem possesses some inherent true character. Proper management does not destroy that character, but protects it or, if necessary and possible, restores it.

There are a variety of social and environmental movements founded on this underlying premise of alienation from the modern world (for a discussion, see Williams and Van Patten 2006). Bioregionalism is one example of a place-based philosophy that harkens back to a more sustainable relationship to places (Flores 1994). The bioregional model envisions an ecological utopia of small-scale societies as an alternative to the large-scale processes favored by global, industrial capitalism. Bioregionalists believe there is an authentic biocentric (natural) way of acting and dwelling in the world, a true sense of place to be discovered or recovered. Bioregionalists mix ecological science and environmental ethics to argue that society should be organized around decentralized natural or "organic" regions. Politically they emphasize decentralized, nonhierarchical social and political systems. The guiding principle is that nature should determine the political, economic, and social life of communities. The conscientious study of nature can guide us in organizing human settlements and ways of life.

Just as some environmental philosophers revere bioregional living on the basis of an organic interpretation of regionalism, communitarians tout the virtues of small local communities on the basis of their presumed thicker ties of tradition and custom as an antidote to modernism and globalization (Bell 1993). For some, the ecological relation to nature is closely tied to communitarian ideals of civic virtues. For example, communitarians such as Kemmis argue that decisionmaking in the public sphere should depend less on a set of procedures, laws, regulations, or bureaucracies and more on human virtues and patterns of relationships—"the set of practices which enables a common inhabiting of a place" (Kemmis 1990: 122). Rural life is presumed to be the good life in need of protection. Within natural resource management, some versions of place-based planning draw on the assumption that local decisionmaking is necessarily better (Kemmis 2001).

The presumption that places are given by nature is challenged by some geographers and environmental philosophers (Harvey 1996). Hayward (1994), for example, identified three problems with bioregional admonitions to follow nature and seek local self-sufficiency. First, there is little evidence from human history to expect that decentralized bioregional/communitarian societies will necessarily respect the positive values of human diversity, democracy, liberty, and justice. Second, there is the problem of distributive justice. The various bioregions, unfortunately, are not uniformly or equally endowed with resources. It is much easier to create a local, communal self-sufficiency in a lush productive landscape than a barren, impoverished one. Deciding who gets to live in a given region is no small problem. Finally, bioregional self-sufficiency ignores the interdependence and hierarchical structure of ecosystems. Actions in one bioregion may have significant impacts on adjacent ones. Nor is decentralization necessarily the most efficient for nature. Assuming anything approaching the present world population, it may not be realistic to believe that a decentralized bioregional strategy is likely to lessen human impact on the biosphere.

The main reason here for highlighting place as an environmental ethic is that managers need to be mindful of how they describe and employ place ideas. The moral arguments for some sort of pre-given sense of place animate specific views for how society should value place, nature, or landscape. As I noted earlier in discussing reasons for elevated interest in place ideas, sense of place is sometimes invoked as a way to correct what is perceived to be an overly modern or mechanistic view of nature (nature as a storehouse of commodities).

Although some people use place ideas in strongly prescriptive ways, this is by no means universal. As we have seen, not all place ideas are calls for preservation or restoration of some "authentic" sense of place. Rather they may represent an expanded understanding of place meanings, without endorsing some meanings over others (the place-as-meaning approach). In the end, however, any attempt to expand the definition of what meanings should count in a land management decision will necessarily open up resource management to a larger political debate.

Managers need to be mindful of how they describe and employ place ideas. Any attempt to expand the definition of what meanings should count in a land management decision will necessarily open up resource management to a larger political debate.

Place as Sociopolitical Process

The fact that people not only assign diverse meanings to place, but often ground meanings in a moral language of ecology or community, implies a political dimension to how place ideas affect natural resource management. Recent years have seen a growing interest in the idea of the politics of place (Cheng et al. 2003, Kemmis 1990, Stokowski 2002, Williams 2002a, Yung et al. 2003) to account for the fact

that different groups of people make competing claims on the meaning of a place. Likewise, place attachments and sense of place are necessarily political because place meanings serve to define social group differences (serve to define "us" and "them," locals and outsiders). And not unlike bioregional philosophy, any claim on what belongs to a place (what kinds of meaning and practices are deemed authentic to the place) is often invoked to assert power and authority over a place. Recreation use involves making and resisting claims about places, about what a place means or what constitutes the true character of sense of it. Jacob and Schreyer's (1980) original work on conflict recognized that conflicts are often over different relationships to the resource. The politics of place is a more up-to-date way to describe these conflicting relationships to resources.

Once resource managers begin to recognize places as repositories of meaning, they must also come to terms with the fact that more than one set of meanings is possible as various communities of place and interest compete to represent the meaning of a place according to their own systems of meaning. Historically, the utilitarian view of places recognized that different parties assign different levels of utility to various resource commodities, but that the potential commodities themselves (the meanings) were inherent properties of the resource. In contrast, the sociopolitical view recognizes that meanings exist beyond those traditionally acknowledged as commodities (e.g., ritual, symbolism, identity) and that there may be little consensus on meanings among stakeholders. In addition, the sociopolitical approach must admit that landscape meanings are but a temporary snapshot of a continuous social and political process of negotiation and contestation. Much of the political conflict in natural resource planning is over whose meanings for the landscape will prevail. Resource plans themselves constitute a sense of place that often elevate and empower the planners' meanings over other stakeholders (Appleyard 1979).

As I have alluded to in contrasting the different place discourses, one of the basic ways that different senses of place provoke conflict is over whether place meanings (or sense of place) are seen as innate in a particular landscape (and therefore an ecological or social norm worthy of protection and/or restoration) or constructed in the minds of users (and therefore open to varying interpretations that are often contested by various enthusiasts of one sort or another). This is also sometimes described as whether there are true, authentic senses of place or whether place meanings are entirely constructed through experience and social interaction and subject to political or administrative adjudication. The former would imply that

management should endeavor to uncover and perpetuate the authentic place or in some cases restore lost places to their former authentic state. The latter says that places are subject to multiple competing claims, but no claims of sense of place can be validated on their conformance to an authentic normative prescription without politics.

From the standpoint of managing public lands, I favor the latter, political view for the simple reason that as public servants, managers, and natural resource planners, our job is not to tell people what the authentic sense of place is, but to facilitate a public dialogue as to what it can and should be. To take the other course and suggest that there is a right and true sense of place is to advocate or endorse a particular management regime based on our presumed technical or professional capacity to identify and prescribe the correct sense of place on behalf of society and goes against the trend toward more collaborative stakeholder involvement in decisionmaking. This amounts to perpetuating our untenable legacy of the technical view of natural resource decisionmaking.

Conclusions

Different theories of place (attitudinal, relational, ethical, and political) tend also to emphasize different kinds of meanings (see Williams and Patterson 1999 for a taxonomy of place meanings). Some are seen as "inherent" in the human-nature connection, others are seen as products of culture and experience. In other words, meanings differ based on the degree to which we assume meaning is biologically determined, objective, and generalized versus socially constructed, subjective, and contextual.

People form varied and complex relationships (uses, meanings, values) with specific locales.

The core idea behind thinking of resources as places is to recognize that people form varied and complex relationships (uses, meanings, values) with specific locales. These relationships often extend beyond the kinds of relationships we normally imagine in a consumer's relationship with a commodity, to include emotional, symbolic, and even spiritual meanings that have little direct correspondence with the usefulness of the setting for some activity. In other words, places are not merely useful for delivering specific recreation benefits. They also embody a sense of meaning and identity for the user that is built up as the user establishes experiences and memories in that place. The challenge for managers is that we are unlikely to discover, let alone map, most place meanings as if they are strewn about on the landscape waiting for us to come by and "inventory" them. In contrast to our resource training, it is difficult to identify meanings through some "archeological" technique that looks for evidence on the ground (e.g., physical properties) that

would reliably indicate specific meanings. Rather, the meanings of each place are revealed in the stories people tell about it (fig. 3). Knowledge of place meanings requires delving into the human history of use, settlement, or occupation of the landscape.

Not only are meanings cloaked in stories that require some effort to uncover, but our pluralist society produces competing stories or senses of a given place. Thus, a second important idea behind thinking of resources as places is to recognize that whereas managers may have some (often important) influence over what a place means, the meanings themselves are not subject to the kinds of rational control envisioned in 20th-century traditions of scientific management. Again the commodity metaphor breaks down. Unlike managers of private markets, managers of "places" do not really control the types of recreation resource products "on the market" for users to choose among based on their particular interests and values. Instead, the individual and collective acts of recreation and other users or stakeholders, as well as resource managers, make (and sometimes resist) competing claims on a place. For managing public places, there is no single or inherently correct sense of place that trumps other senses of places. Negotiating among different senses of public place is an essentially political process, one that can be informed by collaborative efforts by stakeholders and managers to identify and possibly map social differences in uses, meanings, and values of geographically specific places.

Negotiating among different senses of public place is an essentially political process, one that can be informed by collaborative efforts by stakeholders and managers.

Maria Stiefel

Figure 3—The meanings of each place are revealed in the stories people tell about it.

As managers, we face an ever-increasing plurality of contested place meanings and, in my view, we are unlikely to discover a scientific basis for affirming one set of meanings over another. Thus, a source of much confusion in discussions of place and attempts to integrate place ideas into management is the inevitable mixing of **prescriptive** arguments for how places ought to be managed (which meanings ought to prevail) with more **descriptive** or process-oriented statements that merely suggest that managers need to be open and receptive to a wider arena of public meanings and values that attend to a place. In other words, management needs to recognize the potential for competing claims or senses of place while at the same time remaining open to a wider array of meanings and recognizing all claims (even their own) as potentially prescriptive arguments for a particular sense of place. The challenge, as Appleyard (1979) cautioned several decades ago, is that environmental planners often consciously or unconsciously try to impose their own meanings on the environment, meanings that differ from public stakeholders.

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Chapter 3—Creating Social Senses of Place: New Directions for Sense of Place Research in Natural Resource Management

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Abstract

To understand social aspects of sense of place, this paper contrasts traditional cognitive approaches with more recent social constructionist approaches to analyzing place. The paper argues that a more social sense of place rests on the intersection of three fundamental elements: social relationships, interactions, and contexts. The role of language is critical in the development of place meanings. Created through language practices, places and senses of place can be seen as imaginative social productions that gain meaning in the telling, and persist in personal and collective memory. A primary focus of constructionist theorizing applied to studies of sense of place should be analysis of how people collectively create and develop understandings about the nature of and meanings of place. To this end, a range of research and managerial implications are offered by the author.

Keywords: Social constructions of place, place meanings, social and cultural contexts, language, interpersonal communication.

Introduction

The past few decades have witnessed the emergence of considerable academic and public interest in the topic of place. In the social sciences, studies of place once typically fell within the purview of geographers, urban planners, and landscape architects—scholars who generally used the concept to refer to physical settings (natural sites, built locales, regions) that could be designed, transformed, and managed for human goals. In these conceptions, places had objective, observable qualities—a place was a bounded site or locale, it had dimensions (size, shape, verticality), it contained natural or built features, and so on. Places were also functionally useful and meaningful based on the specific kinds of activities they could support. Places, as Tuan (1974) observed, were spaces made meaningful as a result of human intent and action.

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Beyond their physical and utilitarian qualities, places have historically also been conceived as centers of symbolism and sentiment. Philosophers, artists, writers, and politicians have long acknowledged the emotional, affective, social, cultural, and spiritual qualities of place—topics that have generally been grouped under the notion of a "sense of place." In its broadest usage, the concept of sense of place has been used to refer to human interpretations of the sensory and emotional experiences that accompany awareness of, and relationships with, specific locales or sites (places). Although it seems difficult to exactly measure levels of sense of place, the academic literature about this concept can generally be subdivided into two broad categories: (a) formal studies evaluating the attitudes and sentiments of individuals who are studied during participation in specific activities in well-defined places (often home-based, or leisure-based settings) and (b) analytical, creative, and philosophical writings about the importance of place relationships for individuals and societies. Within both categories, researchers have tended to highlight positive senses of place (rather than negative, or neutral), and to study individual (rather than social or cultural) experiences and responses.

Common to both of these analytic approaches is a concern with "meaning." The concept of meaning can be understood in a variety of ways, but in colloquial usage, meaning simply refers to what is conveyed from one person to another (e.g., the "meaning of what someone says"), or the purpose or significance of something (i.e., what an action or thing "means"). However, social scientists have attempted to develop more precise measures; two perspectives are often applied. First, traditional social psychological perspectives are elaborated in Shaw and Costanzo's (1970: 176) definition of meaning as "a consequence of a categorization process that is basic to perception." The human mind translates the importance or value of perceived objects or events into knowledge; thus, "the potential meaning inherent in symbols (or in sets of symbols) is converted into differentiated cognitive content" (Shaw and Costanzo 1970: 176). That is, meaning develops independently in the minds of individuals. Second, a behavioral perspective—in which meaning is a consequence of social action—is elaborated by sociologist Shibutani (1986: 36), who wrote:

> Meaning is often thought to be an attribute of words, or…the inherent characteristic of an object; sometimes we view it as an idea mysteriously floating about in the mind…[But] the meaning of any object is the manner in which we are organized to act toward it…meaning is primarily an attribute of behavior.

That is, meaning is in what people do.

These are not the only approaches to defining meaning, but they are widely accepted and applied in social research about sense of place. In the research literatures of outdoor recreation and natural resource management, analyses relating to the discovery and importance of "the meanings of place" have recently become quite common. Recent journal articles claim to present the "meanings of a place" expressed by recreation groups or a community. Implicit in this literature, though, is an ongoing debate about how place meanings become manifest; the extent to which personal place meanings affect an individual's future behavior; whether place meanings differ across social groups onsite; the extent to which researchers can identify, access, and analyze place meanings; and what different types of place meanings might imply for resource management.

Attaining a Sense of Place: The Traditional Model

What do we mean when we say that someone has a sense of place? Researchers studying outdoor recreation and natural resource management have historically used that phrase to refer to the cognitive and emotional processes of place attachment that occur onsite during an individual's activity participation at leisure, recreation, or resource places. Williams et al. (1992: 31) observed that, "Sense of place is often associated with an emotional or affective bond between an individual and a particular place; this bond may vary in intensity…" Clark and Stein (2003: 869) agreed, "Sense of place [is] also referred to as place attachment…[and] manifests itself as an emotional bond between an individual and specific place."

An analysis of the scholarly literature published in the fields of outdoor recreation and leisure suggests that the process of achieving a sense of place can be generalized as follows. Something internal to a person (a mind, a soul, an aesthetic sensibility) grasps or intuits something felt to be deeply important about his/her relation with a place (an objectively defined center of action, a locale, a site), and interprets this knowledge or sentiment as meaningful (having a plausible reality) in the context of life. This meaning is identified in consciousness as a "sense of place"—a coherent explanation of understanding that is linked with external environmental stimuli. Because the person lives in a world of others, the attributed meaning or sense of place has been filtered socially and culturally, so it appears as a reasonable conclusion drawn from personal experience, verified by others, and appropriate for sharing socially.

Although this description clearly over-simplifies the process, it does reveal several notable features of traditional theorizing about place and sense of place. First, this model is inherently individualistic and psychological in orientation—the focus is on the cognitive capabilities of individuals and their emotional capacity to feel sentiment for places, their efforts to consolidate and interpret those internal phenomena as meanings, and their actions in sharing those meanings with others. Second, an objective definition of place is implicit—places are bounded areas that are distinguishable from other places/sites, such that place meanings relate to specific geographic areas. Third, positive place meanings are predicted to arise from some level of activity involvement, situated onsite—so, dependence on a setting (home, recreation place, resource area) is often assumed in this model. Fourth, the internal cognitive and external communicative aspects of the model are implied but not elaborated. The model fails to explain or predict how meaning emerges from the transformation of personal knowledge or emotion—or the methods used in sharing meanings across sets of people.

The model described above facilitates scholarly and managerial dialogue about individuals and their experiences relative to particular geographic places (or generalized types of places; e.g., beaches, wilderness). Researchers studying sense of place under this traditional model will thus attempt to access both personal and shared meanings through place-based studies of the behaviors, cognitions, and attitudes of individuals. In resource-based recreation, the research questions supporting these types of sense of place studies are nearly always about visitor's preferred places—places people choose to visit, places people enjoy. Researchers ask questions about the objective features of sites, and about the internal characteristics of individuals under study—whether people are knowledgeable about the sites they visit, the extent to which people like specific places or feel happy in or have a history with those places, and whether a chosen activity site is comparable to other places. The goal is ultimately to explain people's behavioral choices, including their motivations for visiting a site, their satisfactions with experiences there, the strength of their feelings for the place, their potential conflicts with others at that site, their likelihood of returning, and so on.

With its highly individualistic focus, the traditional model discussed here is deeply rooted in early theoretical approaches in cognitive psychology. In asking questions about how specific places become meaningful to individuals, traditional "mental state" concepts (attitudes, motives, preferences, information, emotions) are used. The overall intent of research conducted under this model is to provide

managers with relevant technical data and analyses of visitor behavior at recreation places; from this information, managers may be better able to develop workable strategies for land management.

The cognitive model described above is the basis for a considerable amount of sense of place research in leisure and outdoor recreation. Many of the studies done from this perspective have focused on onsite recreationists, and have applied empirical methods (survey methods for data collection, and statistical techniques for data analysis). These studies typically focus on analysis of "place attachment" as combinations of "place identity" (emotional attachments to objective settings) and "place dependence" (attachments related to functional uses of sites). For example, early work by Williams et al. (1992) analyzed how outdoor recreationists developed place attachments based on personal identification and activity dependence at wilderness areas in the Southeastern United States and Montana. The place attachment scales developed by these authors have remained the primary analytic tool used in later research of this type. Other researchers that drew from traditional sociopsychological theories and applied or extended the place attachment scaling approach include Bricker and Kerstetter (2000), Hammitt et al. (2004), Kyle et al. (2003), Kyle et al. (2004), Moore and Graefe (1994), and Moore and Scott (2003), among others.

This sociopsychological model has also been adapted and applied in some interpretive research studies about sense of place. For example, Mitchell et al. (1993) used grounded theory perspectives and interviews to differentiate "attachment (emotion) oriented visitors" and "use oriented visitors" to a national forest in Washington state; the authors argued that forest planners should consider the affective relationships people have with specific natural resource places in public land use planning. Another example is provided by Hull et al. (1994), who asked Charleston, South Carolina, residents to discuss their relationships to iconic urban places damaged by a hurricane. In these studies, researchers have typically conducted interviews to obtain a respondent's own words describing a locale and his/her emotions and feelings toward that place. Statements are subsequently grouped and categorized, and emergent themes are identified.

Whereas the sociopsychological survey-based studies tend to result in conclusions that support two dimensions of place attachment (place identity and place dependence), many of the interview-based studies find that place attachment is supported by one or more of five general themes, which may potentially constitute "ideal types" of sense of place categories. These studies usually conclude that a place is meaningful because of (a) family heritage and history (our family has a

history here, our grandfather built this cabin, etc.), (b) current family connections (our family meets here together for events and special occasions), (c) memorable events (something important happened to me here), (d) individual well-being (I feel alive and free here), and (e) the beauty of the resource itself (fabulous scenery, great fishing, best ocean beach, etc.). Though some of these reasons appear, on the surface, to be "more social" than those produced in the empirical studies, in fact they are still based in analysis of aggregated individual feelings and perceptions. The mere mention of other people (family, generally) in a response is not a sufficient condition to make a place-meaning either "social" or socially shared.

Thus, even in cases where interpretive research approaches have been used, data analysis methods often fall back on individualistic psychological theorizing, ignoring the potential for more complex, emergent social and cultural theories. Under this method, too, a respondent's language and intentions are usually assumed to be self-evident, and meanings inherent in utterances are assumed to be obvious, subject only to researcher interpretation and categorization. (Whether researchers and respondents coincide in their understandings of "what respondents really meant"—or even "what researchers really asked"—remains unaddressed.) And, because of methodological choices often unsuitable to the task (e.g., over-reliance on objective content analyses), at least some of what outdoor recreation and natural resource researchers currently call place meanings may result from a coding scheme that merely sums similar words—rather than providing indepth, interpretive understandings of senses of place.

The traditional model tends to ignore interpersonal interaction, social processes, historical context, and cultural influences on behavior.

With its focus on internal psychological phenomena, the traditional model tends to ignore interpersonal interaction, social processes, historical context, and cultural influences on behavior. It implies that achieving a personal sense of place requires an individual to develop personal ties to a **specific** place—and the model assumes place stability. We do not know what happens to sense of place as places change physically (owing to natural transformation or to human manipulation), or as peoples' circumstances or interests change over time. Moreover, whether people can develop place meanings even if they do not have site-specific linkages or place-based activity dependence remains an open question. Additionally, this model's emphasis on positive senses of place limits understanding of situations in which negative or neutral feelings toward sites may arise (see literature about "dark tourism," war, exile and displacement, Holocaust studies, and border regions where place may be indeterminate).

Nevertheless, traditional cognitive approaches to sense of place in recreation and resource management—where place meanings arise in the minds of individuals—have produced notable scholarly advances, particularly in scale development. The limitations of this model have also stimulated a variety of new questions, many of which move the traditional model into considerably more complex psychological, social, and cultural theoretical concerns. These include questions about how meanings arise, the circumstances under which different meanings become articulated, whether and how meanings vary across time and setting, the extent to which meanings are dispersed beyond individuals and across groups or societies, the social mechanisms by which some meanings are shared, and even how a researcher might recognize a meaning when it is revealed.

From the perspective of the traditional model, though, a social sense of place still remains elusive. What is made visible from its vantage point is a researcher's categorization scheme—one that attempts to capture the essence of respondents' statements about what is in their minds (cognitions). Factored categories (in the survey work) or derived themes (in the interpretive work) are outlined and displayed as evidence that the **real** meanings of place can be identified. Such a research program might best be described as an inventory approach to place meanings. Alternative psychological, social, and cultural approaches to sense of place—involving theories that move beyond individual emotions, site-specific and objective behaviors, and researchers' categorization schemes—are needed.

Toward a "More Social" Sense of Place

Researchers studying sense of place issues in outdoor recreation have tended to focus on individuals as their units of analysis, but some have also acknowledged the importance of social contexts in developing senses of place. Kruger and Jakes (2003: 819), for example, wrote that, "'Sense of place' involves individual or group identification with a place resulting from interaction with it." Eisenhauer et al. (2000: 422) inferred a social aspect to sense of place, writing, "'Sense of place' refers to the connection people have with the land, their perceptions of the relationships between themselves and a place, and is a concept that encompasses symbolic and emotional aspects…" Stedman (2003: 822) included the concept of meanings in his definition: "Sense of place, or the meanings and attachments held by an individual or group for a spatial setting, is a potentially useful tool for forest management…" Cheng and Daniels (2003: 842) wrote that, "Place is defined as a physical setting imbued with meaning as a result of human action and

interaction…'sense of place' (refers to) the nuanced, multilayered ways of knowing a particular place." Although these examples suggest an emerging interest in the social components of sense of place, specific research studies still tend to remain at the level of individual analyses, with limited attention given to the specific roles and actions of others in collaboratively producing sense of place.

But some researchers are attempting to move beyond measurement of cognitive aspects of place attachment. Applying more contemporary psychological and social theories, these researchers also often use different kinds of methods. Some, for example, have approached sense of place from "off-site"—that is, they begin with studies of community and society, and work back toward understanding behaviors and meanings made visible at recreation resource sites. Other scholars have brought broader psychological, social, political, and cultural theories to their analyses, conceiving of sense of place as a product of social relationships and interactions. Many of these researchers consider place to be a broader social and cultural representation of contextualized interpersonal experience—not simply a physical backdrop to individual activity (fig. 4).

The sense of place research associated with these viewpoints typically draws from constructivist, interactionist, critical, and social constructionist approaches. In an early paper in the sociology of leisure, Lee (1972) offered a sociocultural analysis of place, and evaluated the power of verbal images to organize people's behaviors in everyday life. His study focused on people engaged in recreation at different kinds of parks and outdoor resource areas. Basing their work in phenomenology, Fishwick and Vining (1992: 57) studied the experiences of college students at Illinois state park sites. In analyzing students' taped reports, they found that outdoor recreation sites were "sensed" as a complex assortment of "setting, landscape, ritual, routine, people, [and] personal experiences," and were contrasted with other environments. Applying social constructionist theorizing, Stokowski (1996) used local newspapers as a source of data to evaluate the community images expressed publicly as two Colorado mining towns debated the adoption of casinos for tourism development. She found that promoters crafted a "rhetoric of despair" to support the legitimacy of their claims and reinforce the need for gambling; their efforts both drew from, but also called into question, historical symbols supporting community senses of place. Other work in this tradition includes Brandenburg and Carroll's (1995) application of analytic induction to study processes of place creation in a Washington state national forest, Eisenhauer et al.'s (2000) comparison of

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Figure 4—Some researchers consider place to be a broader social and cultural representation of contextualized interpersonal experience.

peoples' emotional connections to public lands in southern Utah, a series of commentaries about leisure and the politics of place (McAvoy 2002, Stokowski 2002, Williams 2002a), Yung et al.'s (2003) analysis of the politics of place-naming along Montana's Rocky Mountain Front, and Stedman et al.'s (2004) study of resident photographs of special community places near a national park in Canada.

The classic, oft-cited article in this tradition is Greider and Garkovich's (1994) conceptual analysis of the social construction of nature and landscapes. Drawing from social interactionist and constructionist thought, they asserted that, "Our understandings of nature and of human relationships with the environment are really cultural expressions used to define who *we* were, who *we* are, and who *we* hope to be at this place and in this space" (Greider and Garkovich 1994: 2). In the context of landscape changes, then, this interpretive perspective "highlights the need to explore the symbolic creation of landscape, the cultural meanings of aspects of the physical environment and biophysical changes in the environment, and the values and beliefs that sustain these symbols and their meanings" (Greider and Garkovich 1994: 21). The authors suggested that researchers study the symbols, beliefs, communicative processes, and cultural artifacts of a set of people to understand how people think about and negotiate the meaning of landscapes—a process that is quite different from thinking about sense of place as a quality of the individual mind.

Places and meanings are created and brought to life as a result of respondents' involvements and interactions with others.

Theoretically, these interpretive studies have in common a grounding of personal place meanings in social and community relationships—rather than a reliance on individual cognitions and feelings as the explanatory basis for a sense of place. In these studies, the behaviors of individuals are contextualized within broader social and cultural processes. In addition, the research subjects are seen as active participants in creating sense of place. Places and meanings are created and brought to life as a result of respondents' involvements and interactions with others. Interpersonal relationships that support social interactions related to place may also have historical basis. Together, these studies hint at an evolving model of place meanings grounded in social process—a model that links psychological, social, and cultural considerations (Williams 2002b).

What would a "more social" approach to understanding sense of place require? Theories that focus on the intersection of at least three fundamental elements—relationships, interaction, and context—are needed. First, an emphasis on relationships would require that researchers study people in relation to one another, rather than focus primarily on the traits, internal states, and sentiments of individuals. Second, people in relation are people interacting—the basic qualities of social life are produced, developed, and elaborated through verbal and nonverbal communication. As Perinbanayagam (1985: xiii) wrote, "social acts are created by human agents engaging in signifying moves and eliciting certain response—from which flow a number of consequences." Third, the actions of people are not independent of the surrounding world—context, history, and culture influence and are influenced by social life.

The three issues of relationship, interaction, and context, taken together, support theories of meaning as alternatives to those evident in early cognitive approaches to understanding place—theories that are drawn from the perspectives of social interactionism, social constructionism, and critical theory. In the sections below, the theoretical foundations for a more social sense of place are explored.

The Theoretical Basis for a Social Sense of Place

Traditional studies about sense of place in outdoor recreation and natural resources research were based in sociopsychological theorizing—and so, they focused on describing cognitive and affective place meanings felt and expressed by individuals. Such analyses are useful if resource managers intend to manage resource sites primarily for individuals (impractical) or to "engineer" sites so that client groups achieve precise benefits (overly idealistic). A focus on individuals also becomes

problematic when social meanings are imagined to follow directly from individual sentiments for places (some of the research about "community meanings of places" commits this intellectual error, an example of what researchers refer to as the "ecological fallacy").

In conceptually recasting sense of place studies away from the internal workings of individual minds and toward people engaged in social processes, theories concerned with communication and symbolic representation, grounded historically and contextually, will be most useful. Interpretive social science (rather than empiricism) will be most appropriate; theories that begin with the basic assumption that what we perceive and know as "reality" is socially constructed rather than objectively "given" are needed. A wide swath of 20th-century theorizing in the fields of sociology, anthropology, philosophy, geography, psychology, linguistics, and discourse studies, among other disciplines, supports social constructionist interpretive perspectives. Such theories share a focus on the communicative, relational, and contextual bases of meaning. The next section offers a brief theoretical diversion away from the main points of this paper; it summarizes some of the important scholarly contributions to interpretive theories of meaning. The ideas developed in this section are then applied in recrafting sense of place in social terms for application to resource management.

A Theoretical Diversion: From Consciousness, to Language, to Social Action, and Meaning

Edmund Husserl's development of phenomenology—a philosophy of the mind focused on the nature of meaning and of being, which assumes that people live in a taken-for-granted world known only through their own senses, experiences, and consciousness—provides a starting point for analysis and reconceptualization of sense of place. Husserl proposed that "all notions of an external world (i.e., "reality")…are mediated through the senses and can only be known through mental consciousness" (Turner 1982: 391). In this view, researchers must study the "**essence** of consciousness" to understand "how humans create a **sense** of reality" about the external world (Turner 1982: 392-393). This approach privileges individual consciousness, and typifies much of the traditional psychological research about place, sense of place, and place meanings in recreation and natural resources (an observation echoed by Stedman [2003] and Williams and Vaske [2003]).

Developments across the social sciences challenged Husserl's emphasis on the autonomous individual who single-authors a life. The philosopher Heidegger proposed an alternative "hermeneutic phenomenology" based on social and historical context rather than on internal states of mind. In his view, language was the basis for understanding and social meaning. Sociologist Alfred Schutz considered how people come to intersubjectively take the world for granted—a question also asked by the social interactionist G.H. Mead, the literary critic Kenneth Burke, the ethnographer Bruno Latour, and many others. In their classic paper on marriage and the construction of reality, sociologists Peter Berger and Hansfried Kellner (1964: 4) outlined a social constructionist approach to that question in which the "subjectively experienced" world of an individual becomes, through interaction with others, a world that is "inter-subjectively shared"—a reality that is taken for granted by the participants jointly involved in the conversation (Frank 1979). Language serves as the basis for the development of both individual consciousness and also social meaning—and it is the foundational element of all personal and social behavior. Social relationships provide the structure facilitating both transitory and more permanent language encounters; these relationships tend to be patterned and repetitive, especially those that are the most meaningful in the conduct of one's life.

The production of meaning, then, arises from interpersonal interaction, such that meaning is intentional as well as social. A person's language utterances are intended to obtain responses from other people, and are subject to interpretation by others. Generated in conversational behavior, meaning is not simply relayed from one mind to another. As Eagleton (1996: 52) explained, "meaning is not simply something 'expressed' or 'reflected' in language; it is actually **produced** by it…we can only have the meanings and experiences in the first place because we have a language to have them in." As a result, meanings are malleable, continually massaged, revised, and replaced in the interactional contexts of daily living. Some meanings may, over time, even assume an air of permanence, appearing to be "stable" features of social life. What we call icons and myths, for example, exhibit this character of assumed stability. Meanings that persist provide coherence and organizational structure to life. They have what Smith (1979: 18) called "governing potential"—they "aid [people] by making [the] world [appear to be] a more ordered place."

Because languages are systems of signs and symbols, structuralist researchers in linguistics, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology attempted to understand the

fundamental laws of organization governing language systems such that meaning could be produced. Eagleton (1996: 93) wrote,

> The structuralist emphasis on the "constructedness" of human meaning represented a major advance. Meaning was neither a private experience nor a divinely ordained occurrence: it was the product of certain shared systems of signification…It was impossible any longer to see reality as simply something "out there," a fixed order of things which language merely reflected.

Structural theories helped reveal patterns in linguistic styles, in the application of language forms (narratives, fables, myths, and others), and in the social organization of people (kinship systems, discourse communities, and so on). But structuralism tended to ignore the characteristics and intentions of human actors. Poststructuralists (Derrida, Barthes, and Bakhtin, among others) brought the actor (the "speaker" in social interaction) back into the conversation, making language more active because, as Frank (1979: 179) noted, language "competence can only be realized in performance." Social action is the evidence that language has been effectively understood and shared.

The use of language is always social; a speaker is always "speaking to" someone. Poststructural theorists focused on language as "the concrete utterances of individuals in particular social contexts…there was no language which was not caught up in definite social relationships…social relationships [that] were in turn part of broader political, ideological, and economic systems" (Eagleton 1996: 101–102). From this vantage point, the study of language-in-use (conversations, story-telling, jokes, argumentation, reports and written texts, public pronouncements, and so on) is the vehicle for understanding the variability as well as the stability of language practiced and negotiated across diverse settings. From social action, meaning emerges. As Watkins (2000: 99) wrote, "knowledge or meaning is embedded in participatory forms of social practice and is subject to the structuring influences of historical processes and sociocultural beliefs that surround those practices."

And so, meaning differs by context. Further, as Eagleton (1996:112) observed, if meaning is malleable, then traditional theories of meaning are called into question:

> For such theories, it was the function of signs to reflect inward experiences or objects in the real world, to "make present" one's thoughts and feelings or to describe how reality was…[But] nothing is ever fully present in signs…meaning is always somehow dispersed, divided and never quite at one with itself.

Researchers should study the networks of interpersonal relationships…If meaning is constructed socially, then social patterning of people will affect the types of meanings that are created.

It becomes the work of researchers to describe the range and types of meanings that derive from and support social behaviors, to "seek to explain the underlying rationale of these meaning systems [to] reveal the rules and 'logics' inherent" in them (Smith 1979: 79). Beyond the structure of meaning systems, researchers should also study the networks of interpersonal relationships sustaining the interactions that produce meanings. If meaning is constructed socially, then the social patterning of people will affect the types of meanings that are created, a point reinforced by Shotter (1993: 2), who encourages researchers to orient their studies to analyses of "the dynamically sustained context of…actively constructed relations [from which] what is talked about gets its meaning."

Creating Place

Theoretical background—

With the theoretical and historical foundations of social constructionism outlined above, we turn back again to the central topic of this paper: How do people achieve a sense of place? Constructionist theorizing suggests that the concepts of place, sense of place, and place meanings should be seen as deriving from language in use. Places are actively created in social interaction, and people come to have senses of place and share meanings about place through symbolic communication (of which language is the most common symbolic system). Whereas most people can agree that identifiable places do exist physically as independent objects in the world, the constructionist argument asserts that places have no inherent meanings other than those created and imposed by humans. That is, meanings about places are created by people engaged in social interaction, not intrinsic to physical sites themselves and not products of individual minds. Ultimately, space becomes place when it is identified, named, and talked about, shaped by human experience (individual, social, cultural), and expressed across communities of interacting, interlinked people.

The fundamental questions introduced from within constructionist perspectives are about the nature of the socially-shared meanings of place—not primarily about the objective characteristics of places, or whether (or which) place meanings arise

in the minds of individuals visiting a site. This is not to say that physical qualities of place, or cognitive and emotional aspects of place meanings, are unimportant. Rather, individualized meanings of place are viewed by social constructionists (and their sociopsychological counterparts, social constructivists) as personal outcomes of the social construction of place. Whether resulting meanings and representations of place are "true" in the factual sense is less important than whether they are assumed to be "real," sensible, and credible by the people who participate in their production.

The role of language is critical in the development of place and its meanings. Language is not only the primary tool people use to talk about places—language is also the raw material people use to "speak" or "act" places into existence. The meanings of place arise from contextualized social interaction in which people describe, explain, and tell the world into reality by categorizing ideas, linking experiences, and making claims about why and how things are the way they are (Potter 1996: 98). It is in this sense that Ryden (1993: 241) wrote, "Unlike simple geographical locations, which exist objectively, places do not exist until they are verbalized, first in thought and memory and then through the spoken or written word."

Place-making, then, is a social process—not an internal, mental, individualized activity. It is, in the language of sociology, the product of a "social transaction…[a] joint enterprise involving the coordinated efforts of two or more participants" (Shibutani 1986: 5). Although efforts to create places may occur at all levels of social organization (from interpersonal, to interorganizational, to mass mediated), some efforts may be more complex than others. Interpersonal interactions, where peers converse about their experiences related to meaningful places, may be qualitatively different from the carefully crafted pronouncements of agencies and organizations concerned with public perceptions of specific environments (e.g., federal government efforts to shift public opinion about oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge seems to be one example where the use of place imagery is highly strategic and perhaps even covert). The political use of sense of place imagery is a rich topic for future research.

The methods of place-making—

Ideas about place, and about how people sense places, and about what places mean to people as individuals, groups, societies, and cultures, are crafted, elaborated, transmitted, transformed, and stabilized symbolically through interpersonal communicative practices. Research about sense of place might be undertaken at a variety of

levels, including that of linguistic discourse analysis (Schiffrin 1994); analysis of the rhetorical intentions, strategies, and effects of discourse (Brock et al. 1980); semiotics (Johansen and Larsen 2002); narrative analysis (Gergen and Gergen 1984); discourse analysis (Titscher et al. 2000); and cultural analysis (Wuthnow et al. 1984), among other approaches.

Created through language practices, places can be seen as imaginative social productions that gain meaning in the telling, and persist in personal and collective memory. There are many communicative devices used to create places into being, including myth-making, argumentation (rhetorical techniques supporting persuasive aspects of talk and text), visual symbolism, and others. One of the most common and useful of these devices is narrative. Narratives are stories, and space is shaped into place through storytelling. Places become "populated" over time by speakers and listeners, experiences, and memories. "Narrative construction can never be entirely a private matter," wrote Gergen and Gergen (1984: 184). Identities (individual and collective) are shaped, people learn their history, they encounter "otherness," grasp the essence of nature, make sense of local events, and anticipate the future through stories about local places. As Johnstone (1990: 5) explained, "…our sense of place and community is rooted in narration. A person is at home in a place when the place evokes stories, and, conversely, stories can serve to create places."

Narratives offer a coherent scheme of symbolic evidence supporting or challenging conceptions of community and of self.

Narrative is also used to remember places. Often, stories draw attention to particular symbols, images, and artifacts that have become visible historic reminders of important meanings in local culture. As Stegner (1992: 202) wrote, "No place is a place until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments." Thus, personal and collective identities form and persist around aspects of local culture. Narratives offer a coherent scheme of symbolic evidence—evidence used to provide a public rationale supporting or challenging conceptions of community and of self within that environment. Symbols are especially useful because they are imprecise, as Cohen (1985: 21) explains: "They are, therefore, ideal media through which people can speak a 'common' language, behave in apparently similar ways, participate in the 'same' rituals.… Individuality and commonality are thus reconcilable."

Narratives typically have structure (a beginning, middle, and end) and coherence (a subject, action, and result), and may reflect stylized and ritualized ways of communicating. The study of narratives is not yet common in analysis of recreation and natural resource place-making, but even a cursory review of recreation research literature suggests some narrative types that might be fruitful for revealing recreation place meanings. These include stories of personal revelation and change,

discourses of spirituality, action stories, hero stories, travelogues, "man conquering nature," and so on. Within these and other genres, a range of meanings (about use values, ownership, resource protection, identity and self-identity, awe, heroism, and so on) will be elaborated. These topics may serve as "master narratives" in the creation of sense of place; research will surely reveal other topics that work at middle and micro levels of theorizing.

Beyond the independent stories and meanings they can support, narratives are sometimes linked together in histories of place. Interconnections among stories support resilient discourses that offer coherence to the socially-produced "real" world. The term discourse is often used colloquially to refer to public speech, or to ways of speaking. Social scientists, however, more precisely define discourse as "talk and text in context" (van Dijk 1997: 3), a definition that includes spoken, written, and nonverbal communications. Hajer (1995: 44) explained, "Discourse is…defined as a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities." Stories about place appear to be organized and coherent when they are consolidated as discourses—discourses that are upheld and promoted by communities of interlinked people and interests.

Van Dijk (1997: 21) reasoned that,

> If we want to explain what discourse is all about, it would be insufficient to merely analyse its internal structures, the actions being accomplished, or the cognitive operations involved in language use. We need to account for the fact that discourse as social action is being engaged in within a framework of understanding, communication and interaction which is in turn part of broader sociocultural structures and processes.

In short, researchers must evaluate discourses on a variety of criteria, including their content, structural arrangements, contextualization, sequencing with other discourses, and also the ways in which they are used strategically. Indeed, Potter (1996: 15) suggested that we strive to understand two fundamental aspects of discourse: "an offensive orientation concerned with undermining alternative descriptions and a defensive orientation concerned with resisting discounting."

Research and managerial applications—

A primary focus of constructionist theorizing applied to studies of sense of place should be analysis of how people collectively develop understandings about the

nature of and meanings of places. A complete social constructionist model of sense of place awaits development, but at least several of its guiding characteristics can be identified. First, the model would be circular, with interlinked communicators (people interacting, involved in social relationships, and enmeshed in social networks). The components of relationships, interactions, and contexts would also be linked by language practices, communicative methods and devices, discourse structures, and social actions and intent. The model would show an intersecting and contingent model of social interaction that may occur at interpersonal, group, organizational, societal, or cultural levels. Realities of place would be socially constructed within contexts of already-existing social relationships, history, and context.

Considering place, sense of place, and place meaning as products of context-bound social interactions and relationships has implications for research and managerial application. First, if place is assumed to be socially constructed, then any given setting will likely have many different communicators using it—and thus, many different discourses of place will emerge. That is, physical space will be made into different kinds of places by different kinds of visitors—and a single place may support many kinds of meanings. Second, and related to this point, the correspondence among, or differences between, multiple discourses of place may not be obvious to either those involved in the independent conversations or to communicators outside specific discourse communities. But overlapping discourses may indicate a degree of consensus in meanings about a place and across networks of people, whereas divergent discourses may reflect incompatible meanings and conflicting discourse communities. Some physical sites, moreover, may be able to "contain" or "accommodate" more divergence than others (i.e., some place contestations may have very minor repercussions).

Third, place meanings are not necessarily stable or long-lived (though they may be). Languages and discourse are always evolving and contingent, as the circular model implies. Moreover, places are always, at least in potential, evolving. Re-evaluation of historical circumstances produces new symbols, traditions develop in use, conflicts change language and meaning interpretations, and so on—and place meanings will change as the social activities of naming, claiming, identifying, contesting, challenging, and reforming places occur. As Wuthnow et al. (1984: 247) observed, "the principal questions…not only include the 'meaning' of symbols but the conditions, patterns, and rules of use which render symbols 'meaningful.'"

Finally, the constructionist perspective applied to studies of place should allow researchers to more clearly differentiate concepts of place, place attachment, and sense of place. Of these concepts, the term "place" is perhaps the most straightforward, based as it is on tangible, observable, physical spaces. The additional perspective brought by constructionist theorizing, though, is to see physical sites and their specific features as taken-for-granted "places" whose meanings are created from the communicative processes of people in interaction. Therefore, meanings will be highly malleable and variable, depending on the interactions of the relevant social actors and the influences of others.

Under constructionist theorizing, the concept of "sense of place" should refer to the broad discourses that are contextualized around specific places. From this theoretical perspective, the emphasis will be on the content, structures, and forms of discourses, as well as on how those socially constructed (even if individually received) impressions, realities, and shared understandings (meanings) are produced and established as a particular set of social practices. A resulting sense of place should be seen as a working definition, not an "absolutely real" sense of place reported by a respondent in reply to a researcher's query.

"Place meanings" can be defined, then, after Lofland and Lofland (1984: 71), as "the linguistic categories that make up the participants' view of reality and with which they define their own and others' actions….meanings do more than describe behavior—they define, justify, and otherwise interpret behavior as well." Meanings range in scope—they can be broad and ideological, in the form of worldviews, or they can be more situated, contained, and strategic. Meanings are expressions about how people (as individuals and as collectives) explain situations, but meanings also appear as shared rules, norms, and typifications "taken for granted" by people in social situations. They are also "rhetorical-responsive": that is, people "are not making a *reference* to the nature of their already existing minds, but are taking part in a contested [or at least contestable] process, a tradition of argumentation, in which they are still struggling over the constitution of their own mental make-up" (Shotter 1993: 31). To access the meanings of place, researchers must ask about what a speaker is attempting to communicate, with whom, for what reasons, and with what historical or contextual contingencies. Meanings should then be interpreted within discursive contexts of past, present, and potential communicative practices of specific social actors and discourse communities.

Under a social constructionist model, then, the concepts of place and place meanings are subsumed under sense of place—unlike in the traditional cognitive model, where place meanings and sense of place are subsumed under a physical

notion of place. “Discourses involving particular places and place meanings are dynamic,” wrote Yung et al. (2003: 857); they are “continually created and actively contested, and not necessarily compatible. Sense of place and place meanings are thus political, based as much on difference as commonality.” The task of researchers under a new constructionist approach to sense of place will be threefold: (a) to move away from reductionist accounts of behavior (including language behaviors) that are said to produce objective meanings about place; (b) to study how language practices, communicative devices, and discourse techniques are manipulated in social interaction to organize the “reality” of places; and (c) to draw upon the intersections of sociopsychological, social, and cultural research approaches to inform more complete understandings of places, senses of place, and place meanings.

In this regard, it is useful to remember that there is an “ongoing dialectic between subjectivity [perception, intentionality, etc.] and an objective sociocultural reality. Human subjectivity [in the course of social interaction] is externalized in objectified social products and, in turn, this objective reality acts back on subjectivity, influencing and even reconstituting it” (Wuthnow et al. 1984: 242). Thus, what is “social” about sense of place is not only that it involves people—but that the social realities and meanings that are created are produced as a result of social interaction expressed within social relationships, bounded by contexts, and implicated in all the social processes people are engaged in relative to natural resource places. The resulting communicative and behavioral actions people take toward place, then, have important social and cultural implications, as well as important psychological consequences.

Sense of Place in Resource Management

Reconceptualizing place, sense of place, and place meanings in social constructionist terms fosters new ways of thinking about and addressing resource management issues. Several implications of constructionist thinking for research and practical application in natural resource management are discussed below.

First, the social constructionist approach should sensitize researchers and managers to think about how language and discourse support development of individual cognitions, emotions, and behaviors. Many recreation behaviors (e.g., development of shared senses of place, activity specialization and involvement, intergroup conflicts, onsite behavioral norms, patterns of activity participation, knowledge transfer across generations, and so on) might be seen as the behavioral outcomes of

processes of reality construction in social interaction. In such cases, studies of communicative interactions within social relationships might be more useful than studies of individual cognitions and attitudes. Moreover, it is not only recreationists who intersubjectively develop consequential senses of place. Place meanings are expressed by others engaged in social interactions both at, and away from, resource places, including resource managers, underrepresented recreation groups who visit rarely or not at all, local and nonlocal interests, legislators, people who have developed sentiments for places based on mass-media exposure, and others. Comparisons of place meanings across various collectives may reveal new ways to think about places and about management strategies for protecting places.

Second, if the communicative practices that shape landscapes are specific to discourse communities, then research that studies place meanings in the context of discourse communities (collectives that likely extend beyond traditional park or forest visitors) should be very useful to mangers. Longitudinal research may reveal how social relationships and social contexts influence place meanings. Whether socially constructed meanings of place become shared or divisive, persistent or transitory, may be a function of how well those meanings are entrenched in the language practices of specific types of social groups and discourse communities. Because the creation of meaning is intentional as well as social, managers would find it useful to understand the strategic manipulation of place-related symbols by people who have covert or overt interests in protecting or revising the meanings of a place. These persons may be valuable contacts (whether supportive or antagonistic) for managers seeking to share public messages and strategic planning initiatives.

Third, the social constructionist perspective also reinforces the idea that resource places are not neutral, or single-authored; they are multivocal and value laden. The voice of the natural resource agency is often the most prominent among all spokespersons, as managers and administrators speak places into being by using specific communicative techniques (such as making official pronouncements, posting signs, offering interpretive programs, granting interviews, and writing planning documents). But, other voices are also present. For example, citizens react to agency actions with public input; recreationists write in log books or on comment cards; travel magazine writers present visions of places in words and in photos; private businesses seeking partnership opportunities with resource agencies promote shared values; and so on. Many of these communicative situations bring people from different social circles in contact with one another, creating opportunities for place-making both within and beyond the borders of the resource place.

Fourth, the overlap of these social circles raises issues that may have implications for management practices. How do the senses of place created by some spokespersons achieve dominating force publicly? Who are the key communicators needed to establish and reinforce meanings of place? The answers to these questions may not be as obvious as one might think. In a study of the communication patterns of visitors to a U.S. Forest Service site in Texas (Bajc 1996), many respondents said that the primary contributors of useful recreation information were "the men in green trucks" (the USFS campground maintenance staff). It should not be a surprise that front-line staff members (compared with agency leadership) often have more interaction with publics, and thus more opportunity to disseminate useful messages and participate in the discursive development of senses of place (fig. 5). Researchers should attempt to understand the informal, often nearly hidden onsite communicative opportunities that may influence place-making, asking about spontaneous encounters onsite, power relationships, marginalized groups, and voiceless others, in determining who influences place-making. How sense of place changes over time, and how managers can positively influence these changes in a social environment of divergent communicators is at issue.

Researchers should attempt to understand the informal, often nearly hidden onsite communicative opportunities that may influence place-making.

Fifth, language is sometimes used strategically to create notable places, such as extraordinary landscapes that people revere as natural icons. There are many iconic places in natural resource settings (Old Faithful, for example) that symbolize long-standing, taken-for-granted meanings shared across some or many segments of

Ashley Atkinson

Figure 5—Front-line staff members often have more opportunity to participate in the discursive development of senses of place.

society. But, managers should also study the social practices of people who create "small icons"—that is, places of meaning in local resource areas—places that, in their substantive history and familiarity, serve as small symbols of community and sense of place. A neighborhood park, or a gathering place for community members (see Hester 1985), or a family's secret blackberry picking spot in the forest (Carroll et al. 2003) are symbolic places that anchor intersubjective meanings for people. A focus on discursive aspects of sense of place from the standpoint of everyday life and commonplace social interactions may reveal how positive environmental values emerge and are fostered in home communities. Resource managers may also learn how to foster new senses of place and meaning at natural resource sites, thus dispersing visitors more fully across landscapes to enjoy richer experiences.

Sixth, narratives and other language devices may stimulate the creation of discourse communities comprising social actors living far from resource places. The mass media, for example, expose people to new ideas and images, and people are likely to hear about and even talk about places they have never visited. Writing from the perspective of sociopsychology, Backlund and Williams (2003: 324) proposed that,

> Some of our own attachment to places like National Parks, Wilderness areas, and National Forests stems not from direct experience of a place, but as a consequence of hearing others' stories and memories of those places.

Whether this is true and whether communicative practices related to creating place will build interest and support for environmental topics is a hypothesis for future study. For managers, the opportunities inherent in creating mobile interpretive programs should also focus on fostering senses of place for sets of people who may not yet have visited.

Public involvement can reward citizens' depths of feeling for a setting, historical relationships with specific places, and ways in which different place meanings are formed by different groups.

Seventh, natural resource planning can be conceived as a strategic social and discursive process. Public involvement aspects of planning processes—based as they are in communicative processes of public discussion, negotiation, and deliberation—have discursive qualities that can reveal citizens' depths of feeling for particular resource settings, the historical relationships of people with specific places, and the ways in which different place meanings are produced by different discursive or primary groups. Natural resource planners should analyze the discourses that surround resource uses, and consider how resource users might be organized within discourse communities. The application of specific types of planning processes (social learning, deliberative planning, expert-driven planning,

and so on) is also a discursive process, and should be studied for how different approaches contribute to or detract from building public consensus about management alternatives and plans. Knowledge of this kind will help facilitate more participatory and substantive citizen input processes.

Eighth, beyond questions about the content and form of discourses about place, senses of place, and meanings of place, one might also ask about the range of participants (both speakers and listeners) involved in place-related conversations. Some typical forms of interpersonal and mediated communication may be identifiable among recreation user groups. People tend to go to recreation places with others close to them—so, both intimate and casual conversations with close others (family and friends) will provide a forum for interaction that can lead to development of place meanings. In addition, people meet others onsite—so, informal conversations with new acquaintances is also typical of these settings (as is overheard conversations from unknown others). Visitors also interact with agency personnel in verbal and textual ways (attending interpretive talks, chatting with rangers, and in reading published mass media, such as brochures, newspaper articles, management planning documents, and Web sites). Given the variable nature of strong and weak ties within and across recreation groups, though, many interesting research questions should be raised about the nature and implications of interethnic, interage, and intercultural communication in place creation.

Finally, some authors have proposed that resource managers should inventory place-based meanings to develop strategies for serving publics and reducing site conflicts. But, if senses of place are discursive and place meanings are fluid (not simply objective categories), then inventories will always be serving past interests, not proactively addressing current (or future) concerns. A manager's imperative, then, should be to understand the emergent qualities of place-making and place meanings in order to respond to patterns of discourse shaped by structured communicators linked across social networks. In this effort, managers should err on the side of variety rather than constraint in allowing resource settings to be as open as possible to social and cultural behaviors through which place meanings may be expressed. In this way, connections between people and place may be fostered.

Conclusion

Creating and achieving a sense of place is, ultimately, a social practice: people create senses of place and meanings of place through language use in social interaction, bounded within social relationships, and influenced by context. This paper has

attempted to argue for a more social sense of place in recreation and resource management. One of the productive consequences of this analysis has been to propose new conceptions of place, sense of place, and place meanings—concepts that have implications for the types of research that might be possible, as well as the types of management applications that may be considered.

The social constructionist approach departs considerably from others that typify place and sense of place as individualized feelings, emotions, "rootedness," or knowledge. Traditional sociopsychological theorizing about place asks questions about the workings of the minds of people, but cognitive versions of reality should be seen as socially informed and constructed. Language with significant others, general public discourse, mass mediated messages, and other forms of talk and text all contribute to what a person knows and feels, what a person thinks about what they know and feel, and what they share with others about what they know or feel. The analysis in this paper does not deny the utility of studies of cognition, emotion, or affect in apprehending places—these characteristics are central to the experience of personhood, and thus implicated in the ways in which individuals become social beings. But a social constructionist account of place finds its foundations in interactional and relational aspects of life.

There are several place-related topics that have not been discussed in this paper, but which may take on new meaning and utility under the constructionist approach described here. One of these is identity. Constructing a sense of place also involves constructing a sense of self (and others) through interaction. For example, in speaking of Peter Berger's social philosophy, Wuthnow et al. (1984: 46) wrote that, "The reality of everyday life of which personal identity is a significant part, is maintained as plausible only as long as it remains plausible in the ongoing conversations one has with others…." The domains of leisure—where we locate places of meaningful experience with close family and friends—should have special influence in shaping (and continually re-making) identity. Shotter (1993: 63) went so far as to propose that, "instead of a 'politics of power,' a new 'politics of identity' is beginning….To the extent that people's identities are a function of their social relations, if they want to sustain their identities…they must sustain…both the identities of those around them, and the social relations which sustain those identities." Recreation and resource places provide settings for this to occur through the language and discourse practices supporting emergent senses of place.

In this paper, the focus has been on interpersonal communication as the primary vehicle for social interaction. But a social constructionist approach can also accommodate mediated and intrapersonal communication, as well as interpersonal

communication. Additionally, this paper has also focused on what people think of as "real" places—that is, objective, physical settings and acreages of landscape. Imaginary places, such as technologically manipulated "virtual" spaces, have not been discussed, although they might be useful topics for future analysis of the social construction of place, sense of place, and place meanings. For example, what techniques of language use and conversational practice create senses of place in these settings, and what are the implications of these settings for social interaction? To the extent that resource managers may wish to create opportunities for resource users to engage in virtual experiences, these and other questions will become important.

Having a feeling for a place always is preceded by contextualized social interaction.

"No one lives in the world in general," wrote the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1996: 262). "Everybody…lives in some confined and limited stretch of it [known to them as] 'the world around here'." This paper argues that those places we know as "the world around here" are only made apparent to us as a result of our communicative engagement within discourse communities. The act of seeing a place is not equivalent to understanding its meaning; having a feeling for a place always is preceded by contextualized social interaction. Understanding of place—and of one's place in place—is always circular, growing increasingly complex as a result of interpersonal and mediated conversations, enhanced by personal reflection. Thus, we come to have senses of places by participating in the social practices of symbolic communication. And we come to share meanings about place through language and discourse in verbal and textual forms—meanings that come to be expressed in the minds and hearts of individuals, and in the collective memory of a society and culture.

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Chapter 4—What Do We "Mean" by Place Meanings? Implications of Place Meanings for Managers and Practitioners

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Abstract

Much place-related research has focused on place attachment. Much less attention has been paid to place meanings, or descriptive statements about the nature of place. Using survey data to illustrate the themes, this paper examines how place meanings are created, their relationship to place attachment, and their relevance to resource managers. Several primary themes are identified: (1) settings have the potential to embody multiple meanings, which are formed on the basis of differences in social interaction and role behaviors; (2) this experience is both volitional and shaped by structural factors, such as the material environment itself, and by land management strategies; and (3) meanings may help managers understand phenomena such as conflict over land use.

Keywords: Sense of place, place meanings, place attachment.

Introduction

The recent spate of research on sense of place, place attachment, and related concepts has emphasized the strength of attachment to settings and sought to understand factors associated with strong attachment. In comparison, far less work has focused on place meanings. Questions about "what kind of place this is" tend to get short shrift. Although place meanings are often referred to as an important component of sense of place, we know relatively little about how they are produced and how they contribute to place attachment. Further, these meanings should be of keen interest to resource managers: while management for attachment per se may be problematic, managers have the capacity to shape the meanings people are likely to derive from the landscape and use meanings to understand the needs of a diverse stakeholder base.

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This paper examines place meanings: how they are created, how they contribute to evaluations such as place attachment, and their potential utility to resource managers. I describe a number of themes: (1) settings have the potential to embody multiple meanings that are not unique or ad hoc but formed on the basis of differences in experience: patterned social interaction and role behaviors; (2) this experience is partially volitional, but also is shaped by structure: factors outside the control of the individual/group, such as the nature of the material environment itself, and land management strategies, or power interests that have a role both in the production of the material environment and the direct creation, packaging, and communication of meanings; and (3) meanings may or may not be tied to affective sentiments such as attachment, but also may help managers understand other phenomena that might be of greater interest, such as conflict over land use. Such conflict often entails conflict over meanings rather than attachment (acrimonious conflict rarely occurs between groups with differing **strengths** of place attachment). The themes imply that recreation and land managers should pay attention to the myriad ways in which their actions create or influence meanings via (a) their land management activities that affect the material landscape, (b) their provision for certain experiences (while inhibiting others) that foster meanings, and (c) their "teaching" of meanings through environmental communication/ interpretation.

Sense of place has been suggested as a tool for forest management, a way to understand public involvement, environmental perception, recreation conflict, attitudes toward user fees, level of environmental concern, and a myriad of other outdoor recreation and management issues.

Literature Review: "Enough on Attachment, Already?"

The sense of place/place attachment literature has proliferated over the past few years. As demonstrated by Farnum et al. (2005), the sense of place concept has been poked and prodded by many different fields, from many different angles; for groups of people ranging from long-time community residents to urban tourists, to whitewater paddlers. Sense of place has been suggested as a tool for forest management, a way to understand public involvement, environmental perception, recreation conflict, attitudes toward user fees, level of environmental concern, and a myriad of other outdoor recreation and management issues.

It appears that gone are the halcyon days in which a sense of place researcher or theorist could label a section "literature review" and thus encircle much of what has been written about sense of place. This should stand as testimony to the enthusiasm with which academics, resource managers, and the general public have embraced the term as something real, something important, that has "gone over the wall" and escaped the ivory towers of academia (a quick Google search on "Sense

of Place" in January 2006 resulted in approximately 158,000,000 hits). As such, this chapter does not attempt to present an exhaustive review of the sense-of-place literature. Nor does it re-tread the ground covered by Relph (1976) and Tuan (1974, 1977), original and prolific sowers of the sense-of-place seeds. Readers are encouraged to examine the work of Farnum et al. (2005) that reviews the burgeoning literature on sense of place, and to examine the work of Relph and Tuan for themselves. As an anonymous reviewer of a paper of mine recently pointed out, "Tuan is [so] panoramic in his writings that one can find a quote to support almost anything about place."

My literature review is short, based on the organization of this chapter. Several thematic areas are presented, and the literature that pertains to each is reviewed in the context of its particular theme. However, a few points, raised in the introduction, are worth supporting in brief. First, the recent spate of research on sense of place, place attachment, and related concepts has emphasized the strength of attachment as a strong (usually positive) emotional bond between people and their environment (Riley 1992, Shumaker and Taylor 1983, Williams et al. 1992). One focus of this work is to understand the factors associated with strong attachment to a setting, and how attachment may differ between individuals and groups. In this vein, some posited a biological foundation to attachment (e.g., Low and Altman 1992) that suggests we are "hard-wired" to prefer certain types of settings (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989). Others have suggested that attachment is socially constructed through individual or group experience with a setting. Some have emphasized the role of culture and group membership (Greider and Garkovich 1994). Stedman (2003) also noted that characteristics of the setting may be associated with the development of attachment (see also Beckley 2003); one should not be too quick to assume that settings really are blank slates waiting to be filled with the memories of human experiences. Others (e.g., Blake 2002) have suggested that people may become attached to symbolic places with which they may not have had direct contact. Some have focused on scale issues: i.e., do people form attachment to specific sites? To regions? To entire nations (see Shamai 1991)? How do local and nonlocal people differ with respect to their attachment (e.g., Kaltenborn and Williams 2002)? Does attachment increase if people are more specialized in the recreation activities they pursue there (e.g., Kyle et al. 2003), or does activity participation per se foster attachment?

The preceding briefly illustrates the attention paid to understanding attachment: how it functions, how it is produced, and how it may differ between groups. The

particular works cited above only skim the surface of what is out there. In comparison, there has been far less emphasis on understanding place meanings: answers to the question "What kind of place is this?" Where do meanings come from? How do they differ between groups? Are certain meanings tied to stronger attachment? How can an increased understanding of them be used to understand group consensus or conflict?

Using Research to Illustrate the Themes: Sense of Place in Vilas County, Wisconsin

The remainder of this paper suggests and examines a number of themes related to place meanings. In some instances, quantitative research findings are used to illustrate these principles, but I would like to invoke two disclaimers. First, this is not a traditional "research paper" per se: I do not use a hypothesis-testing framework. Rather, the quantitative findings are invoked to highlight particular themes. Second, I do not believe that quantitative analysis such as that demonstrated here is the only way to apprehend the themes described below. Many of the complex themes dealing with the interplay between the physical environment, human volition, and social structure, are exceedingly complex and not easily captured by quantitative analysis.

The findings presented are drawn from a study of property owners in Vilas County, Wisconsin. Vilas County is a tourism-intensive and recreational home landscape with a preponderance of lakes. Seasonal and year-round population has been growing rapidly. New construction has resulted in a dramatic decline in vacant lakeshore property, and it is clear that wild lakeshores matter to sense of place in Vilas County. Several Vilas County town planning documents (Town of Arbor Vitae 1996, Town of Eagle River 1996) reflect these concerns, as they focus on clean water, lakes, and woods as critical to quality of life and threatened by unplanned sprawl, inadequate shore land zoning, and recreational conflict (see Stedman 2002, 2003 for more detail on Vilas County, and the survey methodology briefly described below).

In 1999, I sent a mail survey to a stratified (by gender) random sample of 1,000 Vilas County property owners, drawn from the 1998 property tax rolls. The research used a three-contact mailing procedure, resulting in a 72.1-percent response rate. Respondents were asked to describe and evaluate a particular lake of their own choosing: either one on which they owned property or one that they

visited often. These survey data were then matched to several Vilas County lakes databases for the purposes of exploring the relationship between environmental quality and human response (see Stedman and Hammer 2006).

"What Do We Mean by Meanings": Emergent Themes

Symbolic meanings are beliefs or cognitions about place and can be measured and analyzed as such. At the outset, meanings should be clearly differentiated from evaluations. Even in a field of inquiry as replete with confusion about important terminology as sense of place, meanings suffer from an exquisite lack of clarity. At the risk of creating an infinite regress, it is fair to ask "What do we mean by place meanings?" Farnum et al. (2005) noted that place meanings are often used interchangeably with sense of place. Meanings are part of sense of place. They are important to sense of place. But they are not equivalent concepts. And they surely are not the same thing as attachment. Perhaps we can lay part of the blame on one of the oft-cited quotations of Tuan (1977) who stated a quarter century ago that a place is a "center of meaning or field of care." This statement, besides contributing to a full-fledged research scrum among academics ranging from environmental psychologists to humanistic geographers, may be misleading in that the "or" at the center of the statement suggests that the two phrases that bracket it are interchangeable. They are not. The former implies description, the latter connotes evaluation. *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (Mirriam-Webster 1970) defines a meaning as "an idea conveyed to the mind…requiring or allowing of interpretation." Even "meaningful," which is often used casually in a manner that sounds suspiciously consistent with attachment (i.e., "this is a meaningful place to me" implies a strong positive bond) is defined by *Webster's* in more descriptive terms, as "having a meaning, purpose, or function." Meaning and attachment, so often touted as important components of sense of place (Brandenburg and Carrol 1995, Relph 1976, Tuan 1975) are empirically separable, but have been treated as nearly synonymous in research. This is a crucial neglect.

Symbolic meanings are beliefs or cognitions about place and can be measured and analyzed as such. At the outset, meanings should be clearly differentiated from evaluations.

Social psychology, despite those who claim that it minimizes the role of social structure, adds analytical clarity to our discussion of meanings and attachment. Attitude theorists assert that attitudes include affective (evaluative), cognitive, and conative (behavioral) components. Beliefs are the cognitive building blocks of attitude (Bem 1970). The relationship between cognitive and evaluative components of attitude is a traditional focus of social psychology (see Eagly and Chaiken 1993 for a cogent review).

Key to translating sense of place—and especially meanings—through social psychology is the idea that the physical setting and its attributes take on the role of attitude object or locus for cognitions and evaluations. Symbolic meanings about place can be translated into cognitions or beliefs: descriptive statements about "what kind of place this is." Subsequently, this approach suggests that our evaluations—i.e., attachment, satisfaction, etc.—of a setting are a function of the kinds of meanings we attribute to it. Some might respond that this kind of model takes complex phenomena like symbolic meanings and attempts to reduce them to simple cognitive belief statements that can be measured by using "true/false" or "agree/disagree" matrices. Let me be clear: analytical precision and the separation of concepts that are begging to be separated are my objectives, rather than quantitative measurement per se of the components. Our ability to be precise may be enhanced through quantitative measurement, but retreating to numbers is hardly required to differentiate between meaning and attachment.

A setting is more than one "place": settings contain multiple meanings based on patterned experience. If a setting has meaning, surely it does not mean the same thing to everyone. This point is hardly novel: long ago, Lynch (1960) noted that the identity of a place provides its individuality or distinction from other places, its basis of recognition as a separate entity, but that this identity may differ among people. Some suggest radically individualistic place meanings: a given setting will contain as many different meanings as there are people using the setting (Meinig 1979, Relph 1976). Others (e.g., Greider and Garkovich 1994, Ryden 1993) emphasize common meanings based on shared (or similar) experience: there will be a degree of commonality in meanings among people who interact with a setting as recreationists and not as real estate developers.

Illustration: Between-Group Differences in Meanings

The emergence of distinct meanings based on different modes of encounter is explored by using the Vilas County data. Two dominant meanings are explored: "home" and "escape," testing the idea that a second home setting has the capacity to simultaneously embody both of these sets of meanings. Tuan (1977) made a process-based distinction between attachment to ordinary, or "home places" rather than "chosen places" (see also Meinig 1979). In home places, the accumulation of ordinary experiences produces deep feelings of attachment to places that—to the outsider—lack distinction. In contrast, attachment to a chosen place may develop quickly, as a result of a dramatic experience based in an extraordinary landscape.

This latter characterization is the exemplar of the tourist form of attachment, which is often marginalized as relatively unimportant. However, I will take to my grave my memory of my first sight of the San Juan Mountains in southwest Colorado. While driving south from Grand Junction on a drab March day, all of 20 years old and turned loose on an unsuspecting world, I crested a small rise and the mountains were suddenly, impossibly there: huge, snowy, incredible. I had to pull the car over on the shoulder; I was shaken to the core. Nearly 20 years later, writing these words still raises the hair on the back of my neck. Did I have any prior experience with these mountains? No. Did I understand the subtleties of the ecosystem or how people lived there? No. Was my life changed? Forever: I have been fighting to return to the mountains ever since. Attachment to chosen places need not be shallow.

Of interest to this research is the question of whether a given setting can simultaneously embody both a "chosen place" and a "home place," as suggested by the tourist and year-round resident mode of interaction. As reflected in Tuan's writings, year-round residents value their community as "home," and tourists value it as an "escape" from their everyday lives. Articulating the middle ground meanings of the second-home owner is more of a challenge: many of their behaviors are "consumptive," emphasizing recreation and relaxation. Their meanings for the local setting are likely aligned with these behaviors.

Are particular meanings associated with particular behaviors? The dominant modes of interaction with the northern Wisconsin landscape can be divided several ways: year-round versus seasonal residence; and lake frontage owners versus non-lakeshore-frontage owners.[2] The next section of the paper compares symbolic meanings between these sets of groups, using t-tests to compare means (table 1). Note the inclusion of several summed scales for symbolic meanings ("up north" and "community of neighbors"). A maximum likelihood factor analysis revealed a clear two-factor solution explaining 55 percent of the variation in symbolic meanings: my lake as "up north" (alpha = 0.824) or my lake as "a community of neighbors" (alpha = 0.680).

[2] Although one might think these redundant, this is not the case. There is a reasonably strong correlation (r = 0.306), but the two concepts are hardly redundant. Nearly half of year-round residents (46.3 percent) have lake frontage (a testimony to the strong presence of lakes in the region). Most (82.7 percent) seasonal residents have lake frontage (the dominant location of seasonal homes still tends to be on lakes), but this is becoming progressively less the case as lake areas fill in with development, and those seeking solitude (or who cannot afford the exorbitant prices associated with lakeshore areas) are acquiring off-lake parcels.

Table 1—Meanings by mode of encounter (t-test)

	Seasonal	Year-round	Significant differences	No frontage	Lake frontage	Significant differences
	Mean[a] *(n)*			*Mean*[a] *(n)*		
Summed scales						
Community of neighbors	2.70 (427)	3.01 (194)	0.001	2.93 (161)	2.76 (459)	0.05
The real "up north"	3.82 (430)	3.38 (197)	.001	3.41 (165)	3.77 (466)	.001
Individual items						
A family place	4.37 (442)	4.12 (203)	.001	4.01 (168)	4.39 (476)	.001
A pristine wilderness	3.42 (436)	3.03 (200)	.001	3.13 (167)	3.36 (468)	.05
A residential "neighborhood"	2.51 (432)	2.91 (195)	.001	2.92 (164)	2.53 (462)	.001
A place mostly for vacationers	3.13 (435)	2.96 (198)	NS	3.21 (167)	3.03 (465)	NS
A place of high environmental quality	3.83 (432)	3.53 (199)	.001	3.51 (165)	3.82 (465)	.001
A place to escape from civilization	4.04 (440)	3.44 (199)	.001	3.48 (165)	3.98 (473)	.001
A community of neighbors	2.91 (432)	3.15 (200)	.01	2.96 (165)	3.00 (466)	NS
The real "up north"	3.97 (440)	3.55 (202)	.001	3.55 (168)	3.94 (473)	.001

NS = no significant difference.

[a] Measured on a 5-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Comparing respondents according to the two groupings reveals that some of the place meanings differ according to mode of interaction with the setting. Year round and seasonal differ strongly on symbolic meanings attributed to their lake. Quite reasonably, year-round residents are more likely to see their lake as a community of neighbors, while seasonal residents are more likely to see it as up north escape. Similar differences are observed between those who do and do not own lake frontage. People who own frontage are less likely to think their lake is like a community of neighbors, and more likely to think of it as up north (fig. 6). It is clear that we are looking at sites that, therefore, are simultaneously "home" for some, and

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Figure 6—People who own lake-front homes are likely to think differently about their lake than those who do not own frontage homes.

"escape" for others, and that much of this variation is driven by the way people experience these settings. Although it may not exactly be breathtaking news to assert that those who live in a setting year round are more likely to see it as a home place, the implications of this finding (and being able to demonstrate it clearly) are very important for the management of recreation sites that embody both sets of meanings.

Where else do meanings come from? Deceptively simple statements such as "meanings are created from experience" are worthy of more scrutiny. The experience-based model examined above so endemic to sense of place implicitly (at times, explicitly) assumes that people construct meanings of their own via freely chosen behaviors that reflect their own preference structure. This rational actor model may neglect the reality that not all meanings compete on an equal footing. Rather, exogenous forces may play a strong part in the creation of meanings. The material setting is one such force. The role of the physical environment in contributing to sense of place has been under-analyzed relative to the role of shared behaviors and cultural processes. Tuan suggested that an un-experienced physical setting is "blank space," without important characteristics of its own: "What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place when we endow it with value" (Tuan 1977: 6). Much work has followed this path. Greider and Garkovich (1994: 2 emphasis in original) asserted "landscapes are the reflections of these cultural identities, which are about **us**, rather than the natural environment." They continued (1994: 2): "Of

The role of the physical environment in contributing to sense of place has been under-analyzed.

course, humans reside in a natural…world that is there…but this world is meaningless. Meanings are not inherent in the nature of things…" Eisenhauer et al. (2000: 422) added: "In essence, people confer meaning on the environment in ways that reflect their social and cultural experiences." In this way, it is possible for a single space to encompass multiple "places," reflecting the uniqueness of human culture and variations in experiences people have had with the landscape.

Illustration: Shoreline Development, Meanings, and Attachment

Because shoreline development is such a pressing topic in Vilas County, I examined whether lakes with a high proportion of developed shoreline differ in meaning from lightly developed lakes. Respondents were separated into groups based on the level of shoreline development of their lake. Means for each of these domains were compared (t-tests) between respondents on relatively highly developed lakes (more than 30 structures per total mile of lake frontage) versus those on relatively lightly developed lakes (less than 15 structures per mile of frontage). For analytical clarity, respondents in the middle category (moderately developed lakes) are excluded from the analysis. All were asked to respond to the cognitive (symbolic meaning and evaluative belief) items detailed earlier (table 2).

It is clear that lightly developed lakes mean different things than do those ringed by shoreline development. Respondents on more highly developed lakes were significantly less likely to consider them a pristine wilderness, places of high environmental quality, places to escape from civilization, scenic, peaceful, with clear water and abundant forests. They were more likely to think of their lakes as residential neighborhoods, crowded with shoreline development and recreationists, and polluted water. Stedman and Hammer (2006) also found that lakeshore development levels affect perceived water quality: people on more developed lakes also perceive the water of their lakes to be more polluted and less clear, even though limnological data on variables such as chlorophyll and turbidity do not support these perceptions.

Are differences in development levels associated with differences in attachment? No. Although there were differences for two items of the attachment scale (see Jorgensen and Stedman 2001, Stedman 2002 for more information on the development of the attachment scale), overall there were few differences in attachment variables (table 3). This suggests that although beliefs about what kind of place a lake represents may be affected by setting characteristics, identification with it as an important place remains relatively strong.

Table 2—Lake meanings by lakeshore development level

	Less developed	More developed	Significance
	– – – – – *Mean*[a] – – – – –		*p*
My lake is…			
A family place	4.29	4.28	NS
A pristine wilderness	3.61	2.72	0.001
A residential "neighborhood"	2.27	3.21	.001
A place mostly for vacationers	2.99	3.15	NS
A place of high environmental quality	3.90	3.36	.001
A place to escape from civilization	4.05	3.48	.001
A community of neighbors	2.71	3.66	.001
The real "up north"	3.95	3.50	.001

NS = no significant difference.

[a] Measured on a 5-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Table 3—Place attachment by lakeshore development level

	Less developed	More developed	Significance
	– – – – – *Mean*[a] – – – – –		*p*
I feel that I can really be myself there	5.61	5.28	0.01
I feel happiest when I am there	5.35	5.14	NS
For the things I enjoy most, no other place can compare	4.78	4.65	NS
It is my favorite place to be	5.09	5.00	NS
As far as I am concerned, there are better places to be[b]	3.04	3.67	.001
It reflects the type of person I am	5.04	4.76	NS
I really miss it when I am away too long	5.50	5.26	NS
It is the best place to do the things I enjoy	5.26	5.10	NS
Everything about it is a reflection of me	4.55	4.39	NS
Summed attachment scale (alpha = 0.937)	5.12	4.87	NS

NS = no significant difference.

[a] Measured on a 7-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

[b] Reverse coded for inclusion in summed attachment scale.

Other external factors, net of characteristics of the material environment, may also contribute to meanings. Urry (1995) noted that the place myth comprises a number of place images, but those embraced by the ruling classes are more likely to determine the character of the landscape. Pred (1984) asserted that place meanings are shaped by goals and desires of power-holding individuals or coalitions (e.g., the growth machine). Molotch et al. (2000) noted how certain interests may set place aspects in motion, which over time become seen as "normal" aspects of the landscape. Greider and Garkovich (1994: 17) also addressed the role of power in the social construction of landscape: "In the context of landscapes, power is the capacity to impose a specific definition of the physical environment, one that reflects the symbols and meanings of a particular group of people."

These definitions do not necessarily remain at the symbolic level but may result in changes to the physical landscape. Thus, power interests and the material environment are linked. Institutional actors, such as forest or recreation managers may play a large role in the creation of place meanings: official mandates that "freeze" a landscape at a particular point in time (e.g., National Park Service approaches that preserve "vignettes of primitive America"), interpretative signs directing tourists to particular views (while also telling them what it is they are supposed to be seeing) directly affect the meanings that visitors to national parks may glean from their visit. Other policies, such as restricting access to certain areas (i.e., camping only in designated backcountry campsites) or specific types of activities (i.e., allowing hunting in national forests but not national parks) can indirectly affect the meanings attributed to the landscape via affecting the behaviors that support these meanings. Other power interests (i.e., tourism-based growth machine) have interests in the promulgation of certain meanings.

These processes are neither independent of each other nor mutually exclusive. People can only behave in relation to what is there; at minimum it is far easier to "go with the flow," taking advantage of recreational opportunities and infrastructure that readily present themselves, and re-creating meanings that are consistent with attributes of the material environment and its signature uses. Understanding the role of power in shaping place meanings transcends the type of quantitative measurement employed in this paper, but is well worth exploring in subsequent research.

Based on these factors, we may have a hard time predicting meanings through conventional quantitative measures. Both from theory and from empirical research we see that meanings come from experience (individual or social) and that they are also embodied in characteristics of the setting and shaped by power interests.

However, meanings remain fairly elusive to standard quantitative measurement, suggesting that there may exist idiosyncratic factors based on particular experience with particular places. In short, we cannot discount the importance of the specifics of place.

Implications of meanings: Do some meanings foster greater attachment? Because "meanings and attachment" are so often linked in sense of place writings, there is the immediate tendency to assume that certain sets of meanings are more likely to foster place attachment. However, we might also suggest that one could be attached to a setting from a number of different meanings: i.e., there is no "magic meaning" that is associated with higher levels of attachment.

Illustration: Predicting Attachment From Meanings

A simple multiple regression was employed to predict attachment from meanings; the previously described evaluative beliefs and symbolic meanings are both entered into the equation predicting the composite attachment variable (table 4).

Several of the meaning items are associated with higher levels of attachment; most of these are in the "up north" domain. "Escape from civilization" and "the real up north," were strongly predictive of attachment. Interestingly, two of the items in the community domain had opposite effects: "like a residential neighborhood" was associated with less attachment, while "a community of neighbors" was associated with stronger attachment (even though these items were positively correlated). I had initially expected that the particular meanings one holds for the landscape would have relatively little to do with the level of attachment (i.e., one can be attached from multiple dimensions). The results support this contention to a degree: for example, although "escape from civilization" and "a community of neighbors" were negatively correlated, agreeing with each of these is associated with higher levels of attachment. Primarily, however, it appears that agreeing with "up north as an escape" is strongly associated with higher attachment. Given the predominance of "up north" meanings described earlier, it may be that disagreeing with a commonly accepted (even hegemonic) meaning is a form of social resistance or indicator of real dissatisfaction with what's occurring in a place ("Sure, everybody around here thinks this is the real up north, but trust me, it is not").

The importance of meanings goes beyond their relationship to attachment. Meanings may be associated with phenomena other than attachment that might be far more relevant to managers. Underscoring this contention is the demonstrated lack of linkage between environmental quality and attachment. People may remain attached to degraded settings even as one set of meanings may come to

Table 4—Predicting attachment from meanings by multiple regression

	Unstandardized coefficients	Standard error	Standardized coefficients	T	Significance
	Beta		*Beta*		*P*
(Constant)	1.992	0.398		5.01	0.000
A family place	.258	.062	.162	4.127	.000
A pristine wilderness	-.045	.056	-.038	-.803	NS
A residential "neighborhood"	-.121	.052	-.107	-2.324	.020
A place mostly for vacationers	-.250	.045	-.022	-.563	NS
A place of high environmental quality	.510	.067	.036	.762	NS
A place to escape from civilization	.263	.064	.209	4.104	.000
A community of neighbors	.222	.059	.176	3.855	.000
The real "up north"	.209	.079	.163	2.524	.004

NS = no significant effect.
Adjusted R square = 0.182.
F = 17.40.
P = 0.000.

take precedence over another. Contrasting meanings, therefore, may underpin contentious place politics such as conflict over land use. Cheng and Kruger (in this report) note that the increasingly diverse and conflicting social demands for federal public lands and resources is perhaps the critical challenge for land managers. Such conflict may be based in, among other factors, disagreement about what meanings describe a setting rather than attachment per se. Simply put, acrimonious conflict is probably less likely to occur between groups with differing strengths of place attachment, but rather between two sets of interests that are both strongly attached but with conflicting visions about what the setting means.

Symbolic meanings appear to be associated with support for environmental regulation and willingness to organize to resist unwanted environmental change.

Illustration: Meanings and Environmental Support

Are certain meanings associated with active support for more stringent environmental laws? To demonstrate the relationship, simple bivariate correlation analysis is performed between two indicators of environmental behavior: (1) overall levels of support for environmental regulations and (2) willingness to join or help form a group opposing further shoreline development (table 5).

Symbolic meanings appear to be associated reasonably strongly with levels of support for environmental regulation and willingness to organize to resist unwanted environmental change. As we might reasonably intuit, meanings associated with a more pristine "escape" meaning of place (wilderness, high environmental quality,

Table 5—Meanings and environmental support (bivariate correlation analyses)

	Support more stringent environmental regulations		Join or form a group to fight shoreline development	
	Correlation	*P*	*Correlation*	*P*
A family place	0.026	NS	0.027	NS
A pristine wilderness	.080	0.047	.130	0.001
A residential "neighborhood"	.021	NS	-.135	.001
A place mostly for vacationers	.045	NS	-.043	NS
A place of high environmental quality	.111	.006	.073	NS
A place to escape from civilization	.079	.050	.129	.001
A community of neighbors	.064	NS	-.009	NS
The real "up north"	.136	.001	.106	.008

NS = no significant effect.

escape from the everyday, and the real up north) appear to be associated with feelings that current levels of environmental regulation are not sufficiently restrictive. People recognize that their pristine north is vulnerable. Further, people who hold these views express more willingness to engage in collective action to protect their lake from increased shoreline development. In contrast, other meanings (family place, vacation place, community of neighbors) are apparently less based on the presence of a high-quality natural environment, and they are not threatened by increased lakeshore development (the meaning "residential neighborhood" is linked to decreased willingness to counter such change).

The lesson here is that although meanings may or may not be very strongly tied to attachment, (nor very predictable from the suite of variables shown here) they may be related to other constructs that tourism and recreation managers may care much more about: levels of support for environmental regulations, and willingness to become actively involved in opposing specific environmental change.

Conclusions

In this piece I have intended to turn the attention away from place attachment and articulate the importance of place meanings. To recap, I suggest that meanings have a strong cognitive base, and can (and should) be distinguished from more evaluative elements such as attachment. These meanings are neither invariant nor ad hoc in their variation. Rather, the multiple meanings that characterize a setting are created through patterned experience. In illustrating these themes with data, it becomes clear that although Vilas County seasonal and year-round residents exist in

the same spatial settings, they are experiencing different "places." Although there is a choice in the behavior that shapes these meanings, structural factors need to be considered as well: the arrangement of the physical environment—what it contains and does not contain—plays a strong role in shaping meanings. The Vilas County results described here tell us quite clearly that lakes ringed with houses mean different things than lakes encircled only with white pine and maple. We also need to seriously think about the people and institutions that create meanings for us: land managers who shape the "natural" landscape through their actions, interpreters who tell us where to look and what we should think and feel when we look, powerful actors who have a vested interest in the promulgation of meanings that fit their ability to turn a profit, and the simple, iterative structuration of place (see Molotch et al. 2000 for a wonderfully articulated consideration of this) that leads inexorably, almost imperceptibly, to some elements being present in a landscape while others are not.

Messages to Managers

There are important implications of this work for resource and recreation managers. Most importantly, at least as suggested in this research (I'll soon introduce the place-specific caveats that attenuate the strength of this conclusion), trying to manage for attachment may be a mistake. I reach this conclusion from several different avenues. First, environmental quality and attachment may have little to do with each other. At least in Vilas County, the environmental attributes of lakes—their level of development, as described here, but also their clarity, their chlorophyll levels, their acidity—have no effect on attachment. For those who agree that maintaining environmental quality of outdoor recreation settings is an important goal, the finding that people seem to have the capacity to be attached to environmentally degraded settings is somewhat disturbing. There is a second reason that managers should not worry too much about managing for attachment: doing so appears to be very difficult. Much of the capacity people have to be attached to a setting is outside the control of resource managers. As Fitchen (1991) pointed out, people have the capacity to maintain attachment through memories of past events, selective attention to detail, and a host of other factors.

If managers might want to worry less about creating attachment for recreationists, forest stakeholders, and other interested parties, they may want to worry more about understanding their role in creating meanings. In some ways, this represents unexpected "good news": meanings are perhaps more fundamental than attachment, and managers probably have more capacity to influence what kinds of

meanings will be attributed to the setting than attachment to it. Based on this and related research (see Stedman 2003) managers' actions can create or influence meanings in several specific ways. First, and most obviously, their land management activities affect the material landscape that serves as the basis for meanings. Decisions about timber harvest plans, for example, will change the appearance of the landscape and potentially the meanings attributed to it. Second, because meanings are still tied somewhat to the mode in which a setting is encountered, recreation managers create meanings indirectly through their provision for certain experiences, and their prohibitions on others. For example, decisions to open or close an area to certain types of uses (e.g., motorized versus nonmotorized recreation) is likely to affect place meanings. Stedman et al. (2004) found that certain use prohibitions in Canadian National Parks (e.g., limiting hiking to designated trails, and prohibiting hunting) led some local residents to attribute a "nature under glass" meaning to the setting. Finally, recreation managers need to realize that they are always in the process of communicating meanings through interpretation of the landscape for visitors. Most obviously, roadside informational kiosks and signage communicate certain messages about the setting, but communication is hardly limited to these instances. There are a host of subtle and not-so-subtle cues about what kind of place a setting represents; managers need to pay attention to the kinds of signals they send, intentionally or unintentionally. Whether by individual inclination, institutional constraint (i.e., what is the official position of an institution such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service), or through external pressure on the institution (i.e., find a way to increase visitation so that local communities benefit economically) most resource managers are hardly "meaning-neutral": they will (and ought to) have their own vision of what is right for a certain landscape.

A meaning-based management framework can also help clarify management objectives and their communication to stakeholders. I have suggested that conflict over controversial issues—land use, recreational activities allowed, how benefits may or may not flow back into local communities—can be best understood as conflict over questions of "What kind of place is this?" Settings characterized by a multiplicity of viable meanings present special challenges to managers, especially as they come to terms with their own preferred meanings as described above. By asking stakeholders to articulate their concerns in terms of the meanings they are ascribing to place—asking them to put their cards on the table, so to speak—greater analytical clarity may be obtained, leading perhaps to more effective conflict resolution.

Setting-Specific Caveats

Having made some fairly strong statements about meanings based on my Vilas County findings, I would like to back down ever so slightly. My findings and the implications drawn from them are of course rooted in the place-specific attributes that produced these findings. Much of my work on place is driven by my goal of seeking general principles about place, and moving away from highly particularistic studies of people and settings that do not extend beyond these particulars. I would like to contribute to theory that is rooted in the particulars of setting and social actors, but has the capacity to transcend these settings and be used to understand other settings and ways of interacting with the landscape. To a degree, however, all findings and generalizations about place will remain rooted in the particulars of the setting that produced them. Some of the Vilas County findings may have been affected by a lack of diversity both in the quality of the physical environment as well as the behaviors through which people encounter them. The lakes as attitude objects are all of reasonable environmental quality: none, for example, are so polluted that they are devoid of fish. Would my finding that the quality of the physical environment matters little to attachment still hold up if the range of variation were expanded to include some truly woeful places? Similarly, there is a very limited range of human behaviors associated with these lakes: people recreate on them, look at them, live on them. No one is trying, for example, to make a living by extracting natural capital from them. Settings such as national forests that really serve a wider range of uses may produce different findings about the contributing role of experience to both meanings and attachment, and produce a wide range of meanings. My finding that the "up north" meaning really is associated with higher attachment may hold primarily for settings where there really is only one dominant meaning for the landscape, such as witnessed here. In settings where there is greater multiplicity of meanings, selecting one over another may not imply much about attachment.

Clearly, more research on meanings is needed. But what should this research look like? I would like to see the themes identified here used as organizing principles and applied to different settings that may have a greater diversity of experiences and characteristics of the physical environment. As I mentioned at the outset, this research does not have to be quantitative: there are ways of assessing meanings other than translating them into Likert-scaled belief statements. Many of the most interesting questions about how power interests contribute to place meanings probably escape simple quantitative measurement. Regardless, more effort (both by

researchers and managers) should be put into developing measurement frameworks, discovering where place meanings come from, and how such meanings may articulate with ongoing management objectives.

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Chapter 5—Place Meanings in Stories of Lived Experience[1]

William Stewart[2]

Abstract

Place meanings characterize reasons that an environment is valued and describe the uniqueness of a locale. The purposes of this paper are to explain the following complexities of place meanings: (1) place meanings are derived from lived experience, (2) place meanings are difficult to express, (3) articulating place meanings is hampered by dominant cultural values, and (4) representation of place meanings is audience-sensitive. These complexities lead to a crisis in representation of place meanings for environmental planning. The crisis is not a technical problem and cannot be resolved by the usual path of more data or further information being brought into a decisionmaking process. Responding to the crisis requires reviewing goals for decisionmaking forums with expanded capacity for citizenry to represent and negotiate place meanings.

Keywords: Sense of place, environmental management, land use planning.

Introduction

Sense of place is about meanings of place. These meanings arise from people's experiences with the environments and people of their lives (Brandenburg and Carroll 1995). Although place meanings are constructed through our interactions with an environment, we often think of them as being inherent parts of the environment—something that exists even if we are not there. As humans, we create place meanings, we share them with others, we revise their meanings to fit our needs, and we resist meanings we do not like or that threaten our sense of who we are (David and Wilson 2002, Oldenburg 1989). As argued by Stokowski (2002: 372–373), the conversations and interactions with others are the processes by which place meanings are shaped.

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Meanings of place are important in land use decisionmaking. Our place meanings tell us which alternatives to support, and which ones to oppose. Our place meanings give us visions for land use planning, and serve as a reference to evaluate land uses and assess environmental degradation (Yung et al. 2003). Place meanings are embedded in the thoughts and feelings we have about specific environments (Brandenburg and Carroll 1995, Greider and Garkovich 1994, Williams and Stewart 1998). We come to know people's place meanings by talking with them. This does not say the physical environment—the land, the water, the plants—is not important (Stedman 2003a). This simply says that if one wants to learn another's **meanings** of the physical environment, then one needs to know the thoughts of other people. To say it in a different way, place meanings are not found in the physical nature of the outside world, they exist in the minds of people and in the life of their communities.

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In his thorough review of place literature, Gieryn (2000: 464–465) indicated that places have three necessary and sufficient features: geographic location, material form, and the "investment with meaning and value." The latter feature is the con-cern herein, and as a specific focus, this chapter is directed at understanding issues in coming to know and tell about our place meanings. "Place meaning" could be confused with several other terms related to place. Place meanings that individuals and groups assign to environments are "embedded in historically contingent and shared cultural understandings of the terrain" (Gieryn 2000: 473); these meanings qualitatively describe our thoughts and feelings about a place. These descriptions do not necessarily tell us the strength of our attachment to a place (Williams et al. 1992), the degree of our bonding, or the extent that one place is better than another. These latter phrases are connected to "place attachment" or "place bonding," whereas "place meanings" characterize ways in which an environment may be valued, and in doing so, describe the uniqueness of a locale in ways that differentiate it from other locales. Stedman (2003a: 826, italics in original) has distinguished "place attachment" from "place meaning" in the following way:

> [Place] meanings and attachment are not the same thing…. empirical treatments have not looked at the meanings, or *descriptive* sense of place. Understanding the content of meanings is critically important for understanding resource conflict. It is not enough to know the strength of one's attachment to the setting, but precisely to *what* one is attached.

In short, place meanings do not entail "how much," rather they build a context to understand "what kind." This chapter situates place meanings within decision-making about recreation resources. It positions managers as needing to understand, and having the capacity to influence, the social construction of place meanings.

The value orientation of this chapter appreciates the potential of identifying and understanding a diversity of place meanings in planning for land use change, urban and rural growth, and park development. Although there may be several explanations for land use change, the intentions of this chapter are concerned with undifferentiated growth and development, such as urban sprawl, strip development, and other land use changes that do not provide a sense of time or place (Lynch 1972). Development that fails to reflect a community's sense of itself is partially due to the inability of people and groups to assert place meanings within contexts of decisionmaking. The value orientation is not against traditional place meanings or dominant values, but recognizes the challenges of representing a diversity of place meanings in planning processes owing to the privileged position of traditional meanings and dominant values.

Place meanings are complex. There are several overlapping reasons to explain the complexity of place meanings. This chapter details the following:

- Place meanings are derived from one's lived experience—either by being in the place, reading about it, or in some way knowing something about a given locale.
- Place meanings may operate at a subconscious level, are multifaceted, and in a continual state of flux, making them difficult to express.
- The articulation of place meanings may be hampered by dominant cultural values, with people inclined to rely on customary values and meanings and those already legitimized by the discourse of a planning process.
- Representation of place meanings is audience-sensitive, that is, the telling of one's place meanings depends on who is being told and why they need telling.

The purposes of this chapter are to explain these complexities of place meanings and argue that collectively they lead to a crisis in the representation of place meanings for environmental planning. The crisis is not a technical problem and cannot be addressed by the usual path of research that brings more data and further information into decisionmaking. Rather it serves as a premise for decisionmaking and casts roles for citizens from being an involved public to being stakeholders within a dialogue process about place meanings.

Place Meanings Are Derived From Lived Experience

Lived experience refers to our immediate consciousness of everyday life (Dilthey 1987; Schwandt 2001: 84–86; Van Manen 1990). Sometimes labeled "biographical experiences" (Denzin 2001) or "experiences of the present" (Hodder 2000), lived experiences possess a temporal quality indicative of the way life is lived. Our thoughts, feelings, and emotions simply unfold as we engage in the day's activities, and by their nature, we generally experience them uncritically (Ceglowski 2002, Holveck 2002, Van Manen 1990). The lived experience is not given to direct assessment; researchers can surround it, but as soon as one considers it beyond the state of immediate consciousness, it becomes filtered and gains new meaning (Holveck 2002). When we reflect on the past and reconstruct the events of our lives, we develop contexts to further understand our lived experiences. We usually represent these meanings through stories or narratives that tell about our lived experiences (Richardson and Lockridge 1991, Riessman 1993). Such narratives are not the same as lived experiences, but they give meaning to lived experience. It is these representations of lived experiences, usually in the form of stories, that are important to understand place meanings.

We have grown accustomed to learning about place meanings by hearing stories of lived experience (Glover 2003, Tuan 1993). For example, advocates for prairie restoration would characterize their experiences in prairie restoration projects as transforming a degraded state of nature into a healthy and functioning ecosystem. Schroeder (2000: 252) found that restoration volunteers refer to their projects through several kinds of narratives, including metaphors of invasion and war that evoke vivid portrayal of their place meanings:

> On this frigid March day, our small band of intrepid volunteers went to war, armed with a rag-tag assortment of loppers, pruning shears, [etc.]… to help tip the delicate balance ever so slightly back in favor of the little prairie, and help it fight for its existence, before the battle—and the prairie—are lost forever.

Schroeder (2000: 250) also found restoration volunteers characterizing place meanings through stories about healing a wounded landscape:

> Large tracts of woodland such as Cedar Glen are important today because they represent our best chance to restore and preserve this ecosystem…. We [will] reclaim this land from farmland and turn it back to native prairie and woodland.

The starting point for place meanings is that they are complex and not easily represented. This is a prairie restoration project near the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie southeast of Chicago, Illinois. The project is just a few acres yet represents the hard work of numerous volunteers who helped restore it to its current state. They know its past and anticipate its future. Industrial and residential development is surrounding this prairie. Nearby Midewin has initiated the restoration of 15,000 acres of land ultimately to be part of a system of prairies on the fringe of the Chicago metropolitan area. This prairie could be characterized as contemporary and historical, urban and rural, natural and artificial, healthy and isolated, holding promise as a prototype for other projects and doomed by urban sprawl, to name a few descriptors that would collectively confuse and fail to do justice to the place meanings held by stakeholders of the site. Single-word descriptors and brief landscape preference statements are not place meanings. Place meanings are embedded in narratives of lived experience of those familiar with this site. Photo courtesy of Park Planning and Policy Lab, University of Illinois.

Conversely, farmers have told about their daily lives as transforming unproductive fields into beneficial crops. For many farmers, stories connecting their daily lives to their land evoke a sense of pride in bringing their produce to market for nourishment of families near and far (Riley 1985, Sell and Zube 1986). These stories are not to be evaluated in any sense of being "right" or "wrong." They are simply reflections on a day in life by people who live it.

Although correctness is not at issue, stories that reflect on lived experiences provide insight to place meanings, and more generally, tell us ways in which particular environments are valued. Several scholars have argued that narratives are a universal human expression of value (Fine 2002, Linde 1993, Polkinghorne 1988, Rappaport 2000). In their study of special places near the USDA Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Stewart et al. (2004) found place meanings were embedded in stories about people's lived experiences. This is particularly noteworthy given their research methods; they asked participants to take pictures of special places in the community, and participants subsequently were interviewed to discuss the meanings of landscapes they photographed. Participants were not guided to construct stories about the meanings of their pictured places—place meanings emerged naturally as stories of lived experience. The research at Midewin, as well as that of other scholars (Albrecht and Amey 1999, Campbell 2003, Glover 2003, Polkinghorne 1995), suggests that people express place meanings by organizing lived experiences into the whole of stories.

By construing place meanings as embedded in narratives, we also understand the social and community context upon which place meanings depend.

With place meanings being expressed through stories of lived experiences, they are enmeshed in a "plot" that connects the past, present, and future (Denzin 2001, Labov 1982). The plot provides values that lead sequentially to the final conclusion of the story. Denzin (2001: 59) argued that stories provide coherence to life's events in ways that make sense to the narrator. By construing place meanings as embedded in narratives, we assess not only place meanings, but also understand the social and community context upon which place meanings depend (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995). Sometimes referred to as "place-making," the social processes that give rise to place meanings are critical to fully understand the meaning of the place (Brandenburg and Carroll 1995; Greider and Garkovich 1994; Stokowski 1996, 2002). Reflections of lived experience often depict interaction between the story-teller, other people, and environments (Johnstone 1990). The narrative structure is arranged to detail the social processes, causal action, and set of conditions that lead to the meanings of place. By knowing the groups of people and events included in the narrative, the extent to which meanings are shared is suggested.

As an example of a place-making story, a participant in the study at Midewin discussed the meaning of a local diner in her small town. "Cristina" referred back on some of her experiences with this diner to express meanings of the place:

> Basically it's the only restaurant that's really close to us so we go there a lot. And there's nice people. My husband's a carpenter and contractor. One of the carpenter's girlfriend bartends there. And we just kind of know everybody…If something bad happens, our local people come out. I know a woman who found out she has cancer. On the way to cancer treatment, she was in a really bad car accident…and so all of the people had a huge benefit, and everybody gave things. And they had raffles and auctions. And you see that all of the time. We come together and do benefits when somebody dies, somebody's kid is sick. You see, we feel a lot more a part of the community in Manhattan [Illinois] than we did in Bloomington [a larger city to the south]. (quoted in Stewart et al. 2004: 326).

For Cristina, meanings of the diner are intertwined with stories about her community. Her story tells about the people she knows there, their relationships to her, and the activities they have collectively done to support each other (cf., Wilkinson 1986). This chapter asserts, for example, that the meaning the diner has for Cristina is based upon her time spent there and the experiences she has shared with others in (and about) this place. Numerous scholars have developed this assertion from various theoretical perspectives; their work generally suggests that place meanings (and related concepts) are continuously being created, reformulated, and maintained because of our experiences with people and environments of daily life (e.g., Albrecht and Amey 1999, Kuentzel 2000, Stokowski 2002, Urry 1995).

With a different emphasis than a "lived experience" perspective, recreation research traditionally has conceived experiences (and other cognitions or states of mind) through some layer of abstraction detached from experiences actually lived by people. Although there are some noteworthy exceptions (e.g., Glover 2003, McCormick 1996, Patterson et al. 1998), more than four decades of recreation research indicate some general ways in which concepts have been operationalized (or measured), and suggest that concepts linked to recreation experiences are abstracted from lived experiences. Assessments typically provide information about a summary or appraisal of recreation experiences and are not meant to reflect the situationally-defined experiences of life.

For example, the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scales require people to recollect their leisure experience and to summarize their experience across a variety of items by reporting some degree of achieving a generalized

experience, say, "being with friends" as one of several categories of experience (e.g., Driver et al. 1991). The target of most traditional approaches, such as the use of REP scales, is not to depict recreation experiences as they are lived, felt, or made sense of by the people being studied. In other words, such approaches assume that one person's "being with friends" is similar with another person's experiences of "being with friends," and that the two cases could be aggregated as sharing the same experience of "being with friends." Although there is still significant work to be done by using scales to assess some generalized level of experience, there is growing interest amongst scholars to understand the meanings of experiences and ground them in the life world of the people we study (Allison 1988, Gobster 2002, Klitzing 2004, Patterson et al. 1998, Williams and Carr 1993). The point is not to disparage the use of universal scales in recreation research, but to distinguish the goal of using such scales from qualitative or meaning-based approaches. If one wants to know the meaning of places or things, then the context by which one experiences the places or things needs to be identified, developed, and understood (see Lincoln and Guba 2003 for discussion of meaning-making and axiology).

Place Meanings Are Difficult to Express

It is difficult for people to express their own place meanings. Various authors have claimed that place meanings operate at a subconscious level, are multifaceted, or in a continual state of flux. Each of these claims will be examined in turn, and serve to qualify our abilities to express place meanings.

Fried's (1963) research has indicated that we are unaware of the meanings of everyday environments like home, work place, or neighborhood, unless such places are threatened or disrupted. His study was one of the first to support place meanings as coming to consciousness only during one's "grief for a lost home." Others have indicated that place meanings "arise naturally in the context of daily experience, often without conscious intent" (Brown and Perkins 1992: 82-3; see also Hester 1993, Tuan 1980). In their study of residential relocation processes, Brown and Perkins (1992: 301) concluded that most people have a "taken-for-granted" orientation to the environments of their everyday life, and suggest that people rarely understand the meanings of environments until after they have moved away from the environment. However in the past decade or so, several scholars have recognized that place meanings operate at both conscious and unconscious levels. Although focused on emotional relationships to places, Manzo's (2003: 57) conclusion provides insight to place meanings by suggesting that feelings "can be part of a

conscious process where people interact with the physical environment to suit their needs, express themselves and develop their self concept." She acknowledged the "taken-for-granted" everyday world, but argued that this is not exclusively the case, particularly in situations where people have experienced exclusion from environments through conflict, displacement, and difference, which thereby "prompts people to become more conscious of place" (Manzo 2003: 57). In short, the literature indicates that we are conscious of some place meanings and not conscious of others. When environments are disrupted, we may come to know our place meanings—or at least, we think critically about the environment lost, and in doing so, create a frame for the expression of our place meanings.

When environments are disrupted, we think critically about the environment lost, and create a frame for our place meanings.

Place meanings are multifaceted. By construing place meanings as reflections of lived experience, several perspectives to guide reflections of our lived experience could be formed. Some scholars have organized these perspectives into individual and group-based meanings, with the latter meaning being either shared or contested. In their thorough review of place literature for recreation management, Farnum et al. (2005) distinguished personal (or individual) cognitions of place from social or community-based processes of place. They linked personal meanings of place to preferences, memories, feelings, and unique individual experiences with environments and linked community-based processes to shared meanings common to a particular group of people (Farnum et al. 2005: 9–12). At least two stories of lived experience could result, with one focused on individual implications and the other portraying collective action with others. From a different approach, Williams and Patterson (1996) detailed the "sociocultural paradigm" of natural resource management. They characterized the need for sensitivity to "social meaning" and provided several examples of plurality in meanings (and ensuing conflict) directed at the same environment. Extending their argument to the multifaceted nature of place meanings, another layer of complexity would be to include resistance to other narratives within one's own reflections of lived experience. In other words, my place meanings not only reflect my lived experiences, but are a reaction to competing meanings that threaten my own. From yet another approach, Cheng and Daniels (2003) suggested that the meaning of a place is contingent on the geographic scale of one's interaction with the place.

Place meanings are dynamic as a result of their dependence on geographic scale, competing place meanings, and whether they are personal or community oriented. Several researchers have suggested that place meanings are in a continual state of flux, or put differently, place meanings are negotiated with day-to-day interactions about the place (cf., Ahrentzen 1992, Cooper Marcus 1992, Greider

and Garkovich 1994, Hannigan 2002, Hester 1993). Stokowski (2002) was explicit in her depiction of the unstable nature of place relationships. She argued "places are always in the process of being created, always provisional and uncertain, and always capable of being discursively manipulated towards desired (individual and collective) ends" (Stokowski 2002: 374). Her discussion detailed the social processes of place-making, and depicted place meanings as never finalized but always in the process of being made. Manzo (2003) also depicted place relationships as "fluid" and "quite dynamic." She traced the work of several authors who explained our dynamic relationships with places through our movement from home to work, inside to outside our community, dwelling to journey, to name a few variables (Manzo 2003: 51–52). Because we move through various places, the context to appreciate places from our past also changes. The implication of Manzo's discussion is that our place meanings, as stories of lived experiences, are affected by the vantage point from which we tell our story. The research indicates that place meanings are not stable, but have potential for revision owing to several forces, including our encounters with other people and places.

This discussion casts place meanings as being difficult to express. We are not always conscious of the meanings of our environments, reflections of the same lived experience may result in multiple layers of stories, and the meanings themselves are situationally defined and dependent upon negotiations with other people and places. Until we consciously reflect on the environments of our lives, we may not fully know, nor can we tell, their current meanings.

Place Meanings Are Different Than Dominant Environmental Meanings

Place meanings are about a distinctive whole that includes the person, the environment, and their lived experience with the locale. Place meanings characterize the unique whole, and in some sense, exist as arguments to distinguish the place from other environments (Gieryn 2000: 464–465). However there are other environmental meanings "out there." These other meanings permeate society, and have been shaping ways we collectively conceive environments for hundreds of years. Referred to as dominant cultural meanings, the other meanings "out there" are different than individual place meanings and often prevent distinguishing them. Dominant cultural meanings inhibit the articulation of other place meanings by inviting acquiescence, positioning a normative claim, and having potential to diminish the relevance of alternate place meanings.

As an example, a dominant environmental meaning that has been privileged by American culture has been the construction of pristine land and has been coupled with a well-developed lexicon that further signifies the value of pristine land. Several excellent histories of cultural meanings have chronicled the development of the untouched and virgin wilderness as the North American idealized landscape (Hannigan 2002, Nash 2001, Oelschlager 1991, Runte 1992) (fig. 7). These histories have involved politicians, academics, artists, writers, journalists, businessmen, various layers of government, and numerous organizations. Indeed, there is nary a profession or academic discipline that has not played a role in the crowning of pristine land as being America's most sacred myth of origin (e.g., Burnham 2000, Cronon 1995, Denevan 1998, Gottlieb 1993, Hannigan 2002, Takaki 1979). The vocabulary of dominant cultural meanings has expanded to provide detail about the array of values connected to such landscapes. Terms such as biodiversity, endangered species, ecological integrity, and ecosystem health, for examples, have made their way into public consciousness. These terms ostensibly facilitate our ability as a culture to label the meaning of any given environment, provide a comparison to the ideal, and protect a dominant meaning.

However the public language of conservation and land use planning has limited overlap with personal and community-based meanings of place. The purpose of public forums and other meetings between land use planners and citizens could be viewed as struggles to communicate with one another and search for mutual understanding. The negotiation of common ground often favors the use of a public language so that all sides will recognize the discourse as shared knowledge, and presumably the meanings will be mutually understood. The problem lies in the representation of place through use of a public language that fails to do justice to our lived experience in the environment and the place meanings constructed as part of this experience. The result of place meanings being articulated as part of public discourse is that place meanings may appear to agree with dominant environmental meanings. In actuality the public discourse is reflective of tension between the language of conservation and one's lived experience linked to place meanings. The problem of representation is one of expressing place meanings in ways that recognize their tangency to dominant meanings but encourages their multilayered, fluid, and contextualized content to be told.

Public forums and other meetings between land use planners and citizens could be viewed as struggles to communicate with one another and search for mutual understanding.

Even though public language fails to fully capture our place meanings, we acquiesce to the discourse, and may even feel as if our intended place meanings were received by others. As an example, Gottlieb (1993) characterized the emergence of the anti-toxics movement of the 1970s as separating from the tactics of

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Figure 7—Several histories of cultural meanings have chronicled untouched and virgin wilderness as the North American idealized landscape.

traditional environmentalism. He chronicled their learning process that eventually led to strategies of direct action, public protests, and personal testimony, and attributed this movement to the inability of the language and meanings of traditional environmentalism to represent their perspectives (Gottlieb 1993: 162–204). Part of the enticement to use public language is connected to the ambiguity in "language and terminology used to discuss nature" (Hull and Robertson 2000: 97). Although focused on restoration ecology, the discussion by Hull and Robertson (2000) is applicable to many forums and conversations about environments of our lives. They asserted "the language of nature matters," and argued:

> The problem is that the language of nature is often neither precise nor value neutral. There exist multiple, conflicting, imprecise, and biased definitions of the terms used to discuss nature. These vagaries of language can cause conflict that delays or derails well-intentioned efforts to restore and manage nature. This conflict results when people use the same terms to intentionally or unintentionally mean different things or use particular definitions to suppress or promote particular values. (Hull and Robertson 2000: 97).

Rather than dominant cultural meanings facilitating representation of place, they act as invitations to grasp words we know others will recognize. By using a public vocabulary and accepted format of representation, our place meanings

become abstracted from the nuances of lived experience, unwittingly deviate toward dominant meanings, and ultimately lead to a diminishment of any difference. This acquiescence toward dominant meanings is likely to happen in many contexts, but in particular, within forums in which place meanings are being told to an audience unfamiliar to the speaker.

Dominant cultural meanings often exist in binary oppositions that structure debate about land use change (Gottlieb 1993, Gray and Kusel 1998). The "use vs. preservation" dichotomy has a longstanding history as the generic casting of dominant meanings. The poles of this dichotomy shape public discourse, which in turn, influences the representation of place meanings (White 1995). The tendency is for place meanings to acquiesce to dominant meanings and to regress toward one of the poles of the dichotomy. As a result, the qualitative distance between the place meaning and the public discourse may lose its tension, and differences between the two will ultimately disappear.

Although not focused on the ambiguity of language, Stokowski (2002) was nonetheless concerned about "discourses of power" reaffirming dominant meanings. Her essay argued that power differentials in society favor traditional cultural values regarding recreational environments. She observed that forces behind dominant cultural values generally legitimize, and ultimately garner support for, their idealized landscapes, by effectively marginalizing other meanings and other landscapes (Stokowski 2002: 376–377). Her observations caution us about the normative force behind dominant cultural values, and their ability to manipulate negotiations of place to reaffirm traditional values. Stokowski provided a compelling argument that dominant cultural forces are staking a claim with their idealized landscapes and sufficiently deflating any sense of urgency to understand "alternate" meanings.

Albrecht and Amey (1999) also framed dominant environmental values in a normative context. They characterized the construction of community-based narratives that integrate public language and symbols. These narratives act as "truths" and become crystallized, visible, and carry authority during times of conflict and threatened change. Although not explicitly focused on place, their study depicts the ability of dominant cultural values to function as imperatives and to manipulate in land use decisionmaking. Place meanings, when unique to a community or group of citizens, may not be fully defined, whereas traditional meanings will be more immediately known and identifiable. In such cases, the claims of traditional meanings will appear as commonly accepted truths. There is more than

a century of momentum behind traditional meanings that makes community-based place meanings, particularly if they are not aligned with dominant meanings, challenging to voice.

With place meanings being asserted in contexts of dominant cultural discourse, community-based and alternate place meanings may appear trivial, narrow in scope, and lacking relevance. When the narrative of one landscape is socially and politically privileged through decades of build-up, other meanings and other landscapes decrease in status. To this point, Cronon (1995) framed wilderness as a "dangerous" land ethic owing to its power to diminish the value of other places—particularly places of home, work, and everyday life. In his critique of wilderness as a dominant environmental value, he argued that it poses a serious threat to responsible environmentalism:

> Idealizing a distant wilderness too often means not idealizing the environment in which we actually live, the landscape that for better or worse we call home. Most of our serious environmental problems start right here, at home, and if we are to solve those problems, we need an environmental ethic that will tell us as much about using nature as about not using it. (Cronon 1995: 85)

When local place meanings compete in the same arena as dominant cultural meanings, place meanings are challenged to maintain their integrity and usually fail to enhance their political strength.

The point is not to disparage wilderness per se, but to illustrate the power of dominant cultural meanings to frame community-based, localized, and otherwise unique place meanings as low priority in a policy triage of environments to "save" and meanings to "defend." The upshot is that when place meanings compete in the same arena as dominant cultural meanings, place meanings are challenged to maintain their integrity and usually fail to enhance their political strength. Such is the concern of Cronon (2003) who wondered about the representation of the layers of humanity who have inhabited the Apostle Islands in the southwest corner of Lake Superior. His essay detailed the challenges of managing a wilderness full of human stories that directly compete with cultural and institutional meanings of wilderness.

Place Meanings Are Audience-Sensitive

In our daily life, what we say depends upon to whom we say it. If I describe a committee meeting to a colleague, it sounds different than when I describe it to an office secretary and different yet again when I describe it to a neighbor. There may be as many ways to characterize my committee meeting as there are kinds of people who would listen to my story. Each person reflects a different relationship with me

and implies a different purpose for telling the story that, in turn, affects the telling of the lived experience. Likewise with depictions of place meanings—the intended meaning of the telling depends upon who is being told.

Place meanings are consciously expressed when a proposal is being considered to develop or change the landscape. A public meeting or workshop is held to gather public input, and place meanings are voiced by using the proposed change as a focus. In these cases, place meanings usually are defined in contrast to the "other" with the purpose of demonstrating the moral superiority of the speaker's place meaning (Albrecht and Amey 1999). Such forums tend to be adversarial and competitive in that expectations of the public hearing and planning process are that one meaning will win and others will lose (Freudenburg and Gramling 1994, Yaffee 1994).

Because of the adversarial nature of many public hearings or forums for dialogue, we frame our place meanings to carry the most powerful message to the audience, or more importantly, to decisionmakers. In these cases, power is embodied in large numbers of people, who tell similar stories, that clearly lead to commonly-held moral principles for behavior. For example, Gottlieb (1993) characterized the rise of women in environmental activism as intimately connected to their roles as mothers and homemakers. He stated that "one of the most powerful protest images that emerged out of the Love Canal protests was a Mother's Day Die-In, focusing on children's exposure to hazardous wastes and issues of reproductive health" (Gottlieb 1993: 209). Although the "Die-In" effectively protested the violation of home as a safe place for raising a family, other protesters further advanced their place meanings by exchanging stories that brought out the pain and suffering of their own family and neighborhood (Gottlieb 1993: ch. 5). The "Die-In" was an expression of a collective narrative detached from the place meanings of any individual protester, but was directed at gaining public attention for their cause.

Albrecht and Amey's (1999) concern was that community-based narratives may grow distant from the reality of lived experiences. Their study provides insight to ways in which communities engage in place-making to "create and market their definitions of reality based on a wide variety of stated or hidden agendas" (Albrecht and Amey 1999: 755). The implication is that place meanings are constructed for particular purposes and consciously developed for particular audiences. In some sense, the audience-sensitive nature of expressing place meanings reiterates their dynamic qualities and also underscores their function as political tools (Stokowski 2002).

A Crisis of Representation

On the surface, place meaning is a simple concept that describes reasons an environment is valued and considered unique. However, the meanings themselves are anything but simple and exist in many forms:

- From subconscious, to conscious, to politically-manipulated.
- From detailing lived experience of a day in life to reflecting the struggles of a community.
- From describing land to portraying cultural imperatives.
- From stable to fluctuating.

This complexity of meanings reflects the varied ways we develop relationships with environments and with other people. However, if place meanings are at the core of land use decisionmaking, and many authors have argued as much (Brandenburg and Carroll 1995, Cheng and Daniels 2003, Stedman 2003b, Williams and Patterson 1996), what forums are developed that allow the complexity of place meanings to come forth? Although there are some creative exceptions (Gobster and Barro 2000, Kruger and Shannon 2000, Lee 1993), land use planning processes too often are characterized by one-way flows of communication that fail to represent and effectively negotiate place meanings (Cortner and Moote 1999, Fischer 2000, Yaffee 1994).

The lack of adequate venues to negotiate place meanings is symptomatic of a larger crisis of representation across society.

The lack of adequate venues to negotiate place meanings is symptomatic of a larger crisis of representation across society. For several reasons, forums for community-based dialogue and collective action have weakened over the past century (Wilkinson 1986). In his elaborate argument, Fischer (2000) claimed that the increased authority of technical expertise runs counter to democratic ideals, and by implication, has precluded the development of forums for citizen participation in decisionmaking. Yankelovich (1991) also has been concerned with the privileged position of technical expertise within environmental decision processes at the exclusion of the representation of public values. Through a framework of communication theory, Yankelovich (1991: 217) argued for a "kind of open dialogue among public, experts, and leaders in which there is give-and-take, two-way communication" that shapes a common destiny for a community. Yankelovich (1991) suggested that a critical element of representation is the audience to whom we are speaking. If our audience is only experts or decisionmakers, then only experts are informed. In addition, if we tell place meanings to others, we expect to hear place meanings

from others. Yankelovich (1991) recommended the development of creative forums for dialogue to encourage participants to learn from one another.

In their argument for a civic science, Kruger and Shannon (2000) championed approaches to inquiry that allow people to express aspects of their lived experiences to others, referred to as social learning. They concluded, among other things, that social learning processes improve relations among citizens and create a common vision for a community (Kruger and Shannon 2000: 475). Also concerned with the lack of forums to bring together citizens, Putnam (2000) argued that opportunities for citizens to "discover" their collective selves and strengthen their sense of community through the creation of shared visions are gradually being re-invented. Historically, recreation managers have defined their positions as ones that develop opportunities for social learning and community engagement. In the context of concern for the disappearance of community and the loss of public places for collective action, Hunnicutt (2000: 58) argued that recreation researchers and managers at one time were driven by "visions of social reform and transformation" of community. He urged us to re-visit "our fields' traditional concern with revitalizing communities" (Hunnicutt 2000: 60). From a similar starting point, Arai and Pedlar (2003) also questioned the movement of recreation research and management away from community revisioning and social learning, and toward a context of individualism that emphasizes personal choice, individual experience, and self-interest. They rejected the notion of community as being "simply the utilitarian context for meeting private ends" (Arai and Pedlar 2003: 187) and argued a position of social engagement that emphasizes the value of bringing "people together around practices of shared meaning" (Arai and Pedlar 2003: 188).

Sandercock (2003) characterized the paradigm shift in urban planning from a similar perspective. In her comprehensive critique she argued that the "old model" of planning was centered on expert-based, hierarchical decision structures in which knowledge was technically based and grounded in quantitative analysis. She described "new models" based on communicative and value-driven rationality focused on interaction among people who essentially exchange stories grounded in experiential and contextual knowledge (Sandercock 2003: 209-210; cf., Weber 2000, Wilson et al. 2004). Sandercock (2003) concluded her text on new strategies for planning by calling for an expanded language of planning. She argued for a "language to encompass the lived experience" of our cities in order to bring to the forefront questions of value and meaning (Sandercock 2003: 221).

What To Do About Place Meanings?

Responding to the crisis of representation of place meanings will be a major task, and will require expanded forums for public dialogue and deepening citizen access.

By detailing their complexity, some hurdles have been identified to integrating place meanings into land use planning processes. If the past 20 years are viewed as a shift from "expert-based" to "citizen-involved" decisionmaking, the next 20 years will further democratize decisionmaking (Cortner and Moote 1999, Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000). Responding to the crisis of representation of place meanings will be a major task, and will require expanded forums for public dialogue and deepening citizen access. The complexity of place meanings suggests several tenets for approaching citizen dialogue forums. As transition to a democratized decision structure and more engaged citizenry, the following tenets are suggested:

- To know a person's place meanings, is to know the person.
- To know another person's place meanings does not diminish the value of your own place meanings.
- A person's place meanings will change across time and situations, yet such change does not decrease the credibility or legitimacy of the person's place meanings.
- Place meanings shared by a large number of people do not connote a comparatively larger truth or more definitive moral authority.
- There is no last word (or final truth) in place meaning; there is no last word in appropriate management regime.
- Dialogue forums should encourage scientists, professionals, and citizens to share, argue, and negotiate place meanings.
- Dialogue forums are about building community, and are **not** about reaching consensus or resolving conflict over place meanings.
- Decisions should have transparent links to dialogue forums.

These eight tenets are provided in the spirit of expanding the boundaries of public involvement and reconsidering the roles of scientists, professionals, and citizens in planning processes.

The need to develop stakeholder dialogue forums is not new, nor is the call to integrate notions of place into resource management. In addition, the above tenets do not tell resource managers what to do with information from stakeholder dialogue forums, nor do they contain specifics that connect place with decisionmaking. However, seldom discussed is the importance of place meanings and the challenges to their representation. This chapter contributes to the transition of agency decisionmaking from expert-based to citizen-involved by identifying a major challenge: the representation of place meanings.

The shift to citizen-involved decisionmaking is not without its concerns. Citizens who identify as stakeholders may not reflect the diversity of voices in a community, state, or nation. Some might argue that the lack of balance in public forums privileges some voices at the expense of others (Hibbard and Madsen 2003). Whether democratized planning models privilege certain groups remains an open question (Sturtevant and Bryan 2004). The eight tenets above suggest that roles for stakeholders are ones requiring commitment of time, energy, and willingness to listen and learn. Those who join dialogue forums may share characteristics that others do not hold and that may be related to stage of life, career cycle, income, or family situation.

The concern of this chapter is not about who enters into stakeholder dialogue forums—even though it is a worthwhile question to ask. This chapter takes the dialogue forum as a given, and considers challenges to the discourse. In Sandercock's (2003) "new models," goals for planning are related to level of trust developed among participants and the extent of social value created for places and events of the locale. Sandercock (2003: 214–227) provided several examples of successful projects in which trust among stakeholders was enhanced and value for various places was created because of the mutual sharing of lived experiences of citizens. The message of this chapter is to put place meanings as lived experiences at the forefront of decisions about land use change.

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Chapter 6—Understanding Cultural Variation in Place Meaning

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Abstract

In this paper, we provide a framework for understanding variation in stakeholder attitudes and behaviors related to public lands and natural resources. In this framework, we suggest that individual and collective perspectives related to these resources can best be understood by examining the congruence between the individual's identity, the identity of their cultural group, and the identity of the setting in question. Adopting a social constructivist orientation, we suggest that identity governs the meanings associated with place that are manifested in attitude and behavior. Although a variety of propositions have been presented in the literature that have been tailored toward the perspectives of specific populations, testing of those propositions have highlighted significant limitations. Our framework transcends the characteristics of specific social units and provides insight on an approach that can be used to understand the perspectives of a broad range of stakeholders.

Keywords: Identity, culture, natural resource management.

Introduction

> …walking in the same place, people from different cultures see, experience and value different landscapes, and construct with those landscapes entirely different relationships. They do this according to their cultural beliefs and knowledge, locating value in the things that their culture values. (Strang 1997: 276)

Over the past decade there has been growing understanding within the natural resource management community that people are part of the ecosystem and, as such, the human dimensions of ecosystems ought to be integrated into public land management policy and practice (Clark and Stein 2003, Galliano and Loeffler

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Although there may be agreement within the community concerning the physical attributes of a particular setting, there is often divergence on the appropriate use of these settings, their importance, and how they ought to be managed.

1999, Williams and Patterson 1999). This realization has been a long time coming and the execution of policy designed to integrate stakeholder perspectives within ecosystem management plans has been complicated by the heterogeneity of the communities in which these lands exist. Finding consensus on a range of issues is becoming increasingly difficult. These challenges are likely to be exacerbated by the continued disproportionate growth among minority groups and shifting migration patterns within the United States. Although there may be agreement within the community concerning the physical attributes of a particular setting, there is often divergence on the appropriate use of these settings, their importance, and how they ought to be managed.

One approach that is producing some success for managers attempting to navigate these complex issues has been to focus on the meanings relevant stakeholders ascribe to the resources in question (Kruger and Jakes 2003). This approach acknowledges that public lands, and the places that lie within, are symbolic landscapes that differ in meaning dependent on the cultural lens through which these environments are viewed. Further, Greider and Garkovich (1994: 1) noted that these place meanings "reflect our self definitions that are grounded in culture." Although recent efforts documenting place-based approaches in natural resource management have demonstrated its utility for integrating the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders (Austin and Kaplan 2003, Laurian 2004), efforts to integrate these approaches to address issues arising from growth among racial and ethnic groups within the United States remain scant. Whereas a growing body of work has developed that has explored the meanings various racial and ethnic groups within the United States associate with natural environments and public lands, few attempts have been made to integrate these perspectives into existing management plans. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to present a framework for understanding the meanings different cultural[2] groups assign to natural environments and suggest ways in which this framework can be applied in the day-to-day management of public lands.

[2] Throughout this paper, we use culture to refer to socially transmitted, often symbolic, information that shapes human behavior and that regulates human society so that people can successfully maintain themselves and reproduce. Culture also has mental, behavioral, and material aspects; it is patterned and provides a model for proper behavior (Bodley 2005).

Our conceptualization of place meaning[3] is grounded in Saegert and Winkel's (1990) sociocultural paradigm. This perspective suggests that the meanings people assign to landscapes are not only constructed by individuals, they are also conveyed by the social and cultural group with which people are most intimately connected. Working from a symbolic interactionist perspective, Greider and Garkovich (1994: 2) reaffirmed Saegert and Winkel's perspective and suggested that "Meanings are not inherent in the nature of things. Instead, the symbols and meanings that comprise landscapes reflect what people in cultural groups define to be proper and improper relationships among themselves and between themselves and the environment." Greider and Garkovich also suggested that the construction of landscapes by cultural groups and the symbols used to communicate their meaning provides insight on the group's definition of themselves. In this sense, group identity acts to shape the meanings different cultures ascribe to specific environments, but it also provides these groups with their own sense of self (Stewart et al. 2004). The connection between self-identity and place identity is also reflected in the work of Proshansky (1978).[4] He suggested that place identity is an important component of an individual's self-identity where the self is reflected in the physical environment. Just as the roles humans occupy throughout the day (e.g., parent, employee, coach) shift to reveal different aspects of the self, the various settings in which these roles are acted also provide insight into individual identity. Combined, the work of these authors suggests that the meanings people ascribe to specific environments are influenced by how they define themselves individually and as part of a collective. These meanings are communicated through language and symbols that individuals and collectives associate with specific environments. Thus, the framework we have adopted for understanding the meanings different cultural groups assign to natural environments emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural and individual identities of those in question.

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[3] We use place meaning throughout this manuscript to refer to the thoughts, feelings, and emotions individuals and collectives express toward place; where place may differ in scale (i.e., geographic expanse) and tangibility (i.e., symbols vs. settings). Thus, an individual or collective's attachment to place is reflected in the constellation of meanings they associate with the setting or symbol. These meanings often vary in type and intensity and provide the descriptive foundation for understanding human-place bonding.

[4] Saegert and Winkel (1990) and Greider and Garkovich's (1994) perspectives on identity place greater emphasis on broader macro forces of culture and social group affiliation, whereas Proshansky (1978) was more concerned with self-identification processes occurring at the individual level.

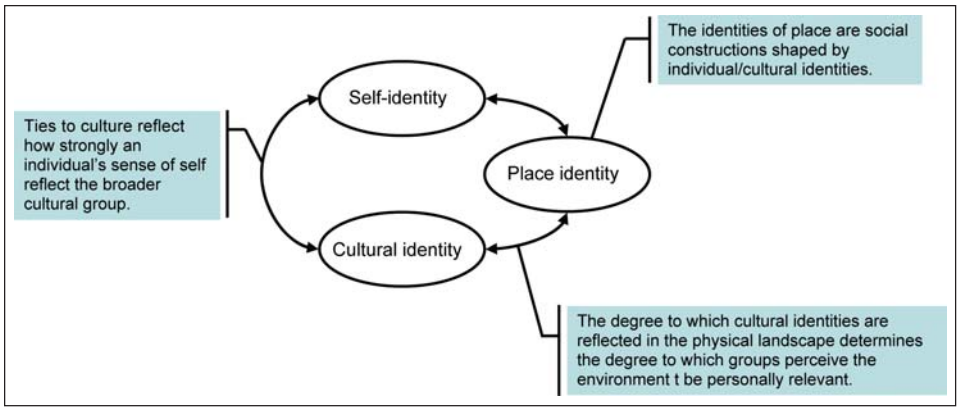

Figure 8—Framework for understanding the cultural dimensions of place meaning.

We suggest that a better understanding of individual and cultural definitions of public lands can be gained by examining the congruence between individual identity, cultural identity, and place identity (fig. 8). Our perspective draws from work related to symbolic interactionism and social identity theory (SIT). Social identity theory focuses on the extent to which individuals identify themselves in terms of group memberships (Tajfel and Turner 1986). The central tenet of SIT is that individuals define their identities along two dimensions: (a) cultural—defined by membership in various social groups and (b) personal—the idiosyncratic attributes that distinguish an individual from others. Cultural and personal identities are said to lie at opposite ends of the spectrum, becoming more or less salient depending on the context. Place identity can be considered an element of both individual and cultural identity. The meanings that are ascribed (by both the individual and society) to identities are also reflected in the spatial contexts in which the individual or cultural groups exist. For individuals with strong cultural ties, the lens through which they view the world around them is likely to be shaped by the dominant perspective of the cultural entity to which they are most intimately connected.[5] For example, research has shown that some African Americans perceive wildland environments as hostile and threatening (Johnson 1998, Johnson and Bowker 2004). For these people, their identities are rooted in a history of prejudice and discrimination (e.g., slavery, share-cropping, lynching). Wildland environments were often the stage where these unsavory events occurred and, more recently, have

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[5] Cultural ties are reflected in individuals' sense of belonging to their culture (Parham and Helms 1981, 1985a, 1985b) and the extent to which they embrace their culture's attitudes, values, and behaviors (Pope-Davis et al. 2000).

been used as a tool to perpetuate inequality. Although we do not suggest that these historical events solely define the individual and culture, these events and efforts of resistance act to shape how some African Americans view themselves and how they would have others view them. In this context, their cultural identity and the meanings this culture ascribes to wildland settings compels them to avoid these environs. Often, it is only when individuals from these groups are able to ignore the structure and norms imposed by their cultural affiliation that they are able to more comfortably interact with these environments. We will return to our identity-based framework toward the end of our review and discuss how the framework can be used to better enable managers to more effectively integrate varied cultural perspectives within their management plans.

With this in mind, we first discuss the importance of understanding the meanings different cultures ascribe to natural environments for public land management. We then provide an overview of the various theoretical perspectives researchers have used to understand variations in meanings among different populations and document the diversity of meanings that have appeared in the literature. Finally, we discuss several potential applications of our framework.

The Importance of Understanding the Meanings Specific Populations Ascribe to Natural Environments and Public Lands

The need to critically examine the cultural dimensions of place meaning arises out of the rapidly changing demography of the United States. For example, over the next 50 years, the U.S. population is expected to increase 50 percent over 1995 population levels (U.S. Department of Commerce 1996). Much of this growth will be driven by immigration and relatively higher fertility rates among the largest immigrant groups. Over this period, the proportion of African Americans will increase from 12 to 15 percent, the proportion who are Hispanic will increase from 9 to 21 percent, and the proportion who are of other ethnic origins (including Asians and other ethnic classifications) will increase from less than 4 percent to more than 11 percent (Cordell et al. 2002, Johnson et al. 2004).

Several authors have noted that this rapid population growth has important implications for the manner in which available land resources, including public lands, are managed (Cordell et al. 2002, Johnson et al. 2004, Pimentel et al. 1998). For example, Cordell et al. (2002), using data collected from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, observed that Hispanics, African Americans,

and Asian/Pacific Islanders are more likely to indicate that humans have a right to modify and control nature and that our technology will ultimately allow us to correct large-scale impacts of human habitation and activity on Earth. At a more local level, Chavez (2002) observed that Hispanics' use of picnic grounds situated in southern Californian national forests differs from use by the White majority. In her data, Hispanics were more inclined to use these areas for family gatherings involving large groups. Reflecting White recreationists' preferences, these settings were originally developed to support single groups of no more than 10 people. Other authors have also expressed concern that public lands risk being considered irrelevant by minority populations (Chavez 2002, Johnson et al. 2004, Low et al. 2002, Taylor 2000). Given their dependence on public support, the prospect of growing ambivalence among minority populations toward these environments has serious implications for the future of public land management agencies. Failure to more actively embrace the multicultural milieu in which these settings exist will inevitably lead to declining public support and, perhaps, their demise.

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Finally, Dwyer and Childs (2004) also noted that the changing distribution of people across the landscape has eroded many of the traditional demarcations used to distinguish urban and rural environments. Urban sprawl and the development of "recreational enclaves" that lie adjacent to public lands have consumed large tracts of open space. These migration patterns have involved new people in planning and development activities who sometimes hold different perspectives from those of the existent residents. In addition to affecting the social and ecological structure of local communities, the influx of new residents also has the potential to affect the use of neighboring public lands. Managers of these settings face a difficult task of integrating new perspectives into existing management frameworks without alienating existing stakeholders. Inevitably, competing claims to the resource will emerge. Although resolutions for these kinds of issues may not always be feasible, insight on the meanings that these groups ascribe to the resource provides managers with valuable information as to why these conflicts exist.

Therefore, there are indications that policy and practice related to the management of public lands will undergo dramatic change over the coming decades. It is our contention that an understanding of the meanings relevant stakeholders ascribe to public lands provides managers with a valuable tool for accommodating the growing racial and ethnic diversity within the United States in addition to resolving conflicts among stakeholders.

Theoretical Perspectives Used for Understanding Variation in Place Meanings Among Specific Populations

The Marginality/Ethnicity Hypotheses

Early work appearing in the outdoor recreation literature focused primarily on minorities' under-participation in outdoor recreation compared to the level of participation by the White majority. This work was guided primarily by two theories: marginality and ethnicity hypotheses. The marginality hypothesis was originally developed to explain low levels of outdoor recreation participation among African Americans. This view holds that African American participation patterns result from limited socioeconomic resources, which in turn are a function of historical patterns of discrimination (Washburne 1978). Alternately, the ethnicity hypothesis explains differences in participation as reflecting divergent norms, value systems, and social organization between majority and minority populations. As an initial set of alternative explanations, the two hypotheses served to bring attention to the role of poverty and historical discrimination and cultural influences as major determinants of intergroup differences in patterns of recreation participation.

Several authors, however, have questioned the utility of the marginality/ethnicity theories for examining minority issues in outdoor recreation contexts (Floyd 1998, Floyd and Gramann 1993, Hutchison 2000, Stodolska 1998). These criticisms touch upon (a) the theories' biased ideological assumptions (Floyd 1998), (b) independent applications of each theory that fail to acknowledge other influences, and (c) investigations that focus only on participation rates rather than understanding the factors driving difference. According to marginality theory, the reduction of socioeconomic barriers should lead racial and ethnic minorities to exhibit leisure preferences valued by the dominant group (Allison 1988). Additionally, there are those who suggest that assimilation in its later stages weakens ethnic ties and produces behavioral styles similar or identical to mainstream society. Both of these explanations have been criticized for their Anglo-conformity bias given that they reflect a normative viewpoint specifying how difference in racial and ethnic participation in outdoor recreation should be addressed rather than a more objective assessment of their actual causes.

In spite of these criticisms, these theories have and continue to provide a lens—albeit with limitation—to understand minitories' interaction with outdoor recreation settings. We would consider it inappropriate to fully discard the tenets offered

by them in search of an all-encompassing explanation that accounts for all variation. Seldom are such "golden eggs" found in social science. Incorporating these with other contemporary explanations that provide insight on the underlying causes or processes that contribute to variation among groups, we may then begin to make progress toward understanding cultural variation in its entirety. To this end, Hutchison (2000) recently suggested that focusing on the identity of the cultural unit in question may provide a complementary addition to the marginality/ethnicity theories. This work extends earlier efforts by providing insight on the underlying (or "intervening") influence of variation in leisure styles. He noted that identity theory examines the degree to which individuals identify with the larger group to which they are reported to be affiliated. Understanding that affiliations exist along a continuum, we are then in a better position to state the extent to which variations in attitudes and behaviors are attributable to cultural affiliations.

Place interaction plays an important role in shaping the personal meanings that individuals ascribe to place and preferences for these settings.

Place Interaction and Place Meaning

Participation rates in outdoor recreation activities are not the focus of this paper per se, but several studies have shown that place interaction plays an important role in shaping the personal meanings that individuals ascribe to place and preferences for these settings. Tuan (1977) was among the first to note the importance of place interaction in shaping place meaning when he suggested that what begins as undifferentiated space becomes a place imbued with meaning as we get to know it better. Since then, a number of investigations of place meaning and related concepts (i.e., sense of place, place attachment, place dependence) have reaffirmed Tuan's observation in a variety of contexts (Eisenhauer et al. 2000, Hammitt et al. 2004, Milligan 1998, Vorkinn and Riese 2001). In the context of natural environments, several studies have also shown that the preferences for these settings and outdoor recreation activities are influenced by early childhood experiences (Bixler et al. 2002, Chawla 1999, Palmer et al. 1998). Overall, these studies indicate that early and persistent exposure to natural environments, often coupled with social reinforcement from family and friends, engenders lasting preferences for these landscapes and environmental sensitivity in adult years. Without place interaction, however, the meanings individuals ascribe to natural environments are likely to be more strongly influenced by the dominant perspectives embodied in their cultural affiliations (Johnson et al. 1997). Given the "collective memories" of these groups relative to natural environments, the identities of these settings in the minds of

minority groups may act to further inhibit setting interaction. In addition to suggesting that African Americans avoided natural environments because they were symbolic reminders of racism and oppression, Virden and Walker (1999) also noted that their respondents' perception of natural environments as threatening spaces could also have been influenced by their anxiety derived from potential encounters with undesirable and dangerous animals (fig. 9). Wallace and Witter (1992) observed a similar response among African American focus group members when asked about their attitudes toward natural settings.

The notion that wildland environments are the preserve and construction of White America, a theme that runs through much of the literature that will be reviewed here, is also reflected in a more recent explanation concerning minorities' engagement in activities that occur within these settings (Shaw 2001, Shinew and Floyd 2005). Recently, Shaw suggested that leisure can be considered a domain in which people, either individually or collectively, are able to challenge (or resist) power distributions within society. Unlike in other domains in life, the relative freedom of leisure settings "make them prime locations for resistance activities as a result of increased opportunities to exercise personal power" (Shaw 2001: 187). Although her presentation of ideas related to resistance was discussed largely within the context of women's leisure and the structure imposed by gender roles, she noted that her framework could also be applied to understanding leisure-related constraints confronting minority populations. Shinew and Floyd subsequently adopted this framework to understand the leisure choices made by African Americans. They suggested that resistance among African Americans could take three forms: (a) pioneers who, as individuals or collectives, participate in leisure activities in spite of being an extreme minority; (b) participation in parallel or corresponding activities, although doing so exclusively within their own race; and (c) abstention by individuals or groups who choose not to participate in certain leisure activities as a form of protest. Thus, in addition to concerns related to fear and feeling threatened in wildland environments, some African Americans may also deliberately choose to avoid these settings because they are perceived to be reflective of White America. Although direct empirical evidence of this phenomena has yet to appear in the literature, Shinew and Floyd pointed to Outley's (2002) examination of leisure socialization among African American youth as a potential illustration of resistance (i.e., abstention). Outley observed that youth, particularly boys, sanctioned their peers for engaging in middle-class activities such as golf or tennis. At both school and within their neighborhoods, such activities were labeled "White activities" by

In addition to concerns related to fear and feeling threatened in wildland environments, some African Americans may choose to avoid these settings because they are perceived to be reflective of White America.

USDA Forest Service

Figure 9—Anxieties derived from potential encounters with dangerous animals could influence some people's perception of natural environments as threatening spaces.

the boys, and those who participated in the activities were said to be "acting White." Floyd and Shinew indicated that by rejecting "White activities" and favoring the activities indigenous to the neighborhood (e.g., basketball or football), they are able to perpetuate perceived boundaries.

Meaning-Based Approaches

Recent work examining minority perceptions of natural environments has begun to explore the meanings these populations assign to nature. Reflecting Saegert and Winkel's (1990) sociocultural approach, this work acknowledges that the meanings people assign to place are not only constructed individually, they are also conveyed by the social and cultural groups with which people are most intimately connected. Commenting on the utility of the sociocultural approach, Williams and Carr (1993) noted that the approach elucidates the linkages between macro-level factors such as culture and ethnicity, and the micro-level meanings people ascribe to place. Contrary to much of the earlier work cast within the marginality—ethnicity hypotheses, research cast within the sociocultural framework sought not only to explain divergence in their attitudes and behaviors, but rather to understand the underlying personal and sociocultural factors and processes that contribute to the differences. The following review examines several approaches that have been couched within the sociocultural framework.

Several authors have suggested that the meanings minority groups ascribe to natural environments are conditioned by these groups' cultural backgrounds and experiences (Meeker et al. 1973, Mohai 1990, Mohai and Bryant 1998). Taylor (1989), for example, suggested that before being influenced by Europeans, Africans did not see nature as a separate place for finding refuge from the stresses of everyday life and for finding peace and revitalization. Africans saw no discontinuities and considered nature as something of which everyone is a continuous part. Taylor suggested, however, that slavery resulted in decidedly negative values among African Americans toward natural environments. The land became a place of punishment and imprisonment. Even after slavery ended, continued racial discrimination barred African Americans from access to natural recreation areas (e.g., beaches and parks). Johnson (1998) and Johnson and Bowker (2004) have suggested that African Americans' "collective memory" of certain historical events have led them to associate wildland environments with negative experiences. Although many African Americans have no personal memories of these atrocities (e.g., slavery, share-cropping, lynching), stories have been relayed by parents, older relatives, and others who have lived these experiences. For this reason, African Americans have tended to avoid wildland environments. Virden and Walker's (1999) findings, which illustrated that White respondents were more inclined than African American respondents to indicate that forests were safe environments, offers further support for Johnson et al.'s hypothesis. It may be that for some African Americans, natural environments symbolize a dark and sinister past.

Relatively little is known about meanings ascribed to natural environments by other ethnic groups.

With regard to the meanings ascribed to natural environments by other ethnic groups, relatively little is known. In fact, as noted by Virden and Walker (1999), for some ethnic groups the concepts of natural environments may be different. For example, there is no equivalent word for "wilderness" in the Spanish language. Further, Carr and Williams (1993) indicated the phrase "respecting the forest" could not be translated directly into Spanish. Regardless, Carr and Williams observed that when asking Anglos and Hispanics what "respecting the forest" meant to them, respondents from both groups born in the United States focused on issues related to not littering, vandalizing, or having open fires. They attributed differences among foreign-born Hispanics and Anglos and the similarity between U.S.-born respondents (i.e., both Anglos and Hispanics) to the processes associated with acculturation and awareness of social norms related to being in and using the forests. They suggested that U.S.-born Hispanics were more likely than foreign-born Hispanics to have been acculturated and, correspondingly, were more cognizant of the social norms associated with natural environments. Consequently, the

meanings they now associate with natural environments more closely reflect those of the White majority. Similarly, Floyd and Gramann (1993) observed that highly assimilated[6] Mexican Americans exhibited recreation behaviors similar to those exhibited by Anglos in a national forest in Arizona.

Another group of studies have examined, albeit indirectly, the congruence between individual/cultural identities and the identities that these groups construct for natural environments. As has already been discussed, natural environments and public lands carry with them a diversity of meanings dependent on the cultural lens through which these settings are viewed and experienced. Walker et al. (2001) recently used the concept of self-construal to examine differences in motivations to engage in outdoor recreation among Chinese immigrants to Canada and Euro-North Americans.[7] Building from the work of Markus and Kitayama (1991), Walker et al. suggested that Chinese culture and tradition encourages individuals to be more cognizant of others. Consequently, Chinese are said to possess interdependent self-construals, which are reflected in a stronger sensitivity and attention to others' needs relative to individual needs. Alternately, whereas individual self-structure is intimately connected to others within Chinese culture, Western culture places greater value on independence, self-expression, and self-assertiveness. Thus, an independent self-construal values autonomy. Walker et al. also noted that the form of self-construal also influences the affective domain. Whereas positive emotions are derived from performing tasks associated with being the independent self in Western culture, interdependent selves value belonging, maintaining harmony, fitting in, and maintaining one's proper place. Walker et al.'s findings were consistent with the Markus and Kitayama theory underlying the self-construal construct. That is, Chinese respondents' motivations to engage in outdoor recreation activities were more socially derived, whereas Euro-North Americans were more inclined to value individual outcomes. Their analysis also indicated that self-construal had a stronger effect on respondents' motivations than their indicators of ethnicity and acculturation.

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[6] Assimilation was measured by using two items. The first asked respondents about the ethnicity of friends or family members who were most likely to accompany them on visits to the recreation area. The second asked respondents to indicate the ethnicity of friends that respondents talked to at least once a week.

[7] Euro-North Americans consisted of American, Canadian, British (English, Scott, Welsh, Northern Irish) and Western Europeans (Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, German, Swiss).

The implications of Walker et al.'s (2001) findings for understanding place meaning suggests that for cultures with interdependent self-construals, natural settings are environments that allow for the reinforcement of social values; e.g., social order, group harmony, and community. Although this does not necessarily imply that individuals with interdependent self-construals would prefer developed settings that can accommodate large communities of recreationists, it does provide a potentially interesting contrast for the preservation of pristine areas. Given that many of the values Anglo-Americans have historically associated with natural environments are grounded in concepts related to freedom, independence, and democracy (Taylor 2000), these findings add to a growing literature suggesting that such constructions require further consideration in a multicultural America (Johnson et al. 2004). Although it is understood that the constructions of natural settings emerging from transcendentalist, romantic, and frontierist ideals that have long ignored the orientations of those occupying the land prior to European settlement, the growth of communities with differing value systems is placing increasing pressure on existing philosophies of land management. Frameworks that have long served public land management may need to be reconsidered to accommodate these differing meanings. As noted by Williams et al. (1992), viewing recreation settings as a collection of interchangeable attributes from which managers can craft specific experiential outcomes ignores the experiential nature of human interaction with place—whether the place is natural or influenced by humans. Whereas physical attributes often define what is possible within place, the elements that make many settings special are often products of what individuals bring to the setting (i.e., inter/intrapersonal factors) (O'Sullivan and Spangler 1998).

Integrating Place Meaning in Public Land Management

This review of the literature illustrates that there is considerable variation within the United States with regard to the meanings various cultural groups ascribe to public lands and wildland environments. We, along with others, believe that an understanding of place meaning provides insight into the public's attitudes and behaviors relative to public lands and wildland environments. Given the reported current and projected growth of minority populations, an understanding of their attitudes and behaviors has become an important priority for public land management agencies. There is, however, evidence to suggest that these groups do not share the perspectives of White America; perspectives that have long governed

policy and management of public lands. If public lands are to remain relevant to the broader community, greater effort is required to understand the meanings these groups assign to public lands and wildland settings and incorporate these meanings within planning frameworks. As stated earlier, failure to do so may threaten their existence.

Building from the work of several authors (Greider and Garkovich 1994, Proshansky 1978, Saegert and Winkel 1990), we suggested that an understanding of the congruence between self-identity, cultural identity, and place identity provides insight on how place meaning shapes individual/group attitudes toward public lands and subsequent behaviors relative to the setting (see fig. 8). This framework also links macro-level meanings (i.e., cultural level) to the micro-level meanings that individuals ascribe to place. To briefly elaborate, our framework suggests that the degree to which an individual is tied to his or her culture[8] will determine how closely his or her identity is reflected in the identity of the specific culture. In instances where there is strong cultural identification, the meanings assigned to place by the cultural group will likely mirror individual meanings.

The identity of the setting will also determine individual and cultural attitudes and behaviors relative to the setting. We acknowledge that setting identities are social constructions and, as such, can hold multiple identities dependent on cultural affiliation. A strength of our framework is its ability to transcend the specific characteristics of the racial/ethnic group in question. Recently, Stodolska (2000) commenting on the limitations of the marginality/ethnicity theories, noted that there are certain fundamental characteristics of humans that are independent of race, ethnicity, or culture. As such, she suggested that enough is known of the human condition to understand minority perspectives within existing theories of human behavior. Thus, the framework discussed here could be equally applied to understand the perspectives of other homogenous groups that share common understandings, norms, and behaviors related to the natural environment.

So how can the meanings that different cultures ascribe to place be integrated into public land management? First, this framework provides insight on how public land management agencies can begin to reach out to traditionally underrepresented groups. Although there appears to be general concern and appreciation for natural

[8] These cultural ties are often reflected in the strength of familial bonds. In instances, however, where the connection between self-identity and cultural identity is weak, other social world affiliations may provide insight into individual-level meanings. An understanding of the perspective shared by an individual's reference group is likely to shed light on the individual's perspective.

environments among both majority and minority populations within the United States (Jones 1998), it is unclear how this concern equates in behaviors related to local settings. We would suggest that localized action, in a variety of forms, is most likely to emanate from programs that help minority groups identify the relevance of local wildland settings within the context of their own cultures. This does not necessarily imply the need for them to be regular visitors or to engage in natural-resource-based recreation. Efforts to directly promote these behaviors would reflect what Floyd (1998) referred to as an Anglo conformity bias,[9] although we acknowledge that some form of place interaction is most conducive for place creation. Within the context of our model, efforts to increase the relevance of these environments can best be served by examining the congruence between cultural identity and place identity. For example, as noted earlier, Hispanic identity is rooted in close family ties and family tradition. Consistent with this, a number of studies have shown that Hispanics hold preferences for developed recreation areas that can accommodate large groups consisting of immediate and extended family (Baas et al. 1993, Chavez 2002, Chavez et al. 1993). For the Hispanic groups in these studies, Forest Service lands provide a spatial context for family gatherings and support opportunities for the reinforcement of family values. Chavez (2002) provided an example of a national forest in southern California that integrated Hispanic users' preferences and altered the design of their day-use picnic areas. This involved placing picnic tables close together to better accommodate larger groups, as opposed to tables that were relatively isolated from one another (fig. 10). This forest was able to balance the needs of these groups without compromising the ecological integrity of the setting.

Efforts to increase the relevance of these environments to minorities can best be served by examining the congruence between cultural identity and place identity.

In the case of African Americans, the work of several authors (Johnson 1998, Johnson et al. 2004, Taylor 1989) has suggested that their collective memories related to wildland environments have been the product of several centuries of discrimination and prejudice. Consequently, shifting the identities of these settings to positions that are less antagonistic is not likely to occur overnight. One approach suggested by Low et al. (2002) is to better acknowledge these groups' history and presence in the area. As noted by Taylor (2000: 175), "while interpretive exhibits in wildland areas celebrate European American experiences, conquests, exploration and heritage, the same is not true for people of color." Thus, it can be argued that

[9] An example of this would be reflected in youth-based programs that encourage participation in conventional outdoor recreation activities supported by settings managed under plans that have been guided by romantic/transcendentalist ideals.

Gary Norcross

Figure 10—Picnic tables that are isolated from one another do not accommodate larger groups, and may not meet the needs of some users.

For places to carry meaning and relevance, a personal connection to the setting is required—through personal experience, or cultural heritage (preferably both).

visitor centers and interpretive exhibits need to better reflect the cultural history of those that have previously occupied and shaped the setting. Low et al.'s findings illustrated that disconnects between cultural and place identities result in places without meaning. Whereas their study focused on the meanings various racial and ethnic groups ascribed to Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, parallel contexts exist within less developed public estates throughout the country. For example, Schelhas' (2002) review of literature related to race, ethnicity, and natural resources provides other examples of groups' histories that have been erased from the landscape. For places to carry meaning and relevance, a personal connection to the setting is required—if not through personal experience, then through cultural heritage (preferably both).

Finally, consistent with sound management practice, decisions concerning the management of resources—be they public or private—should be firmly grounded in data collected by using accepted scientific protocols. The collection of such data, however, is often time consuming and, depending on the issue at hand, expensive. It may also require expertise and the use of technologies not immediately available to public land managers or their staff. Management decisions stemming from such data, however, provide managers with a better platform to implement policy that is acceptable to stakeholders in addition to withstanding litigation from disenchanted groups or individuals. In our final example below, we provide an overview of an issue confronting a National Park Service (NPS) unit in southeast Texas and our proposed methodology for collecting data to assist NPS staff develop policy to address the issue. Although the issue at hand is not one that solely affects a distinct

racial/ethnic minority population, it does relate to conflicting preferences reflected in differing cultural traditions relating to the use of the land. Its relevance for the current manuscript relates to our application of the identity-based framework as well as providing some insight on the methods used to collect relevant data. For one group, in particular, the meanings they associate with the setting are strongly tied to both their self-identity and the identity of their community. For others, the identification processes appear to occur at a more individualistic level with influences from other activity-based groups (i.e., social worlds).

The investigation is in its preliminary stages and is taking place in and around the Big Thicket National Preserve. Its focus is on the environmental impacts arising from feral hog populations in the region. One of the challenges faced by the NPS in their attempt to manage the feral hogs concerns conflicts among local groups over an appropriate strategy (fig. 11). Based on preliminary discussions with various stakeholders (i.e., NPS staff, resident groups, environmentalists), the most salient conflict lies between those who have historically hunted hogs on the preserve and those who would like to see the animal completely removed from the preserve[10] by the NPS and hunting-related activities banned. The conflict is exacerbated by two underlying issues. First, Big Thicket received its designation as a National Preserve in 1974 and was the first to be managed by the NPS. Prior to receiving this designation, the area (i.e., nine noncontiguous units spanning 97,000 acres) reflected an agglomeration of federal, state, and private land holdings. Beyond values associated with a rich biological system, the units were and continue to remain popular for the hunting opportunities they provide local residents. The population of feral hogs in southeastern Texas, however, has grown tremendously in recent years, and the impact on native flora and fauna within the preserve has been significant (Mapston 2004). Whereas this issue appears not to have bothered many local hunters who have historically enjoyed hunting hogs, the destruction caused by their rising numbers has caught the attention of local environmentalists keen to see their removal. The dependence of some local residents on hunting feral hogs is reflected in stories of locals releasing domestic hogs within the preserve in an effort to maintain the hog population. These stories also include discussions of locals having hunted hogs on the preserve for several generations, for meat as well as sport, well before it received its "National Preserve" designation. For some, this designation has severely impinged upon their ability to hunt hogs in ways they had

[10] Complete extraction of feral hogs is highly unlikely: (a) the species' habitat extends beyond park boundaries, and (b) the resources required to capture and remove the animal are beyond current provisions.

Miles D. Phillips

Figure 11—The feral hog population has led to conflicts among local groups over an appropriate management strategy.

done for generations prior (e.g., use of dogs, trapping, use of horses and off-road vehicles). For many, hunting hogs is a continuation of a family tradition.

The second issue contributing to the management dilemma concerns rapid (human) population growth and development in the area. This growth is largely a product of urban sprawl and the popularity of "recreational enclaves" that allow residents to commute to Houston for work but maintain proximity to large undeveloped tracts of land (i.e., Big Thicket). This rapid growth has also brought long-term residents who have been hunting hogs in the area for several generations into direct conflict with newer residents who have different recreation patterns and management preferences. For some of the long-term residents, the history of association spans several generations. The accrual of sentiment reflected in family narratives and memories of experiences shared with significant others have meant that the preserve occupies an important place in their lives. For these residents, hunting hogs on the preserve is an expression of their cultural identity. For the newer residents, the meanings of place are substantially more varied owing to the diversity in these residents' cultural backgrounds[11] and experience with natural environments.

Therefore, in the context of examining how to accommodate these varied positions related to managing feral hogs, we have begun to collect data from stakeholders about the diversity of meanings they ascribe to the preserve and the effect of feral hogs on these meanings. From preliminary interviews it appears that feral hogs and hunting opportunities they provide are an extension of some long-term residents' cultural traditions. For other groups, both hunting and feral hogs

[11] Historically, the population of this southeastern pocket of Texas comprised descendants of Western European settlers (England, Ireland, France, Germany, and Italy).

along with the effect they have upon the ecosystem, run contrary to their conceptualization of a "preserve" dedicated to the conservation of rare flora and fauna. Thus, for one group, the hunting of hogs on the preserve affirms their individual and cultural identities, whereas as for others, the damage caused by hogs is seen as eroding their bond with nature; a bond also that underlies their own sense of self. Thus, our data collection procedures will first provide us with an understanding of the meanings various individuals/groups ascribe to the preserve and how these meanings are created. Dependent on the extent of cultural and social world affiliations (e.g., activity-based groups), our identity theory/interactionist framework would also suggest that individual-level meanings are likely to reflect the perspective of the affiliated group. Given the social nature of these meanings, we anticipate considerable variation among stakeholders. It is our intent to analyze how these meanings are manifested in attitudes, behaviors, and management preferences related to feral hogs and the preserve.

Therefore, our formal data collection protocols will include (a) focus group interviews with relevant stakeholders (e.g., residents, hunting groups, environmentalists); (b) a mail survey sent to residents in surrounding communities and relevant interest groups (e.g., hunting associations, volunteer/advocacy groups); and (c) monitoring feral hog populations and site impacts within the preserve.

It is anticipated that the data from the focus group interviews will provide insight on relevant issues underlying the management of feral hogs in addition to helping us better understand what these lands mean to affected groups. These data will also help inform the design of the mail survey. For the mail survey, beyond basic indicators of sociodemographic characteristics and use/residential history, questions that provide insight on the meanings respondents associate with the preserve (e.g., attachment to the setting and factors driving these attachments) will also be included. Consistent with our identity-based framework, the data will also help us understand the role the preserve (and the activities occurring within the preserve) plays in contributing to stakeholders' personal identities and the identities of their cultural group or social world affiliation. Lastly, for the mail survey, geographic data will be collected that allow us to develop overlays depicting the variety of meanings and activities different groups associate with regions throughout the preserve. It is anticipated that these data, coupled with the data from the feral hog population and impact monitoring, will enable managers to implement a feral hog management plan that allows them to control the feral hog problem and at the same time accommodate the needs of relevant stakeholders.

Conclusion

Stakeholders' attitudes, behaviors, and preferences related to public lands can be understood by understanding the congruence between individual, cultural, and place identities.

These examples provide insight related to the influence of culture on place meanings and how these meanings are reflected in both the use/nonuse of public lands and management preference. They also provide limited guidance on how to integrate these diverse perspectives in public land management. It has been our thesis that stakeholders' attitudes, behaviors, and preferences related to public lands can be understood by understanding the congruence between individual, cultural, and place identities. The identities bestowed upon specific settings are socially constructed symbols that reflect cultural perspectives. In some instances, these symbols will be intimately connected to individual and cultural identities. For these populations, management action related to the affected setting will attract intense scrutiny. Actions that have the potential to disrupt human-place bonding, as discussed above in the context of feral hogs, have the potential to sever people's ties to place and arouse negative sentiment. Alternately, actions that support groups' ongoing identification with the setting will be embraced. The identity-based framework discussed here also provides insight on how managers might be able to reach out to populations that have traditionally been underrepresented on public lands. As exemplified in Low et al.'s (2002) discussion, including the place histories of other cultural groups that have previously inhabited or interacted with the setting, perhaps through interpretive media, offers a way for people to link their own cultural identities, reflected in historical narratives, to the locations where these narratives were born.

Finally, to effectively implement place-based management practices, we emphasize that managers of public lands need to understand the variety of meanings their stakeholders ascribe to the resource in question. We feel that this understanding is best obtained through the systematic collection of data shedding light on these meanings. The literature related to the meanings humans ascribe to built and natural environments has grown considerably over the past two decades. This literature also documents various procedures for collecting and analyzing data that provide insight on the meaning people associate with place.[12] The recommendation for continued research is one that managers have likely heard many times before, but it remains imperative for including stakeholder perspectives within management plans.

[12] Other examples of scientific approaches for collecting place-related data can be found in the work of Austin and Kaplan (2003), Clark and Stein (2003), Laurian (2004), and Stewart et al. (2004).

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Chapter 7—Understanding Human Relationships to Place and Their Significance for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Lynne C. Manzo[1]

Abstract

As we are all embedded in a physical context, we are compelled to try to understand the nature of our relationships to place. This task is critical for the care and management of our natural resources and outdoor recreation sites. Insights into the nuances and complexities of our relationships to place can help guide management strategies that are more responsive to people's experiences and needs. This paper explores the multiple dimensions of our relationships to place and the significance of these relationships for outdoor recreation and public land management through an indepth study of people's place experiences. Findings reveal that significant places are those that (1) enable people to explore and develop their sense of self; (2) provide opportunities for privacy, introspection, and reflection; (3) serve as developmental markers in a person's life journey; (4) serve as bridges to a person's past; and (5) provide important social experiences such as a sense of belonging and social connectedness. Implications for the management of outdoor recreation settings are discussed.

Keywords: Place attachment, place identity, environmental psychology, leisure studies.

Introduction

What makes us value and care for places? What makes us return again and again to some places but avoid other places? What is the hold that some places have on us? For centuries, thinkers have pondered these questions. But in the past three decades in particular, a rich body of scholarly literature examining the nature of people's relationships to places has blossomed. There are now theories and research from an array of disciplines on sense of place, place attachment, and place identity, all of which can be considered the building blocks of our relationships to place. Explorations of these concepts have made a critical contribution to our understanding of

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our relationships to place. They have validated an important aspect of the human experience by articulating the roles and meanings that places have in our lives. This is an important but complicated task. Yet, as we are all embedded in a physical context, we are compelled to try to understand the nature of our relationships to places. This task is critical for the care and management of our natural resources and outdoor recreation sites. Insights into the nuances and complexities of our relationships to place can help guide management strategies that are more responsive to people's experiences and needs.

The need for a greater awareness of place is greater than it has ever been (Steele 1981). In suburban areas, there has been a drift toward standardized, unstimulating settings. Continuing urbanization and growth has brought the interface between urbanized areas and wildlands to the fore (Ewert et al. 1993). With the health and survival of our ecosystems hanging in the balance, an understanding of our relationship to places, and to nature in particular, has become urgent. We must try to understand our relationships to place better, not only to understand the foundation for our attitudes and behavior toward natural environments, but also to learn how to use and manage our natural resources and public lands more thoughtfully. For example, we now know that the once prevailing paradigm of humanity as separate and above nature has fostered a consumption approach to nature. Such an approach has manifested itself in recreational land management practices that treat outdoor recreation resources as a "supermarket of trails and trees…to be arranged by recreation programmers and managers for consumption as leisure experiences" (Williams 2002: 353). This approach has had significant environmental and experiential repercussions and has rightly been critiqued (see especially Williams et al. 1992). However, understanding consumption better as a social practice can help us to challenge that approach in the management of outdoor recreational settings.

As MacNaghten and Urry (1998) argued, our understanding of nature develops through various sociocultural practices and our responses to the environment are embedded in daily life. For example, Preston-Whyte (2001), in his study of seaside leisure space, discussed how such settings are socially constructed—that is, through social practices of use, spaces are discovered, conceived, and acted upon by different groups of people. Place is at the same time a location, an idea, and an ideal. Similarly, Stokowski (2002) observed that places are more than geographic locations, they are fluid and changeable contexts of social interaction and meaning. Dynamics of power, ideology, and conflict manifest themselves in place-based behaviors. Not only are attitudes toward, and uses of, outdoor recreation settings influenced by this, but so are management practices. Stokowski (2002: 370)

pointed out that the managerial contexts of places, usually treated "as stable and predictable elements of recreation experiences," are themselves changeable social practices and they need to be recognized as such.

If our relationships to places—including both our experiences of them and management ideologies and strategies—are a result of sociocultural practices, then it follows that these relationships would best be understood within the context of the larger communities and societies in which they are embedded. We cannot disconnect outdoor recreation/tourism experiences from the daily rounds of people's lives. It is essential to see nature, and our experiences of it, in this context. The way to "unpack" and understand these complex phenomena is to investigate place meaning and our lived experiences of place and how they fit into the larger puzzle of our lives.[2]

This paper explores the multiple dimensions of our relationships to place and the significance of these relationships for outdoor recreation and public land management through an indepth study of people's place experiences. This research was conducted to learn more about the kinds of places that are meaningful for people, the role these places play in their lives, and the processes by which they develop meaning. Given that many of the significant places in the research participants' lives are natural settings, the findings of this research have implications for the management of outdoor recreation settings.

Overview of Critical Concepts

To better understand the findings and implications of the research presented in this paper, it is helpful to begin with an overview of the ever-growing body of literature on people's relationships to place, particularly writings on place attachment, place identity, and sense of place regarding natural settings (Bonaiuto et al. 2002, Bricker and Kerstetter 2000, Jorgensen and Stedman 2001, Kyle et al. 2004, Williams 2002, Williams and Carr 1993, Williams and Kaltenborn 1999, Williams and Roggenbuck 1989, Williams and Vaske 2003). As a whole, this work can provide natural resource managers with "a way to anticipate, identify and respond to the bonds people form with places" and thus help to develop management strategies that are more responsive to the ways that people think and feel about place

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[2] For a further discussion of lived experience and place meaning, see Stewart's "Place Meanings in Stories of Lived Experience" also in this report.

(Williams and Stewart 1998: 18). An important starting point, therefore, is to examine existing theory and research findings to get a better sense of what we know to date about people's relationships to place.

Place attachment is generally considered to be "the bonding of people to places" (Altman and Low 1992). That definition has been further developed to include "a positive affective bond between an individual and a specific place, the main characteristic of which is the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness to such a place" (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001: 274). This definition is noteworthy because it reflects the implications of place attachment on one's intentions toward and use of places. Indeed, natural resource and leisure studies explore place attachment among campers, hikers, and other outdoor recreationists in terms of ecological stewardship, a commitment to return to a setting, and membership in special interest groups (Bricker and Kerstetter 2000, Vitterso et al. 2001, Wickham 2001). It is also measured in terms of attitudes toward the setting and level of concern about how a place is managed (Mitchell et al. 1993). Thus, it has both emotional and functional dimensions (Williams and Vaske 2003).

Looking at a community level of analysis also opens up the possibility of discovering contested meanings.

There are a few ways in which this definition has, or could be, expanded further. First, we can add a community level of analysis. Recent research explores important social dimensions to place attachment (Clark and Stein 2003, Hummon 1992, Stewart et al. 2003) revealing that shared place meanings develop among communities and groups that can then lead to both individual and community-level attachments. Looking at a community level of analysis also opens up the possibility of discovering contested meanings, a difficult issue to be sure, but one that is necessary to address. Even in instances where there is a lack of consensus on what a place means, it is clear that meaning develops through social processes. Second, in almost all of its uses, place attachment refers to a positively balanced affective bond to place (Manzo 2003, 2005). But as Relph (1985: 27) pointed out, "relationships to places need not be strong and positive"; sometimes there is strong affection for particular places (topophilia), but there may be an aversion for other places (topophobia). This diversity in responses to places and in place meaning is essential to address in managing public lands. However challenging it may be, it is just too important to ignore.

Being connected to a place may give some people a positive sense of belonging, but for others it may feel oppressive and restrictive (Relph 1976). This is what Chawla (1992: 66) called the "shadow side" of our attachments: "if place forms the circumference of our experience, we are attached to it for better or for worse. Therefore, there is a shadow side…composed of…frustrating or frightening

places." This dimension of place attachment is important to explore if we are to understand why some do not frequent, or even avoid, certain outdoor recreation settings. Of particular relevance to outdoor recreation and public land managers, are the findings of research on how different racial and ethnic groups perceive nature and wildlands. For example, recent research demonstrates that African-Americans perceive wildland environments as threatening (Johnson 1998, Virden and Walker 1999). This has even been connected to different levels of environmental concern and action between African-Americans and Whites (Taylor 1989). Other research argues that labor-related institutions such as forest labor and plantation agriculture have impacted negatively on African-Americans producing an ambivalence toward wildland areas that contrasts with the dominant perspective of these places as a refuge (Johnson and Bowker 2004). Finally, an ethnographic study of a national park suggests how ethnic and immigrant groups can feel excluded because of a lack of sensitivity to cultural identity and lack of representation (Low et al. 2004). Together, these studies show how a sociocultural approach to the study of place meaning enables us to better see a range of place experiences and meanings, both positive and negative. They also reveal how social constructions of identity affect place experience and create diverse meanings (Manzo 2005). Knowing this can help public land managers reach out to underserved populations in a more sensitive manner.

Place identity is another important concept for natural resource and outdoor recreation management. It has been defined as "those dimensions of the self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioral tendencies" (Proshansky 1978: 155). It is a malleable construct that can encompass a range of feelings and experiences of place, as it comprises a "cluster of positively and negatively valenced cognitions of physical settings" (Proshansky et al. 1983: 62). The concept of place identity has been further developed by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) who argued that place identity is not a distinct subsection of identity. Rather, there is a dynamic interplay between identity processes and the places with which we interact so that our experiences of place are infused in our self-concept. They offer four principles of identity in regard to place: distinctiveness, continuity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. This has important implications for our use of space. For example, Korpela (1989) suggested that we use the environment in strategic ways to maintain a sense of self and that our use of place is a result of environmental self-regulation. If this is

indeed true, as research suggests (see also Korpela et al. 2001, Williams 2002), then it is worthwhile to explore how such identity processes affect our use and valuation of outdoor recreation environments.

Research on leisure has put forward the notion of "leisure identities" (see especially Kelly 1983, Kuentzel 2000, Williams 2002), which examines how recreation serves as a medium for personal enhancement and self-development. This research demonstrates how people become committed to certain self-images and seek identity-confirming behaviors in their recreational activities (Haggard and Williams 1992, Kuentzel 2000). In addition to individual self-definitions, however, leisure identity includes social practices that create a sense of continuity and stability in one's self-concept (Kuentzel 2000). This goes beyond the rational actor or functionalist approach that views recreationists as motivated goal-directed actors, and it tries to incorporate social structure into our understanding of leisure activity. This approach challenges "the imperialism of individual experience" (Giddens 1984, as summarized in Kuentzel 2000), and seeks to understand how routine patterns of social interaction reproduce structural conditions that are the scaffold of individual actions (Keuntzel 2000: 89). This is useful for public land managers who seek to understand outdoor recreation and leisure behavior on the social level.

Place dependence results when people perceive that a place meets their needs better than alternative places and supports people's goals and desired activities.

Then there is the notion of "place dependence," originally considered to be "the perceived strength of association between a person and specific places" (Stokols and Shumaker 1981: 457). It is said that dependence results when people perceive that a place meets their needs better than alternative places (Brown 1987). Over time, this concept has evolved in a way that focuses specifically on behavior, and how a place might support people's goals and desired activities (Williams and Roggenbuck 1989). For example, we might depend on a place to provide us with a certain experience or opportunity, and we might even depend on that place to afford us the same experience time and again. Place dependence has even been considered a "functional attachment" and thus a component of place attachment (Williams and Vaske 2003). Focusing on behavior clearly has value for managing natural resource recreation and tourism. But we must "round out" this utilitarian approach with other elements of place experience—thoughts, feelings, meanings and values—as well as behaviors. Hence, place dependence should continue to be studied in the context of place attachments, identity and meaning, each of which express somewhat different dimensions of place meaning and our overall relationship to place.

Finally, we have the concept of "sense of place" (Lewis 1979, Tuan 1980). In one of its earlier uses, it is defined as "an experiential process created by the setting combined with what a person brings to it" (Steele 1981: 9). This concept embraces

a transactional view of people and places that reflects the true richness and dynamism of our relationships to place. It recognizes that these relationships are a combination of what people bring to a place (their past experiences, culturally-based worldviews, attitudes, beliefs, preferences, thoughts, feelings) and what the place brings to the person (affordances of certain behavioral and experiential opportunities). In this framework, we can see place as both an object (of people's interest, concern, and alteration), and as a cause (of people's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors) (Steele 1981: 9). This definition has recently been expanded to include "the social and historical processes by which place meanings are constructed, negotiated and politically contested" (Williams and Stewart 1998: 20). Interestingly, some landscape architects also talk about sense of place, using the expression to refer to a feature or essential character of a place, or they talk about how to create a sense of place through design. Insofar as qualities of a setting might foster some experiences more than others, this is worthy of exploration certainly for natural resource and outdoor recreation managers. Indeed, sense of place as an essential character of a place (landscape) is embedded in the Forest Service's Scenery Management System. However, it is important to remember that meaning cannot exist outside of a human interpreter, and so a more transactional perspective that seeks to understand the bidirectional nature of people-place relationships is warranted.

It is both a strength and weakness that these concepts are all rather broadly defined. The strength is that such broad definitions allow for the inclusion of a range of place experiences, feelings, values, attitudes, and thoughts. The weakness is that the broadness of the definitions has caused subsequent research to conceptualize and use these concepts differently. Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that place attachment, place identity, and sense of place make up a constellation of concepts that address place meaning, and they are related to our fundamental relationships to places in our lives. As such, these concepts are all interrelated. So although there are differences in how scholars apply them, there are important commonalities, the most important of which is a belief in the importance of understanding the qualities and dynamics of our relationships to place as a way to achieve a more socioculturally and environmentally sensitive way of life, and as a way to develop sound management strategies based on how people respond to and experience place. This work can provide insights for policy and management of natural resources, outdoor recreation, and tourism in a way that respects people's needs, values, and desires along with the integrity of the environment.

Place attachment, place identity, and sense of place make up place meaning and are related to our fundamental relationships to places in our lives.

The Need for Multiple Perspectives and Levels of Analysis

When studying such multifaceted, complex phenomena as sense of place, place attachment, and place identity, a truly interdisciplinary approach is needed. To push the boundaries of current research and explore the full dynamism of people-place relationships, we must learn from an array of disciplines. For example, the literature in political geography and urban planning (Bondi 1993, Cresswell 1996, Davidoff 1965, Forester 1989, Hayden 1995, Massey 1993) has a great deal to offer to our understanding of our relationships to place through extensive theory and research on the politics of place and on place as a social construction (Keith and Pile 1993, LeFebvre 1974). Planners have long tackled the politics of place and contested meanings—from the advocacy planning efforts of the 1960s (see especially Davidoff 1965) to the multicultural planning of today (Sandercock 1998). Most current planning efforts employ community participation strategies and can teach us a great deal about how to address both shared and contested place meanings, as well as the negative and positive implications of place attachment (Forester 1999). Moreover, environmental psychologists who focus on place attachments and identity in relation to urban settings or other cultural settings (Low 2000, Rivlin 1987) can also provide useful insights for the use and management of outdoor settings, particularly when taken in the context of people's everyday lives. To be sure, writings on the politics of place are gaining a foothold in the natural resource recreation literature as noted earlier in the paper (see also Cheng and Kruger in this report, Williams and Carr 1993, Williams and Stewart 1998, Yung et al. 2003). However, this work has been somewhat overshadowed by studies that seek to measure place attachment, partially because such studies are site-specific and relatively easy to do.[3] We could benefit from a greater integration of the insights from geography, planning, and urban studies, and a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach in general.

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To develop a fuller understanding of relationships to place we must also include an array of methodologies in our research. This is important because different methodologies have led to different interpretations of the concepts. For example, place identity and place dependence have both been treated as dimensions

[3] Williams, D. 2005. Personal communication. Research social scientist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, 2150A Centre Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80526-1891.

of place attachments in much of the recent quantitative research, but as Farnum et al. (2005: 8) noted, this is "encouraged by the fact that the common standardized measures used to assess place attachment in recreation and tourism view attachment as" comprising these two dimensions. That is, if place identity is equated with emotional attachment conceptually from the outset, then subsequent scales to measure place attachment would include items considered related to identity. This particular framework gets institutionalized with further use of the measurement tool. In such cases, conceptualizations have become artifacts of statistical manipulations, all of which are predicated on assumptions about the original concepts in the first place. We must be careful that the methods of inquiry do not solely drive the conceptualization of phenomena. Although some might argue that an irreconcilable gap exists between quantitative and qualitative approaches based on differences in beliefs about what constitutes "valid" knowledge, I would argue that these two approaches can complement one another and provide a more complete picture of people's relationship to outdoor recreational environments. This is, in fact, an essential part of the more holistic perspective that I call for in this paper.

Contribution of a Qualitative Approach

Whereas some research on place attachment, identity, and meaning in relation to outdoor recreation and tourism takes a quantitative approach and endeavors to measure these concepts (Stedman 2003), other work takes a more qualitative approach to understanding the nuances and complexities of meaning (Fishwick and Vining 1992, Frederickson and Anderson 1999). In many ways, this makes sense, as much of the earlier literature on people's relationships to places has roots in phenomenology, a branch of philosophy that focuses on meanings and experiences via a descriptive, qualitative discovery of things in their own terms (Husserl 1970). Phenomenology calls for an understanding of everyday lived experience (Dovey 2002). When applied to explorations of the environment, it provides a conceptual language that allows us to explore the everyday, often taken-for-granted experiences of place (Manzo 2005, Seamon 1996). In this framework, place is an inseparable part of our existence (Heidegger 1962, 1971). As such, it is essential for human psychological existence and well-being (Casey 1993, Searles 1960, Tuan 1974). This approach has been adopted by numerous scholars who recognize that, by their nature, people-place relationships involve poetic, essential qualities (Bachelard 1969; Relph 1985; Seamon 1982, 1984). These philosophical and theoretical roots can provide a continuing source of inspiration. Looking at what

we know now in the context of these seminal theories on people-place relationships can help us to think more critically about our current state of knowledge and identify areas for further exploration.

A number of studies that engage in qualitative explorations of the lived experience of place (see also Stewart in this report) add new dimensions to our understanding of our relationships to place (Mitchell et al. 1993). For example, indepth explorations of "deep ecology" and the ecological self provide unique insights into outdoor/wilderness experiences and how they might encourage environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviors (Bragg 1996, Nash 1989, Zimmerman et al. 2004). One recent qualitative study of wilderness experiences reveals that these settings offer important, even spiritual, experiences (Frederickson and Anderson 1999). This study documents a process of so intensely identifying with nature that the boundaries of the self-construct shift to encompass the natural environment. As more is learned about relationships to natural environments, we see new dimensions of place experience and meaning unfold. Although this has caused some qualitative scholars to argue that past quantitative research on place attachment "has produced simplistic interpretations of the person-place interaction" (Frederickson and Anderson 1999: 22), I believe less harshly that it simply suggests a need to expand current explorations and include both quantitative and qualitative methods in our research.

A qualitative approach is quite helpful for exploring the unique qualities of people's relationships to places. First, it is sensitive to the nuances of place meaning, something that does not readily lend itself to quantification. Moreover, qualitative studies can provide insights for addressing contestations over place meaning, shedding light on how socially constructed identities (of race or ethnicity, for example) affect people's responses toward, and uses of, place (Williams 2002, Williams and Stewart 1998). For example, research on multiethnic urban communities reveals how multiple cultural identities inform and (re)form the meanings and uses of space, as well as community planning and development efforts (Abramson et al. 2006). Finally, as we can see in this example, a qualitative approach can help us to understand the ways that larger macrostructural forces (sociocultural, historical, political, economic) influence place meaning allowing for a richer understanding of community dynamics to unfold.

An Empirical Exploration of Relationships to Place

In this section, I will provide some key findings of an indepth qualitative study that are of particular relevance to natural resource management and outdoor recreation

and tourism. The findings of this research reveal that people develop powerful relationships with a wide variety of places, and that meaning develops from an array of emotions and experiences. Because of the general nature of the inquiry—most questions did not specify any place or type of place—participants described a number of places that were important in their lives. That is, people were not asked exclusively about nature or outdoor recreational settings. It is noteworthy, however, that almost half (48 percent) of participants discussed nature when describing at least one significant place in their lives. This is congruent with other research findings that show people's favorite places are often natural settings (see e.g., Korpela 2003, Korpela and Hartig 1996). Participants talked about the value of what Kaplan et al. (1998) call "nearby nature"—i.e., natural environments in the city itself—in addition to natural settings outside of the city. Significant places were quite diverse (fig. 12). Some places were outdoors (beaches, parks, woods, waterfalls, the desert); others were indoors (churches, bars, laundromats, airports). Some were tiny niches (a closet, a hallway in a grandmother's apartment, a "pocket park" in the city); others were entire cities (Budapest, Winston-Salem, San Francisco, New York); and still others were entire countries (Scotland, Hungary, Russia). Some were places from the past that no longer existed or were no longer accessible, whereas others still existed and were actively used. One thing is quite clear—each person had rich relationships to places in their lives that influenced their sense of self and the quality and meaning of their lives.

Maria Stiefel

Figure 12—Significant places can be quite diverse, with some outdoors and some indoors.

Research Procedure

This research takes a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Strauss and Corbin 1998), which focuses on the nuances of people's experiences to develop and explore concepts and theories. Indepth interviews were conducted with 40 participants to explore the nature of their relationships to the places in their lives. All participants were adults, aged 25 to 35, residing in New York City.[4] This age range was selected based on research findings that adults in this age bracket are experiencing increased autonomy and establishing their "place in the world" (Horwitz and Tognoli 1983). Participants were obtained through a networking procedure or what is also referred to as "snowball sampling" (Bernard 2005). In this strategy, participants are initially obtained through acquaintances who meet the criteria for participation. Then, subsequent participants are obtained through recommendations from previous participants. Throughout the data collection phase, demographic data on participants were monitored to ensure a diverse sample of sex, ethnicity, income, and household configuration, because these demographics emerged as important in early interviews. This sampling procedure follows Trost's (1986) strategic nonprobability sampling, which seeks a range in qualities of respondents in order to explore phenomena (Gustafson 2001b: 671).

The interview itself explored participants' experiences in places that they considered important and meaningful. The interview instrument was semistructured and involved a series of open-ended, indepth questions that covered the following themes: (1) the meaning and importance of different places in the lives of participants; (2) the social implications of those places, i.e., the kinds of experiences and people that have played a role in their experience of places; (3) feelings about their place of residence and the experiences they have had there; and (4) past environmental experiences, i.e., experiences with significant places from childhood and whether they affected feelings about current places in their lives.

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Interview transcripts were analyzed by using the procedures typical of a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967): To begin, the data were analyzed for content by using the "open coding" technique. In this technique, conceptual codes are developed to describe discrete events, experiences, and feelings reported in the interviews. These codes

[4] A more thorough description of this research, including the methodology, appears in "For better or worse: exploring the multiple dimensions of place meaning" in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 2005. Please contact the author for copies or additional information.

were then used in two ways: to analyze each individual interview across all questions for meta-themes within each interview, and to analyze responses to each individual question across all participants, which allows meta-themes across all interviews to emerge. Through this analysis, similar phenomena were grouped together in an effort to identify the various dimensions of people's experiences and place meanings. This is the "axial coding" phase wherein "the data are put back together again in new ways…creating new connections between the various categories, resulting in new conceptualization of the data" (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 97).

Demographics

Of the 40 participants in the sample, 24 were women and 16 were men. Respondents represented a mix of race and ethnicities—56 percent of participants were White, 22 percent were African-American, 11 percent were Hispanic, 8 percent were of mixed race, and 3 percent were Asian. Twenty percent of participants were gay or lesbian. Participants' household size ranged from one (living alone) to five (living with four others). Educational background ranged from some high school experience to doctoral training, with 70 percent having at least a bachelors degree. Sixty-five percent worked full time and the remaining 35 percent worked part time. Annual income ranged from under $10,000 to $105,000.

Experiential Dimensions of Relationships to Place

People develop multifaceted relationships with places that coalesce around personal, emotional experiences. This suggests that it is not simply the places themselves that are significant, but rather what can be called "experience-in-place." This is what ultimately creates meaning. The concept of experience-in-place takes as the fundamental unit of analysis both the physical location and the nature of the experience, recognizing that each is inextricably bound to the other. This also emphasizes the transactional nature of our relationships to place. In examining the findings, several critical themes emerged. Significant places were those that (1) enable people to explore and develop their sense of self; (2) provide opportunities for privacy, introspection, and reflection; (3) serve as developmental markers in a person's life journey; (4) serve as bridges to a person's past; and (5) provide important social experiences such as a sense of belonging and social connectedness, or conversely threat and exclusion, particularly in terms of culture and subculture. As we shall see, many of these themes reflect the political underpinnings of our relationships to places. Although the interviews did not focus specifically on nature,

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each of these experiential dimensions has important implications for the use and management of outdoor recreation settings, and the examples provided below to illustrate each theme are explicitly about natural or outdoor settings.

Identity Confirmation and Development

Participants felt it was very important to have places where they could be themselves and explore who they are. Their stories suggest that relationships to places are often a way of working out or confirming one's identity in the world. Many respondents (39 percent) talked explicitly about how a particular place "made them who they are" and how their understanding of themselves changed through their relationship with that place. One participant described how outings on his family's boat as a youth dramatically changed and developed his sense of self:

> When I was growing up, my family had a boat and we spent a lot of time on the water…That is an important place to me. I associate some of my best times with being out there. It was a place where I could be myself, where I was in my element more than any other place. There is something about the whole way of life on the boat that I took to. It was more than just an activity, it was a defining part of my life.

Not only do many places contribute to one's sense of self over time, but also several places can simultaneously contribute to one's identity. An example of the former is well captured in this participant's comment: "most places that are important to me played a role in who I am as a person. Each of them was a stepping stone to where I am today." An example of the latter process is illustrated in another participant's discussion of important places. She went to a particular neighborhood to attend a church that she felt fostered her spirituality; she also frequented another neighborhood for its bars, and spent time in Central Park to have contact with nature and remind herself of a childhood spent in the country. This is not to say that people expressed only one aspect of themselves in a given place. Our understanding of ourselves, and our sense of how the world views us, are not that easily compartmentalized. Rather, this example suggests that, together, many places form a "web of meaning" in our lives and that each is a part of the gestalt of who we are. Finally, important identity-related experiences in place included those that reflect one's personal journey in the world. Many places that become meaningful do so because they served as markers in that journey. Typically, the experiences people had in these places marked a turning point, some right of

passage, or they serve as a symbol of change. In some cases it was a change in the way people perceived themselves, their abilities, or their view on life. Comments such as: "This is a place where I really got to learn about myself and explore who I am" typify this experience. In other cases, the salient experience was a rite of passage like a first experience with sex. In still other cases it was a dramatic event such as a severe car accident, a fight with a lover, or a parent's death. Although some of these are clearly negative experiences, everyone talked about them as important growth experiences, and they described these places as especially important and meaningful because of it.

These findings support Kuentzel's (2000) discussion of self-identity and leisure activities in outdoor recreation places. He proposed that people's engagement in outdoor recreation places reflects a working out of the self through a constantly developing process (see also Kelly 1983). In the research presented in this paper, we see evidence of both identity-confirming behaviors and experiences of place, and a more fluid process of identity development as a negotiated process in a context of change. These findings are important for outdoor recreation and public land management because they move us beyond the consumptionist, goal-directed models and help us to appreciate people's experience in such settings as a fluid process of balancing change and stability in a complex world (Kuentzel 2000).

Certain places become meaningful particularly when they afford people the opportunity for reflection and introspection.

Privacy, Introspection, and Reflection

Certain places become meaningful particularly when they afford people the opportunity for reflection and introspection—two fundamental aspects of place experience that are also associated with identity. Many participants discussed the importance of natural settings to think and reflect on life and who they are. For example, one man explained that the mountains and rivers have always "had a tug for him" and provided a place for reflection:

> A lot of the appeal of those natural places where I have been is that…I really sat and thought about who I was and what I was doing and what my direction was. Self-evaluation type of things. I really have not had a really good self-evaluatory experience in the last few years, so…I feel an urge to go to those places to relive the sense of peace and relaxation and comfort with myself that I associate with those places.

Another participant who went mountain climbing regularly explained:

> I like to get on top of something like a mountain or a rock. Something where I have a view and am up high. Something that places me to see far externally, so that I can see far internally and get on top of things internally.

For others, it wasn't necessary to leave the city altogether, but they did seek places with natural elements. For example one woman's "favorite place" was Paley Park, a lovely vest-pocket park in midtown Manhattan, which she enjoyed for the waterfall and chairs beneath the tree:

> I just love it here. I come here a couple of times a week when it is open. It is a place where I can just relax, and it is peaceful. It puts life back in perspective.

Such a remark reflects Appleton's (1975) point that people seek observation points and prefer places where they can observe their surroundings, but the findings presented here put a new experiential spin on it. Such places not only enable us to look outward but to look inward as well. As Cooper Marcus and Francis (1990) observed, places offering views help people to think and "put things into perspective."

Not surprisingly, the issue of privacy emerged in these particular discussions, as some felt this was an important ingredient in the experience of reflection and introspection. What is noteworthy is that people felt they could achieve this in both public and private spaces. A full 60 percent of participants went to places outside of their residence to seek privacy to think and reflect on life. Of these, most (58 percent) sought out natural settings. These locations enabled participants to become lost in their thoughts and to reflect on their problems. Some people sought physical solitude to achieve privacy, so they selected secluded areas that gave them "room to think" (fig. 13). For example, one participant went regularly to the Arizona desert to be alone and reflect on life:

> It is out in the middle of nowhere. It is pretty much natural, the way it should be. You can drive out to a spot and just camp out. It is really great to leave all of the paperwork in New York and live out of my backpack. And that is all you have to concern yourself with. There are no forms to file or paperwork to get done. I find that really liberating.

Kip Tyler

Figure 13—Some people selected secluded areas that gave them "room to think."

This supports the notion of privacy as a dynamic boundary-regulation process (Altman 1975) that can also enhance place attachment if one can regulate the amount and kind of contact one has with others (Harris et al. 1996). For example, some people did not feel it was necessary or desirable to be alone to achieve privacy, although they still often sought out natural elements. Many people (42 percent) talked about their regular use of city parks to achieve this experience. One woman explained why she enjoyed going to Central Park so much:

> It is almost like everybody can be in their own separate space and not really bother each other. People are there to just hang out. It seems like the rules are different in the park than everywhere else in Manhattan.

This suggests that allowing for private experiences in public space is a valuable strategy. And whereas this often means allowing enough space for some physical solitude, solitude is not absolutely necessary to provide for a feeling of privacy. Moreover, people do not automatically assume they will be alone or have privacy in a public space. As effective public park design shows, allowing for different subspaces for distinct activities and providing visual or acoustical privacy work well to achieve a sense of privacy (Cooper Marcus and Francis 1990). If we understand privacy in this more dynamic sense of boundary control, then we can see how this can be facilitated through strategies that apply not only to urban parks, but to more removed nature settings. Protecting opportunities to achieve multiple types of privacy are important in such settings.

Places as Bridges to the Past: Continuity and the Value of Memories

Through places, people can make connections among a whole collection of feelings and experiences in both the present and the past.

People's experiences of places remain with them over time, either through memories of places from their past, or through repeated use of the same places over time. Both past places and past experiences in currently used places were threads of the tapestry of people, places, experiences, and feelings that make up their lives. It is through places that people can make connections among a whole collection of feelings and experiences in both the present and the past. In some cases, places enable the memory of people and events to emerge; in other cases, the memories of people and events enable places to emerge as significant. Further, past experiences with currently used places enable people to make comparisons between where they once were, and where they are now, literally and figuratively. Thus, places act as bridges to the past, and provide continuity in people's lives. For example, one participant felt that the New Jersey coast was particularly important to her because of the many happy times she spent there with her family before her father died. She explained that she continued to visit there because the place reminded her of those special times:

> The shore is a very important place for me. The whole feel of the shore and that area is very emotional for me. As a family, we used to take trips down there. It was a place that was very special to my father. It was one of his favorite places, and now it is one of mine too.

Revisiting past places helped people feel part of a larger whole; it was a way to put themselves in a larger context. The return to these places represented a search for the context of their lives. By going to their past, they were creating their own history, their own context, and claiming it for themselves. Some people made it a point to go back to certain places that meant a great deal, even if such places were difficult to access. One participant described a tour that she had taken of past places:

> I took a trip once around the country to go back to all of the places that I have lived, because I really needed to touch base with them. I bought one of those Greyhound tickets, and went back to all of them.

Occasionally, new places linked a person to past experiences because there was some feature of the new place—either a similar quality in the landscape or the

people whom they encountered—that felt familiar to them and provided a sense of continuity. For example, another participant found that going camping and hiking in New England evoked the feelings and memories of being in the small town of her childhood, a place she considered her "spiritual home:"

> One of the reasons I like New England a lot is that it reminds me of Washington. It lets me recreate it even though I am way over here on the other coast of the United States. The physical and social flavor is very similar…So, I can go there and I can have Trout Lake again.

Evidently, new places can provide linkages to past places, events, and people by building emotional and psychological "bridges" that help create and maintain a sense of continuity and wholeness in people's lives.

In the cases described above, revisiting places helped connect participants with happy times in the past, a sentiment encapsulated in one person's comment that "there are too many good memories to not go again." But for others, revisiting a past place created a sense of loss and sadness if it had changed, particularly if it were perceived as a change for the worse. For example, one participant who grew up in the California desert went back regularly to go hiking. Her most recent visit was bittersweet:

> I was walking through the desert—this is one of my best experiences—I saw a roadrunner run by. That was a really neat experience. It was just how it was supposed to be. And I always think, how can you recapture that, how can that stay with you? And every time I go to California now it gets worse and worse. You think, okay, Palm Springs is all developed, so let's go a little further out because that is still natural. And then you go a little further and you just can't go anymore. You are going to be in Nevada or Arizona by the time you find a natural desert setting because all these towns are spreading!

In this case, the sense of continuity is challenged when an anticipated experience is more difficult or in some cases impossible to achieve. But the problem does not seem to lie in a resistance to change per se. It seems more based on the nature of the change in the place, and in this example, a threatened ecosystem.

Childhood Experiences of Place

Childhood play experiences in the outdoors were a strong influence in how people thought and felt about nature and how they interacted with it in their adult lives. Participants told very rich, vivid stories of many different places of play, including empty lots, campsites, skating rinks, hills, parks, and alleys. Descriptions of tree houses and forts were not uncommon. As one participant recalled:

> We lived on a sloped area of Staten Island where it goes down to the Bay. There was this open land that was a wonderful place to play. There was a large chestnut tree that was just tremendous, and it was rotting away and was a good place to hide. We would draw maps of pirate things and buried treasure, and build caves. We would take the old Christmas trees after Christmas and build them up, devise a door, and that would be our clubhouse.

These places were locations for growing experiences, and times for exploring the world. Such place experiences stayed with participants beyond the form of fond memories. They influenced their lives in adulthood. For example, among one participant's "most important places" was an old, over-grown field:

> When I was a really little kid in Colorado, there was an old field where they stuck old farm equipment and left it to rust. I would sit out there and pretend that I was farming. It was my imaginary world, and it was a big one.

This man maintained a strong fondness for rural landscapes and farming. He also made a point to maintain a garden in the city.

In this section we have seen that important and meaningful places helped people build bridges to their past. These places were either currently used places in which a person had a history, places from the past which were revisited, or new places that echoed significant places from the past. People often went to these visited places to recapture some moment, feeling, or experience that was important to them. We also see how childhood experiences of place influence our adult relationships to place. Generally, connecting to past experiences of places provided a sense of continuity and wholeness, but as we have also seen, this was not the case when one's expectations were unmet, thus breaking that sense of continuity. Either way, we can see the critical role that memory plays in the use and appreciation of places over time. Further investigation of those aspects of places that make them memorable would be quite fruitful.

Social Experiences of Place

Participants in this research described a strong connection between their feelings about places, the experiences they have had there, and the people with whom they interacted in those places. That is, places often became important because of the people encountered there. As one participant noted, "We live in a world of our friends. You will be most comfortable with them." Other people help shape people's experiences in places, which, in turn, help create an attachment to those places. Many people explained that it was through their social experiences in places that the places themselves developed meaning on their own. Social experiences also reinforced their view of the place as a facilitator for social gatherings or intimate connections to those held dear. Although these stories are not necessarily about shared meanings, they underscore how meaning develops through social exchange.

Participants described a host of places to which they went to be social, ranging from bars and restaurants, to churches, beaches, zoos, their office, and school. Although some spoke of a general type of a place, like restaurants, or a neighborhood as a whole, others described specific places, such as a particular hunt and fish club, the Sierra Club Headquarters, and the West Side "Y." In these places, people met with friends or found others who shared their interests and viewpoints. From their accounts, it is evident that people create communities of shared interest that sustain and reinforce their identity. It is noteworthy, though, that place is an inextricable part of this experience even when the value is placed on a community of others because such communities do not occur in a vacuum, they are embedded in a physical context. For example, a self-acclaimed "jazz head," loved going to jazz clubs in Greenwich Village, and those clubs were a very important part of his life. Sometimes he went with friends. Other times he went alone and invariably met people who shared his love of jazz music. In perhaps a more relevant example, another participant talked about going kayaking regularly with a group that formed around their mutual interest in kayaking. Not only was this group personally very important to him, but their trips, and the specific place where they kayaked became very special for him. Not only was this an enjoyable social and physical activity, but the place came to encapsulate many of his values:

> It's a great activity. I always loved kayaking. It is peaceful and you are low and connected to the water. You are with other people who appreciate the same thing, so you know you are all on the same wavelength and they are having a good time too. So I'm connecting with the people, the place, and myself all at the same time. It doesn't get much better than that.

When considering the impact of social relationships on people's feeling about and use of places, it is important to recognize that it is not just that people are connecting to places because they socialize with other people there, it is also that a place may represent a quality of a relationship or an experience with a significant other (friend, family member, spouse, lover) that is especially meaningful. So enjoying places with loved ones solidifies a bond to the place on its own merit, and people would consequently frequent that place even if those loved ones were not with them. It could be a place in which an experience occurred that marked a turning point in a relationship (like the markers in the journey described earlier) or a place that strongly reminds a person of someone special. So the impact of other people on creating place meaning is not just in providing ongoing social opportunities, but also in enabling people to honor and remember past or current relationships. We also see this in cases where people share enthusiasm for the same outdoor recreational activities, like whitewater rafting or rock climbing (Bricker and Kerstetter 2000). Here, individuals with specific shared interests come together in particular places to enjoy this shared activity (fig. 14). This helps people solidify connections not only to each other, but also to the places they come to know, use, and enjoy together. This is a critical factor in enduring leisure involvement (Kyle and Chick 2004). In such cases, people meet and reunite in the same places over time, and thus people and place become intertwined.

Participants' race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality affected their relationships to places influencing which places they used and which they avoided as well as where they felt comfortable and where they did not.

However, it is important to note that meaningful places in participants' lives were not merely containers for social experiences. Part of the social dimension of place meaning also includes the social construction of the place itself. That is, the appearance, meanings, and uses of a place are all influenced by sociocultural and political processes as well the social construction of participants' identity. Even on an individual-level analysis, these issues emerged as significant. Although these experiences are based on social processes, they reflect a distinctly political dimension of place experience.

Political Dimensions of Place Experience

The findings of this research reveal that participants' race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality affected their relationships to places influencing which places they used and which they avoided as well as where they felt comfortable and where they did not. In particular, participants from socially marginalized groups—women, people of color, lesbian and gay participants—all told powerful stories about belonging, safety, and threat as critical elements in their experiences of place. It is noteworthy

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Figure 14—People with shared interests in the same outdoor recreational activities, like kayaking, come together in particular places to enjoy this shared activity.

that this issue was not explicitly probed in the interview; nonetheless all members of some "minority" group (30 percent of the total sample) talked about it. Many commented that a sense of belonging in place was so critical because feeling accepted and free to be who they were in the world was more of a struggle for them. They attributed this to their race, sexuality, and gender, and they sought out places where they could find people "like me." These findings support Lee's (1972) writing on the social definition of recreation places that describes how social interactions with others perceived as similar to oneself is an important aspect of choice and use of outdoor recreation places.

Conversely, minority participants talked about feelings of discomfort in places in which they were either the only one or one of a few people from their particular group. And many concerns about marginalization emerged in stories about safety and threat. For example, one gay man who used to camp out West explained that when he was a child he would pinpoint places on maps to visit when he got older. At that time, he planned to hitchhike to them, which is something he would no longer do: "You can't do that anymore, I've grown aware that it is no longer safe. There are too many murderers out there, and the way I flit around, someone will probably do something regrettable." Gays and racial minorities told similar stories. Many African-American participants talked about neighborhood and other geographic boundaries drawn sharply along racial lines. Two told poignant stories of

racial attack and the discomfort of walking through an all-White neighborhood—places that they learned implicitly were "just not where I belong. People start looking at you and wondering what you are doing there, looking at you funny." Women also clearly navigated their daily rounds with a conscious judgment about where they could or could not go, particularly when alone after dark. One woman was the victim of a mugging, and although it happened several years ago, she would not walk down the block on which it happened, even if it meant going out of her way to get somewhere. Such findings are important for outdoor recreation management, especially in light of the research on African-American's attitudes toward, and experiences in, wilderness and other nature settings (Johnson 1998, Johnson and Bowker 2004, Taylor 2000, Virden and Walker 1999). Inclusive management strategies and environmental features that can enhance a sense of safety are critical for more widespread use of outdoor recreation sites. More importantly, understanding the nuances of place meanings—including the shadow side that nature might hold for some—as well as appreciating the sociopolitical roots of these meanings is essential for sensitive public land management.

Inclusive management strategies and environmental features that can enhance a sense of safety are critical for more widespread use of outdoor recreation sites.

Conversely, minority participants also talked about a sense of "cultural connectedness" in certain places. For many, living in New York City in general provided a valuable reprieve from living in what they perceived as more oppressive places. For others, it was culturally specific places within the city that were important and meaningful. For example, several African-American participants went to Harlem regularly for that sense of connection. One woman explained:

> 125th Street is very rich in cultural elements. So I feel good there, I feel like I have some kind of connection there…I really like Malcolm X Boulevard. It is the heart of black Harlem, and that is really culturally rich. I can feel a certain at-homeness there.

Another African-American participant was quite enthused about the revitalization in his Brooklyn neighborhood: "I don't know of another place that has as many young active, bright, striving black folks."

Together these stories make an important statement about the political underpinnings of our relationships to places. Significant place experiences, at least for minorities, provided powerful messages either of exclusion or belonging. This is where we can see the intersection of identity and political and sociocultural processes in our relationships to place.

The Process of Developing Meaning

The findings of this research offer insights on the process of how place meaning develops. Naturally, the element of time was a critical factor. In some cases, places became meaningful through the steady accretion of experiences over time and memories of those experiences of place. In such cases, people came to rely on a particular place because it predictably provided them with a desired experience (an activity or emotional experience). In such instances, it seems that intimate familiarity with a place fostered a sense of comfort and self-affirmation as per Kuentzel's (2000) discussion of self-identity in leisure research. In other cases, repeated use of a place enabled participants to engage in a variety of experiences, keeping that place fresh and new, allowing them to explore new opportunities. Through either of these processes, repeated experiences in places added many facets and layers of meaning to those places, as people "collected" experiences in them. As we have seen, it also offered people a sense of continuity. This is important because relationships to places are a life-long phenomenon. They develop and transform over time, so that past experiences in places influence our current relationships to places. This supports Gustafson's (2001a) discussion about the temporal dimension of place meaning (i.e., the development of place meaning through the "lifepath"). This is also evident in the research on enduring leisure involvement in particular outdoor recreational areas and encampments (Kyle and Chick 2004). Together these findings provide firm testimony to the importance of memory and long-term experience of a place or type of place.

However, it was not always necessary for a person to spend a lot of time in a place for it to have an emotional impact. In some cases, it was a singular, pivotal moment—a flashpoint experience—that solidified place meaning for people. This is usually an intense experience. It could be a sudden realization—about one's life, one's hopes or desires, or abilities—a moment of insight, a turning point in a relationship, or the making of an important decision. Such an experience can be facilitated by the environment, especially if it offers opportunities to take on a challenging task such as finishing a difficult hike. Other times these experiences occur in places that afford the opportunity for reflection. These flashpoint experiences were sometimes related to serendipitous discovery. As the findings in this research suggest, unexpected discoveries, about a place or oneself, are valued experiences. For example, one man on a walk through what became his favorite woods, rounded the bend of a path and encountered a sparkling lake that he had not known was there. That moment of discovery stayed with him and drew him to that place again and again. These experiences are unexpected learning and even growth

opportunities. They are what I consider the spatial equivalent of the "ah-ha!" moment. The value of these experiences has interesting implications for public land managers. We must continue to allow for multiple experiences in places and exercise some restraint in interpreting environments/nature for visitors so that some degree of self-guided discovery is possible. At the same time, paths, trails, viewpoints, and sitting places can be designed in a way to capitalize on environmental features that support experiences of discovery without dictating what people should do and look at, and when and where they should do it. Although one cannot design or anticipate ah-ha moments—indeed their very nature requires the serendipity—we can nonetheless allow for multiple opportunities for independent exploration and discovery without over-interpreting a site.

Although one cannot design ah-ha moments, we can nonetheless allow for multiple opportunities for independent exploration and discovery.

Other meaning-making processes also emerged as significant, particularly in terms of place specificity and interpretive scale. Place specificity refers to whether relationships to place are specific to a particular setting or whether they can be generalized to a type of setting, whereas interpretive scale refers to different levels of place interpretation—from individual-level psychological processes to larger societal processes. Findings indicate considerable flexibility in both of these areas, suggesting the fluid nature of our relationships to places. In terms of place specificity, participants sometimes extrapolated from their experiences with a specific place, developing bonds not only to that particular setting, but more generally to a similar "type" of setting. In this study, bonds were generalized to a type of setting most often when a person no longer had access to a specific place that was important to them, either because it no longer existed or because it was too far away to visit often. However, other research demonstrates that some outdoor recreationists develop attachments to a general type of place even when there is no loss of access. In terms of interpretive scale, findings indicate that place experiences and consequent meaning are influenced not only by the individual's thoughts, beliefs, values, feelings, etc., but also by social processes—either smaller social groups or larger sociocultural and political processes. Together these findings underscore the dynamic nature of people's relationships to place and the importance of a holistic perspective that allows for multiple levels of analysis of multiple environmental domains, as discussed earlier.

Finally, as we have seen, people have an array of meaningful places in their lives. Clearly, different significant places hold different meaning and play different roles in a person's life. They all are in a dynamic relationship with one another, creating a web of meaning that informs our sense of self and how we situate

ourselves (literally and figuratively) in the world. This occurred both with the array of places that are used concurrently in the present, and among places across a person's lifetime. They can include places that are geographically scattered or no longer in our current lives.

Conclusions

The research findings presented in this paper highlight the various dynamics of people's relationships to places and reveal their rich complexity. Place meanings are inextricably linked to the specifics of the experiences that take place in them. As we have seen, a host of experiences—both positive and negative, dramatic and mundane—occur in a variety of places. However, several particular types of experiences in place emerged as salient in this research. First, the role of place is critical for informing and expressing identity, and opportunities for identity development—including privacy, introspection, and reflection—are critical components of place experience that foster personal growth. Second, relationships with places are dynamic over the lifecourse, and place memories are fundamental to providing a sense of continuity of the past with the present. In this way, important and meaningful places can serve as developmental markers in one's life journey. Third, places are important for developing, revisiting, and honoring important social relationships. Fourth, a sense of belonging and safety are important experiential dimensions of meaningful places; at the same time, experiences of threat and exclusion also critically shape our relationships to place and cause us to avoid some places. Fifth, our relationships to place are influenced by the larger sociopolitical context in which we live. This context includes social and cultural norms, the biases and assumptions of the dominant culture that ignore the experiences and needs of minority groups, as well as economic constraints and existing management policies. Finally, we form important and meaningful relationships with a variety of places in our lives, and each relationship is best understood within this context of multiple places, rather than any one site. Thus, many places form a web of meaning in our lives.

Each of the points mentioned above highlight distinct aspects of our relationships to place, but all of these themes are interrelated. For example, a place that is meaningful can inform one's sense of self, and conversely our self-concept influences where we prefer to go and where we feel comfortable. It also influences which places make us uncomfortable and which we might avoid. As Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) pointed out, not only do people choose environments that are congruent with their self-concept, they also move on to find places that are more

congruent with their sense of self. This process is influenced by past experience—with both place and people, as social relationship are also critical—and memory. And all of this is informed by social processes and the political context in which we live (Dixon and Durrheim 2000). This happens on both an individual and collective level. As writings on the experience of African-Americans in wilderness areas show us, our relationships to place are not just about our own individual experiences, both past and present; collective memories are salient in the preference and use of places too (Johnson and Bowker 2004, Taylor 2000). Thus we can see that places are not merely containers for significant experiences. People take an active role in their relationships to place.

It is useful for public land managers to take a broad view and include urban nature and other places in places that are valued by the public.

Implications for Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism

The findings of this research have particular relevance for outdoor recreation and public land managers because they shed light on what experiences make people value places, what makes these experiences meaningful, and what people seek when going to particular places. We have seen how, together, many different places form webs of meaning in people's lives. Given that, it is useful for public land managers to take a broad view of people's experiences with nature settings and include urban nature and other places in current research to see how the opportunities that they provide fit into the suite of places that are valued by the public.

As we have seen, significant places can serve as developmental markers in people's evolving sense of self over time, and they can serve as important bridges to the past. This suggests that outdoor recreation settings do not have to serve all functions for all people, as these settings exist in a larger "web of meaning" in people's lives. People will always bring their own set of experiences and needs to a setting that can either enrich or diminish their experience. They will also seek out particular places to meet different needs and expectations. However, more work needs to be done to better understand shared meanings of place and how they may be influenced by social relationships as well as qualities of settings.

Although no one mentioned nature settings exclusively, it is noteworthy that almost half of the research participants discussed the importance of nature settings without being prompted. Perhaps this is an indicator that such settings are best equipped to provide some of us with experiences that we particularly value. This is congruent with other research findings on people's favorite places as nature settings with restorative qualities (Korpela and Hartig 1996). It is a compelling idea, but one that warrants further investigation. As this research and other literature shows

us, we have to be mindful of biases in research. For example, we must ask: Is this a valued setting for all or just a certain demographic? But if, in fact, there are important experiences that natural settings can uniquely provide, greater effort can be made to promote visitation to such places. This can dovetail with efforts to reach out to the full range of potential visitors.

This study does shed some light on the diverse roles that places play in people's lives and why some people might use places that others do not. In general, such insights are important for effective, sensitive management of natural resources and outdoor recreation places. They can help us understand how meanings impact the use of specific recreation and tourism sites and provide insights for negotiating diverse meanings within and among different social groups. This knowledge, in turn, can offset and help resolve conflicts over use of space.

It has been noted that "resource management is, at heart, a very political process" (Cortner and Moote 1999). The findings of this research suggest that a proper understanding of people's relationships to places must include a politicized view of these relationships (Manzo 2003, 2005). An appreciation of the politics of people's relationships to place can, in turn, help managers in the decisionmaking process to negotiate difference as well as common ground (Yung et al. 2003). As we have seen, the politics of place emerge at the individual level of analysis, but it is also important to explore relationships to places at the social/community level of analysis. This better enables us to examine shared and contested meanings as well as how the appearance, meanings, and uses of a place are influenced by sociocultural practices.

We must ask who feels invited in to certain outdoor recreation sites and what messages are sent out to people about who belongs here.

The politics of place are particularly salient in regard to tourism. Here, the places at issue are usually iconic places that hold considerable symbolic value for a society or social group, although these, too, can be contested (Williams and Stewart 1998). Hence, the dynamics of identity and belonging illustrated in this paper are critical, as are notions of "insideness" and "outsideness." We must ask who feels invited in to certain outdoor recreation sites and what messages are sent out to people about who belongs here. This framework can shed light on why some people use some places and others do not, why some feel a sense of belonging and others feel alienated. Contestations over meaning can occur among different groups, and an understanding of these diverse meanings is essential for conflict management, as it can help people to allow multiple meanings and uses to emerge—or at least to start negotiations. Here we can also learn from urban design and planning research that addresses the NIMBY (not in my backyard) phenomenon. Although some research shows how place meanings and place attachments

Understanding of diverse meanings is essential for conflict management.

have been used to justify the NIMBY response, newer research suggests that a deeper appreciation of place meaning sheds light on the motivations and rationale used by people to either resist or push forward certain preservation or development efforts.

We are now beginning to more fully appreciate the importance of research on sense of place, place attachment, and place identity for redirecting understandings of natural settings as more than commodities. This is an important rediscovering of Aldo Leopold's argument that we abuse land because we see it as a commodity belonging to us. However, "when we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." (Leopold, as quoted in Sanders 1996: 48). This suggests the importance of place meaning and attachment for environmental stewardship. If we are to develop effective policies to foster stewardship, we must begin with a better understanding of place meaning and people's relationships to place.

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Directions for Future Research

As outdoor recreation and tourism continue to grow, management efforts and the public policies created to support such efforts must be informed by different levels of analysis of place meaning—not only the individual level, but the group, community, and societal level. Moreover, there must be more interdisciplinary collaboration. There is a great deal we can learn from an array of disciplines—geography, planning, philosophy, community psychology—and we must mine this work for insights for natural resource management. A more holistic perspective is necessary to understand fully the nature of people's relationships to places and to incorporate the full range of people's place experiences into that understanding (Manzo and Perkins 2006). Such a perspective includes multiple environmental domains (physical, social, political, and economic) as well as multiple levels of analysis. Each of these levels and domains informs the other and plays a part in the use and meaning of the environment. For example, our use of a place is informed by our individual thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and values, which are also shaped by our sociocultural context. That context influences the appearance, qualities, and uses of a place. This, in turn, is affected by the political economy as well as the behavior of both individuals and groups. So all levels and domains are interconnected and we must try to appreciate all of them in a more integrated program of study. This more holistic approach can contribute important insights for the use and management of outdoor recreational settings and natural resources, shedding light on issues that have hitherto been under-explored in this specific field.

It is also important to conduct further research on the social meanings of natural resource recreation and tourism sites and the sociocultural processes through which their meanings develop. More broadly, we must better understand the political underpinnings of outdoor recreation space use, experience, and meaning. This should include exploration into the expectations and experiences of place for those who choose to work in public land management. This can help shed light on how and why policies are made, and what people value and prioritize in managing public lands.

As MacNaghten and Urry (1998) argued, our understanding of nature develops through various sociocultural practices. Social practices produce, reproduce, and transform different natures and nature-related values. It is essential to see nature and our experiences of it in this context. Moreover, how people (including the media) talk about and conceptualize nature in their day-to-day lives is critical, as is people's sense of power or powerlessness in how they make sense of, and use, natural settings. Related to this, the findings that some people do not choose to leave the city to have contact with nature and that they have meaningful experiences in nearby nature suggests that further research must contextualize our relationship to nature within an urban world. The fact that some participants felt decidedly less comfortable "in the middle of nowhere" supports the argument that we need to appreciate and better understand experiences in more developed recreation areas (Stewart et al. 2003, see also Farnum et al. 2005).

Further research must contextualize our relationship to nature within an urban world.

As Hayden (1995: 112) pointed out, "place is one of the trickiest words in the English language, a suitcase so overfilled we can never shut the lid." The challenges behind understanding this word reflect the complexity of our relationship to the world around us. But despite these challenges—or perhaps because of them—we are compelled to try to understand our relationships to place. Those of us who conduct research in this area, or who work in natural resource management and tourism, share some broad value about the importance of place in our lives, particularly natural settings. Although specific meanings, roles, and strategies might differ, in the end, we share this fundamental common ground. And this moves us forward to learn more fully about the nuances of relationships to place so that we can better appreciate their complexities—the positive and the negative, the commonalities and contestations. This will open possibilities for more sensitive public land management and will ultimately help us to learn how to better live our lives. Place is, after all, part of the human endeavor for understanding, dignity, and the honoring of our heritage as members of the Earth.

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Chapter 8—Collaborative Place-Based Forest Planning: A Case Example From the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests in Western Colorado

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Abstract

This paper describes a collaborative process in which diverse stakeholders, including USDA Forest Service staff, defined a shared vision for the geographic places making up the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) in western Colorado as the first phase of the GMUG forest plan revision. A thematic mapping process was used in which geographic places serve as starting points for dialogue and deliberation among diverse stakeholders over desired future conditions for the national forest. Place becomes a platform upon which people can come together and craft shared vision. Although the GMUG case focuses on an ecologically based set of place themes and, therefore, does not encompass the full range of experiences, values, and uses that are bundled in "sense of place," we show how conflict can be considerably narrowed and common ground significantly expanded. The approach used on the GMUG is but one alternative framework for developing desired future conditions in national forest plan revision exercises, and can serve as a template for other collaborative planning processes.

Keywords: Planning, place, conflict, collaboration.

Introduction

Natural resource social scientists have used the concept of "place" in the past decade as a lens for understanding and analyzing people's values and policy preferences for federal public lands and resources (Brandenburg and Carroll 1995, Cheng et al. 2003, Eisenhauer et al. 2000, Kruger 1996, Schroeder 1996, Williams and Stewart 1998, Williams et al. 1992). Given that people value public lands and resources in vastly different ways and for divergent reasons, is it possible for

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diverse stakeholders to collaboratively develop a shared vision for national forest places? The purpose of this paper is to provide federal public land planners and managers practical strategies for maximizing such collaboration by using a place-based framework.

This paper describes a collaborative process in which diverse stakeholders, including USDA Forest Service (USFS) staff, defined a shared vision for the geographic places making up the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) in western Colorado as the first phase of the GMUG forest plan revision. In this context, "place" is defined in two ways. In the most basic sense, place is geographic: the land parcels that compose the GMUG. The places are most easily delineated on maps and represent distinct geographic features, such as a ridge, valley, plateau, recreation corridor, or watershed. Second, a thematic mapping process was used in which geographic places serve as starting points for dialogue and deliberation among diverse stakeholders over desired future conditions for the national forest. Place becomes a platform upon which people can come together and craft shared vision.

The approach used on the GMUG is but one alternative framework for developing desired future conditions in national forest plan revision exercises, and can serve as a template for other collaborative planning processes.

Although the GMUG case focuses on an ecologically based set of place themes and, therefore, does not encompass the full range of experiences, values, and uses that are bundled in "sense of place" (Williams and Stewart 1998), we show how conflict was considerably narrowed and common ground significantly expanded. The approach used on the GMUG is but one alternative framework for developing desired future conditions in national forest plan revision exercises, and can serve as a template for other collaborative planning processes.

Place as a Locus of Conflict or Collaboration in Public Lands Planning

Daniel Kemmis, in his book, *Community and the Politics of Place* (Kemmis 1990: 119), wrote:

> Places have a way of claiming people. When they claim very diverse kinds of people, then those people must eventually learn to live with each other; they must learn to inhabit their place together, which they can only do through the development of certain practices of inhabitation which both rely upon and nurture the old-fashion civic virtues of trust, honesty, justice, toleration, cooperation, hope, and remembrance.

Based on his personal experiences as former mayor of Missoula, Montana, Kemmis painted a rather rosy picture of citizens who typically stand on opposite sides of issues coming together around their shared place. What might be the role of place in shaping conflict and collaboration, especially in national forest planning contexts? Is there a process by which diverse people become "claimed" by the place and begin working together toward a shared vision?

We do know that conflict exists in national forest planning because the process is generally conducted by USFS planning teams in a way that forces tradeoffs among what are assumed to be mutually exclusive, competing demands (Behan 1981, Bettinger and Chung 2004). Conflict is defined as the interaction between interdependent parties who perceive incompatibility of goals and interference with achieving their own goals (Folger et al. 1997). In many cases, forest planning processes generate conflict by the way geographic places are labeled and presented to public stakeholders. A prime example is the use of management areas in forest plans. Management areas delineate the landscape into distinct parcels (places) with each parcel emphasizing one dominant use or value as defined almost exclusively by the USFS planning team and resource specialists. These parcels are typically designated by the team with generic labels such as "suitable commercial timber," "livestock grazing," or "winter elk habitat." Alternative management scenarios are then presented to the public where each alternative has a different number of acres per management area. Coalitions of citizens and groups line up behind the alternative that maximizes the number of acres for their primary use, value, or interest. Stakeholders often end up counting and comparing how many acres there are in Management Area 1.1 versus Management Area 3.2, for example.

By assigning generic, general labels to management areas, national forest planning teams preclude opportunities for discussions between the USFS and stakeholders, and among stakeholders themselves, about the particularistic, nuanced interactions, uses, interests, and values diverse people have with and for the landscapes. Stakeholders are typically not part of the process of assigning values, uses, and desired conditions. The general place meanings assigned by the planning team result in a social process where stakeholders are pitted against one another even if there is common ground between them (Blahna and Yonts-Shepard 1989, Wondolleck 1988). Forest planners effectively (albeit likely inadvertently) divide citizens and groups into competing camps, each fighting for their own share of the landscape. Approached in this way, places are loci for conflict.

On the flip side of conflict is collaboration. Collaboration is defined as a process by which diverse stakeholders who see different aspects of a situation

constructively explore their commonalities and differences, and systematically search for ways to improve the situation that go beyond their limited vision of what is possible (adapted from Gray 1989; Daniels and Walker 2001). Collaborative processes have emerged in federal public lands planning that seek to address areas of conflict and work toward common goals, such as the Applegate Partnership in southern Oregon (Rolle 2002, Sturtevant and Lange 2003) or the Ponderosa Pine Partnership in southwestern Colorado (Richard and Burns 1999).

In the case of the Applegate Partnership, individual citizens, interest group representatives, and representatives from local, state, and federal agencies have focused their energies since 1992 on achieving the shared goal of restoring and enhancing ecological and community health in the Applegate watershed. The partnership developed integrated watershed analyses and landscape-level plans to which individual projects are tiered. Hence, USFS, Bureau of Land Management, state and local governments, and even timber industry land management activities are coordinated so as to minimize ecological fragmentation while still meeting each landowner's objectives. By facilitating the development of action plans where each stakeholder benefits and the collective also benefits, participants in the Applegate Partnership have been able to achieve ecological and social gains that they would not have otherwise achieved alone. Additionally, the partnership focuses on on-the-ground results, such as the removal of small-diameter trees to reduce hazardous fuel loadings, riparian fencing, removal of fish passage barriers, and even proposing local ordinances on gravel extraction along local creeks and rivers (Rolle 2002: 4).

In the case of the Ponderosa Pine Partnership, the USFS, local governments, timber industry, and conservation groups came together in 1992 around a shared concern over the health of ponderosa pine forests in southwest Colorado. The partnership took a study group approach where stakeholders collaboratively learn about specific resource conditions and issues. This was done through intensive field trips as well as facilitated study sessions where scientific, technical, and local knowledge is presented and exchanged in a workshop setting. From this collaborative learning, the stakeholders jointly developed, implemented, and evaluated specific treatments to achieve collectively defined desired conditions for that particular landscape. To date, over 4,000 acres of the San Juan National Forest have been treated.[2]

[2] Dallison, D. 2004. Personal communication. Silviculturalist, San Juan National Forest, 15 Burnett Court, Durango, CO 81301.

In both the Applegate and the Ponderosa Pine Partnerships, the geographic place provided an organizing principle, a starting point for diverse stakeholders to collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision. In this way, places can be loci for collaboration. One possible interpretation for the role of geographic place in collaboration is that, through a collaborative forum and process, stakeholders can articulate the particularistic nature of their respective interactions with, and knowledge of, the geographic place. In both aforementioned partnerships, stakeholders eschewed the traditional process by which an agency planning team assigned generic, general labels to the landscapes such as "suitable timber" or "Class IV watershed" and, instead, developed shared understandings and desired future conditions of this place in particular based on a collaborative learning process.

Collaboration is a deliberate process where stakeholders build working relationships around issues and desired conditions affecting specific pieces of ground.

Empirical research has shed light on the mechanisms by which stakeholders, interacting in a collaborative process, are able to engage in an approach to define the desired future conditions and activities of specific locales rather than abstract philosophical or policy positions. Collaboration is a deliberate process of learning where stakeholders intentionally share idiosyncratic experiences, knowledge, information, and perspectives (Bentrup 2001; Cestero 1999; Daniels and Walker 1996, 2001; Pipkin and Doerksen 2000; Schuett et al. 2001; Webler et al. 2001; Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000). Stakeholders build working relationships around issues and desired conditions affecting specific pieces of ground (Bentrup 2001, Cestero 1999, Cheng and Daniels 2005, Michaels 2001, Schuett et al. 2001). Through a collaborative learning process, stakeholders examine and analyze the nuanced, multidimensional character of issues affecting specific places rather than seeking general, generic prescriptions across all situations (Bentrup 2001, Borrini-Feyerabend 1996, Cheng and Daniels 2003, Daniels and Walker 1996, Richard and Burns 1999, Sturtevant and Lange 2003). Because the focus is on a specific resource situation or landscape, stakeholders are able to participate in implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, resulting in a commitment to productive improvement in a specific situation (Bentrup 2001, Schuett et al. 2001).

Through a collaborative process, especially one that emphasizes learning, stakeholders are afforded the structure and opportunity to articulate a shared vision of a place, drawing on their own interactions with the place. By doing so, stakeholders have found ways to induce changes in the management of places at various scales—from 100-acre ponderosa pine stands to 200,000-acre watersheds. It is important to note that collaboration emerged primarily in response to a demand from citizens who desired planning processes that respected and valued more

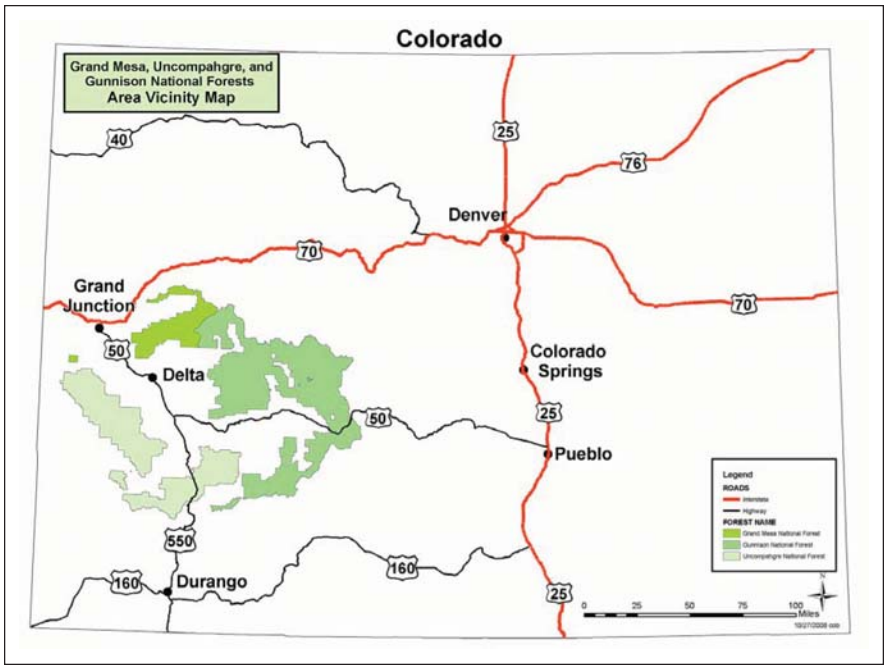
nuanced experiences and knowledge (Brick et al. 2001, Buckles 1999, Weber 2000). Many observers attach the moniker "community-based" indicating that a collaborative planning process emerged from the grassroots level, as opposed to an "expert-driven" planning process.

In sum, federal public land planning processes are about places to which diverse people assign value and meaning. Collaboration has opened up this process of assigning meanings, desired conditions, and prescriptions to specific places by valuing individuals' place-based knowledge, experience, and stories versus general/generic labels. In practice, this involves intensive dialogue and requires a substantial investment of time, people, and resources to plan, implement, and adaptively manage the dialogue. Because of this, several national forests, including the GMUG, have initiated place-based dialogue in the assessment phase of planning prior to the Notice of Intent and scoping phases required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA 1969). These approaches move away from delineating management areas by prescription to one where the desired conditions and proposed management actions for each geographic place are collaboratively defined by USFS staff and stakeholders. Key to these approaches is involving stakeholders in defining geographic boundaries and naming geographic areas, developing vision statements for the area, and defining current and desired future conditions. In the next section, we describe the pre-NEPA place-based collaborative process used on the GMUG.

The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests Plan Revision Process

The GMUG is approximately 3.2 million acres of federal public land spanning a 7-million-acre subregion in eight counties in western Colorado (fig. 15). Western Colorado, like many parts of the Western United States, has experienced a transformation in its primary economy from agriculture and resource extraction to tourism and "amenity" values, although both of these economic factors are present on the landscape. The GMUG forest plan revision was divided into phases, with phase 1 beginning in February 2002 with a series of geographic area assessments.

Geographic area assessments define and synthesize issues, current conditions, trends and risks, desired future conditions, and recommended management options to achieve desired conditions. In short, the geographic assessments lay the foundation for defining and analyzing decision alternatives for the revised forest plan. By their very nature, geographic area assessments are place based, drawing on data and information specific to a geographic location. The place-based approach to the



GMUG National Forests

Figure 15—Location of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests in western Colorado.

assessments also provided opportunities for structuring a public involvement effort that built on stakeholders' interactions with the geographic places on the GMUG.

The GMUG was divided into five geographic areas along topographic or watershed boundaries by forest employees. This was a marked departure from the smaller, prescriptive management areas approach taken in the first round of forest planning. For each geographic area assessment, a landscape working group (LWG) was convened as the forum for public involvement. The LWGs were not formal, organized groups per se; they were venues for the public to contribute to defining issues, current conditions, and desired future conditions. The name was chosen to accentuate the working nature of the meetings. Between February 2002 and October 2003, 42 community meetings were conducted with 1,035 registered participants. From the sign-in sheets we find that 15 percent of the participants were formally affiliated with an organized interest group; the remainder did not claim an organizational or interest group affiliation. Sixty-eight percent of the participants were male and had lived in the geographic area for an average of 11.3 years (with a range of 2 to 58 years). The self-identified occupations of the participants ranged from traditional land use-oriented employment, such as farming and ranching, to more urban-oriented service jobs, such as computer systems analyst and bike shop owner. Approximately 35 percent of the participants were retired.

An exercise in mapping landscape management themes maximized collaboration and minimized conflict.

The primary technique for engaging diverse stakeholders that maximized collaboration and minimized conflict was a participatory mapping exercise called the "Landscape Management Themes" exercise. In the mapping exercise, the LWG participants worked together to identify what the landscape will look like in the future—the desired future condition of the geographic area. The exercise divided participants into small groups of six to eight individuals. The USFS personnel sat at each table to clarify technical questions and encourage open dialogue. Each small group table was equipped with:

- 3- by 5-foot maps of the geographic area divided into landscape units ranging from 1:250,000 scale to 1:50,000 scale.
- Landscape theme reference guide.
- Data summaries for each landscape unit.
- Desired condition worksheet.

The planning team, working together with district staff, generated the maps and data summaries. The maps are digital replicas of maps commonly used for recreation pursuits, such as hiking, motorcycling, and car touring. Maps of different scales were used, from small-scale, large-area forestwide maps (approximately 1:250,000) to large-scale, small-area watershed maps (approximately 1:50,000). Figure 16 is an example of a medium-scale map used in the Gunnison Basin LWG. The map scale is approximately 1:125,000 and depicts the northern half of the Gunnison River basin. Inset in Figure 16 is an example of a small-scale map used in the Gunnison Basin LWG. The map scale is approximately 1:50,000 and depicts the Taylor Park area. Hence, the maps were of places and at geographic scales that were familiar to stakeholders.

The landscape units on the maps are color-coded by theme. The landscape themes classified landscape conditions on a continuum.

Theme 1: Natural Processes Dominate

These areas are managed to perpetuate semiprimitive to pristine conditions. Natural processes and conditions are not measurably affected by human use. This theme includes designated wilderness areas and other primitive areas. Lands must be a minimum of 5,000 acres or be contiguous with other wilderness/undeveloped areas to qualify for theme 1 management. Ecological processes such as fire, insects, and disease are allowed to operate essentially free from the influence of humans. Vegetation composition and structure result predominately from natural succession, and

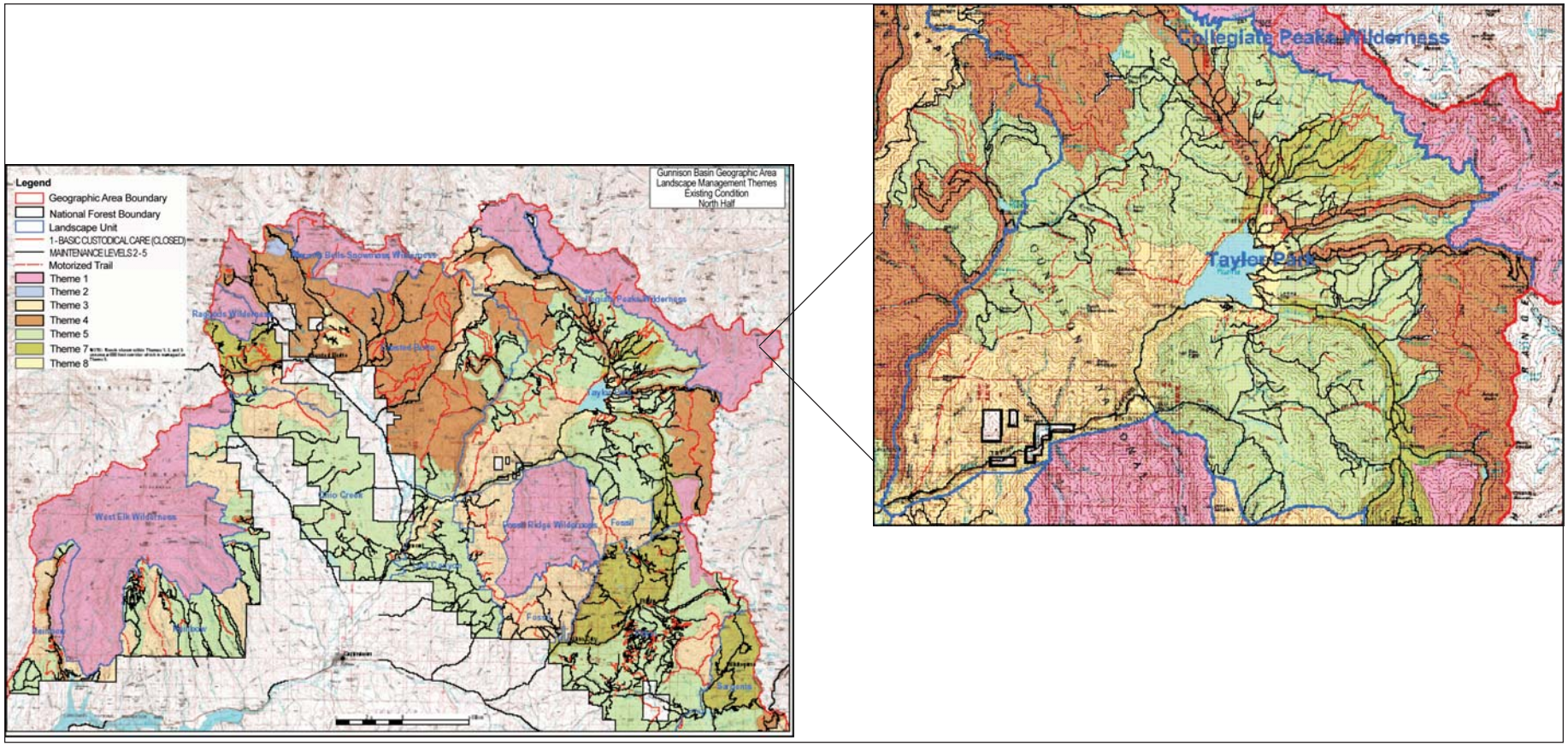


Figure 16—The north half of the Gunnison River Basin Geographic Area. Theme 1 = Natural processes, Theme 2 = Minimal use special areas, Theme 3 = Natural landscape with management, Theme 4 = Recreation emphasis special areas, Theme 5 = Modified natural environments, Theme 6 = Grassland, Theme 7 = Residential-forest intermix, Theme 8 =Permanently altered. (Courtesy of the GMUG National Forests)

nonnative vegetation is rare. Visitors should be self-reliant and expect low levels of contact with other people. Few, if any, human-made facilities and structural improvements are present. Travel is nonmotorized with rare exceptions of winter motorized travel outside of designated wilderness areas. A minor amount of motorized use may be needed to restore desired conditions in restoration areas. Mountain bike use may be allowed. Livestock grazing is generally an established use, and it is carefully managed to maintain the ecological integrity of rangeland and riparian systems.

Theme 2: Minimal Use Special Areas

These special emphasis areas provide for the conservation of representative, unique, or rare ecosystems, ecological components, or culturally significant features. Theme 2 areas help ensure conservation of ecosystems that may provide important contributions to the overall sustainability of larger landscapes. Human influences on ecological processes or special resources are limited to the degree possible, but sometimes evident. The type of human use can vary; however, it is generally not intensive. Travel generally is nonmotorized. These areas are managed for a particular objective and are often formally designated. These lands can range from a few hundred to several thousand acres and include such areas as Research Natural Areas—special biological, geological, or cultural/historical areas. The balance of management activity favors elimination of uses that are incompatible with the area's primary management objective.

Theme 3: Natural Landscape With Management

Moderate levels of resource management and recreational activities can occur, but the natural character of the landscape is emphasized. Resource management activities such as timber harvest, grazing, and mineral leasing may be conducted, but on balance, management objectives favor natural ecological processes. Although these areas are characterized primarily by natural-appearing landscapes, a variety of management tools may be used to restore or maintain natural ecological processes. This may result in some evidence of human activities. In some areas, users will experience considerable isolation from the sights and sounds of people in a setting that offers considerable challenge and risk. Backcountry areas within this theme are generally a minimum of 2,500 acres. Restrictions on motorized travel may differ from area to area or from season to season. Motorized travel is not common but is allowed at low density on motorized trails. Trails are made of native substrate

(dirt/rock). Resource use may change over time to accommodate priority ecological objectives. Livestock grazing, although common, is managed to maintain the ecological integrity of rangeland and riparian systems.

Theme 4: Recreation Emphasis Special Areas

Lands are managed to emphasize recreation opportunities and scenery values while maintaining ecosystem integrity. These areas typically are centered on transportation corridors or bodies of water. Other resource uses are not emphasized and therefore have little impact on ecological conditions. Effects can occur from facility development and hardened surfaces at recreation sites. Human use is recreation oriented; potential for contact with other users is high. Sights and sounds of people on the site are expected and may even be desired. Motorized transportation is common. Examples range from developed scenic byways and recreation areas to relatively undeveloped natural areas often near natural attractions such as lakes and streams. Unstructured recreational activities occur, such as fishing, snow play, camping, etc. Various management activities are allowed but limited to be compatible with the recreation setting, public safety, and stewardship objectives.

Theme 5: Modified Natural Environments

These forest and grassland communities are managed with a strong multiple-use emphasis on various resource objectives. Management is usually a combination of livestock grazing, timber treatments to maintain or enhance stand vigor, and prescribed fire or mechanical vegetation treatments to improve forage and browse production. One or more commodity resource program areas (e.g., livestock, timber harvest, minerals) may be emphasized, while providing a wide array of recreational opportunities and diverse ecological conditions. A mosaic of vegetation conditions are present, some showing the effects of past management activities, others appearing predominantly natural. These lands often display a high level of investment, use, activity, facility density, and vegetation manipulation. Users expect to see other people and evidence of human activities. Recreation opportunities range from dispersed to developed. Facilities supporting the various resources are common. Motorized transportation is common.

Theme 6: Grassland Condition

Does not apply to the GMUG.

Wildland-urban interface areas have high priority for fuel and vegetation treatments to reduce wildlife hazard.

Theme 7: Residential-Forest Intermix

Public lands are intermingled with private lands to such an extent that management objectives for forest lands are generally secondary to community or landowner uses and objectives. These areas, often referred to as the "wildland-urban interface," have a high priority for fuel and vegetation treatments to reduce wildfire hazard. Human activities have altered the natural appearance of these landscapes in most areas on both public and private lands. Resource extraction (logging, grazing, mining, etc.) is not planned on a sustainable basis, but may occur in concert with surrounding community and private landowner objectives. Motorized transportation is common. Sights and sounds of people predominate. Vegetation management may be done to minimize fuel loading and to improve public safety or enhance scenery. Some dispersed recreation uses (e.g., overnight camping) are not encouraged. Access to existing areas of high recreational use is provided. Land exchanges and acquisitions are compatible with community and other landowner objectives.

Theme 8: Permanently Altered Areas

These areas, which are generally small in scale, are permanently altered by human activities such that ecological conditions and landscape appearance are likely outside their natural range. Management emphasis is generally for a single program, such as leasable mineral development or highly developed recreation. Human activities are generally commercial in nature and directly or indirectly provide jobs and income. Ecological conditions are maintained to ensure public health and safety and secondary aesthetic and amenity values. Motorized transportation is common. Examples of permanently developed sites include utility corridors, mining sites or districts, and highly developed and concentrated recreation complexes such as ski areas.

Pubic Involvement in Theme Mapping

In essence, the themes describe different kinds of disturbances affecting the landscape, from purely natural to purely human alterations, and the resulting landscape conditions one might see. They obviously are not as nuanced as the broad range of individual's "sense of place" for the GMUG. Nevertheless, the themes do provide a platform from which diverse stakeholders can articulate their own interactions with, knowledge of, and perspectives on the geographic places that make up the GMUG. Through the collaborative learning process in each LWG, stakeholders were able to use the themes as a common language for communicating the current and desired

Table 6—Data summary for the Taylor Park area of the Gunnison Basin Geographic Area (160,900 acres)

Road		Vegetation		Area suitable for timber harvest[b]	Outstanding or unique characteristics	Existing uses and past management activities	Existing condition mangement		Management concerns
Type	Length	Type	Total area				Theme[a]	Area	
	Miles		*Percent*	*Acres*				*Percent*	
Improved	106	Aspen	2	100	Summer range for bighorn sheep, mountain goat, and moose	Livestock grazing	Theme 1	2	Relatively quick access from Front range brings increasing number of visitors to the area
High clearance	199	Conifer	68	52,000	Historic mining towns	Taylor Canyon Road upgrade	Theme 3	17	Potential upgrade of Cottonwood Pass Road could escalate number of visitors to the area
Administrative	6	Shrub	17		Presence of boreal toad and northern pike	Colorado Trail Gunnison spur	Theme 4	24	National marketing of the areas' motorcycle trails draws high numbers of users
Closed	31	Grass	8		Regionally renowned high-quality fishery: Taylor River below reservior	Developed campgrounds	Theme 5	43	Travel management enforcement
Motorized travel	154	Water	1		Sensitive plan populations and unique fen wetlands	Heaviest developed and dispersed recreation activities on the GMUG	Theme 7	8	Development of private land fragmenting landscape
		Barren	3			Recreation activities: camping, rafting, fishing, hunting, gold dredging	Theme 8	6	
						Outfitters/guide activities: rafting fishing, hunting			
						Winter recreation: snowmobile, dog sled ice fishing			

Table 6—Data summary for the Taylor Park area of the Gunnison Basin Geographic Area (160,900 acres) (continued)

Road		Vegetation		Area suitable for timber harvest[b]	Outstanding or unique characteristics	Existing uses and past management activities	Existing condition mangement		Management concerns
Type	Length	Type	Total area				Theme[a]	Area	
	Miles		*Percent*	*Acres*				*Percent*	
						Recreation events: Ride the Rockies bike tours, Colorado 500 motorcycle tour, Round-up Riders of the Rockies horse trail ride Privatly owned reservoir Prescribed fire Timber harvests and extensive forest vegetation treatments Developed sewage lagoon USFS permitted summer homes			Boundary identification between the forest and private land often unclear Union Park Project–potential transmountain water diversion

[a] Existing management themes:

Theme 1–Natural processes dominate
Theme 2–Minimal use special areas
Theme 3–Minimal management
Theme 4–Recreation emphasis
Theme 5–Active management
Theme 6–Rangeland/grazing management
Theme 7–Private land intermix
Theme 8–Permanently altered lands

[b] According to the 1991 GMUG Forest Plan Amendment.

Sandy Guerreri

Figure 17—Community stakeholders participating in the landscape management theme exercise.

conditions and proposed alterations of the landscape units. Furthermore, the themes differ from the traditional "management area" labels by encompassing a much broader range of potential uses, values, and people-place interactions. The data summaries are tables of key information of the area, such as vegetation types, amount of area in roads and trails, recreation opportunities, potential for timber and other resource production activities, and unique ecological and social values, such as endangered species or historical landmarks. Table 6 is a data summary for Taylor Park in the Gunnison Basin Geographic Area.

The first stage of the mapping process was to affirm, adjust, and amend the information for each landscape unit on the map. In their small groups of six to eight people, individuals compared the information on the data summary with what they knew or had experienced on the specific landscape unit (see fig. 17). A group facilitator—typically a USFS staff member—ensured that everyone at the table had a chance to speak and offer their perspectives. The facilitator took notes directly on the data summary of any discrepancies identified by the group participants. It was common for group participants to share stories of a recent hike or drive up a specific trail or road, or about historic events or activities on the landscape unit. It was also common for participants to challenge one another about whether a change was permanent or temporary, or whether conditions had remained the same, gotten better, or gotten worse.

The point of this first stage is for participants to realize and appreciate the diversity of experiences, knowledge, and values associated with this landscape unit, and to encourage the participants to develop a common understanding of the current condition of the landscape unit. Although the landscape themes and data summaries are primarily biophysical, the dialogue among group participants was about how their own experiences and knowledge compared to the themes and information presented by the USFS. Participants were also encouraged to redraw the boundaries for the landscape unit, as well as question the landscape theme assigned by the USFS. Any changes were recorded directly on the map or on the data summary sheet. Throughout this process, participants drew on their own and one another's local knowledge of the landscape, resources, and uses, and matched it up to the information provided by the USFS. This was a unique opportunity for local stakeholders to contribute to the production of information and knowledge about the local landscape.

Defining the desired condition of the landscape is a highly deliberative process; it requires people to integrate individual visions for how the land should look in the future.

The second stage of the mapping process is to define the desired condition of the landscape. This is a highly deliberative process because it requires people to integrate individual visions for how the land should look in the future and the role of people in achieving this vision. In their group of six to eight people, individuals were asked by the facilitator, "Should this landscape unit remain a theme 'X' or should its desired future condition be another theme? If the theme should not be changed, why? If the theme should be changed, how will this change be achieved?" In this stage, diverse individuals are presented with the opportunity to explore their differences and discover commonalities. In the case of disagreements over desired conditions, the facilitator continued to probe asking the disputing parties to explain and justify their perspectives. The facilitator ensured that each individual had an opportunity to express his or her perspective.

In addition, the facilitator asked about whether the proposed desired future condition theme is feasible—what realistically needs to happen for the condition to be achieved. A Desired Condition Worksheet was formatted to encourage stakeholders to use the landscape themes to describe the findings of small group deliberations. Specific comments and concerns were written on the worksheets to provide equal voice to dissenting viewpoints. For example, if the majority of the group decided that Taylor Park should be primarily landscape theme 3 with designated areas of 1 and 5, but two individuals wanted the whole Taylor Park to be a theme 5, their perspectives were written on the sheet with a brief explanation for why this is a desired future condition. The point of this second stage is to uncover a range of potential desired future conditions for each landscape unit, not necessarily

to force a consensus around one theme. The Gunnison Basin LWG meeting summaries for Taylor Park, a landscape in the Gunnison Basin, are given in appendix 3.

A total of 83 landscape management theme areas in the five geographic areas were assigned management themes and values by stakeholders. Twenty-three out of the 83 areas (28 percent) were assigned themes that had conflicting desired future conditions—primarily a disparity between themes 1, 3, and 5. For the remaining areas (60 out of 83, or 72 percent), LWG participants generally agreed on the landscape themes. At this writing, the GMUG has finalized the geographic area assessments and, based on the assessments' findings, has formulated a preliminary proposed action (PPA) for each of the five geographic areas (see http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug/policy/plan_rev/index.shtml). The LWGs, through the participatory mapping exercise, directly influenced the decisionmaking process. For example, the desired future condition landscape themes for Taylor Park PPA closely aligned with the thematic input received from the LWG meeting in October 2003. The GMUG planning team worked with stakeholders through September 2005 on collaboratively developed objectives, guidelines, and a plan monitoring program. Unfortunately, an administrative delay postponed the release of the draft forest plan until fall 2006.

Postmeeting evaluation questionnaires also provide quantitative indication of how LWG participants viewed the mapping exercise. Table 7 shows mean rankings to questions focusing on the process. As the table indicates, participants nearly universally valued a deliberative process early on in the planning process well before decisions were being made, with a mean rank of 4.59 on a scale of 1 to 5. This indicates the importance of engaging stakeholders in the situation assessment phase of planning. Participants also indicated that they valued the knowledge that others possess (mean rank = 4.30), including the Forest Service (mean rank = 4.22). Participants generally found value in small group discussions (mean rank = 4.29) when using the mapping process (mean rank = 4.36), but were slightly less comfortable with large group discussions (3.96). Participants who attended the LWGs were already well versed in deliberative processes, having previously been a part of two or three collaborative groups. Indeed, federal land managers can expect stakeholders to already have experience in collaborative processes.

In sum, preliminary results indicate that taking a place-based approach to engaging stakeholders in the situation assessment phase of the GMUG planning process produced qualified success. By collaboratively defining desired future conditions for geographic places rather than reacting to aggregate management area

By collaboratively defining desired future conditions for geographic places rather than reacting to aggregate management area acreages, stakeholders were able to come together to expand common ground and narrow conflict with regard to landscapes they all care about.

Table 7—Mean response rankings to learning-based questions from postmeeting questionnaires, Grand Mesa, San Juans, and Gunnison Basin Landscape Working Groups

	Mean response ranking (n = 329, except where noted)	
Evaluation question	**Mean ranking (1 = strongly disagree;) 5 = strongly agree**	**Standard deviation**
I understand how this evening's meeting fits into the GMUG forest plan revision.	3.81	1.05
My knowledge of the area provided important contributions to this meeting.	4.06	1.05
Other citizens' knowledge of the area provided important contributions to this meeting.	4.30	.98
The district staff's knowledge of the area provided important contributions to this meeting.	4.22	.98
It is important that the public is being involved at this early stage of the Forest Plan Revision.	4.59	.91
Presentations by Forest Service staff help me better understand various issues affecting the area.	4.11	1.04
I was comfortable discussing public land issues with people I don't know. (n = 273)	4.11	.00
I was comfortable discussing public land issues with people who hold different viewpoints. (n = 273)	4.11	1.02
I was comfortable contributing to discussions during the large group activity.	3.96	1.10
I was comfortable contributing to discussions during the small group activity.	4.29	.95
I felt comfortable using maps during the landscape management activity.	4.36	.95
I am comfortable talking to Forest Service staff about issues in the area. (n = 273)	4.34	1.03
How many collaborative processes have you participated in over the past 5 years?	2.55	1.10
How many of these involved the GMUG forest?	2.16	1.14

acreages, stakeholders were able to come together to expand common ground and narrow conflict with regard to landscapes they all care about.

Implications

Gathering diverse stakeholders around maps can cause them to recognize how interdependent their uses and values are with one another. Maps especially can facilitate this recognition of interdependence.

The GMUG case offers valuable lessons with implications for national forests embarking on revising their forest plans or other landscape-scale plans. First, the participatory mapping techniques and LWG processes used on the GMUG can serve as templates for other national forest planning processes. They were effective in bringing together technical and social information in ways that seemed to make sense to the LWG participants. The participatory mapping process, in particular, struck a balance between imposing enough structure and background information, and allowing stakeholders ample opportunities to articulate their own experiences, knowledge, and perspectives. At a broader level, the process might have initiated communities of GMUG places. Gathering diverse stakeholders around maps can cause them to recognize how interdependent their uses and values are with one another. Maps especially can facilitate this recognition of interdependence.

Second, it is clear that the GMUG landscape themes are but one of any number of thematic frameworks planning teams and stakeholders can use as a starting point for collaboratively defining desired future conditions. The GMUG planning team decided to base their themes on categories of disturbance and resulting landscape conditions; however, it is conceivable—and perhaps necessary—that other themes be used, such as variations of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum or themes collaboratively developed by a planning team and ad hoc group of stakeholders. It all depends on the issues, geographic scale of the planning context, the relevant land management laws and policies (in this case, the National Forest Management Act and associated administrative rules), and the stakeholders involved in the process. The key point is that the thematic approach taken by the GMUG is adaptable to any number of planning contexts, providing a starting point from which USFS staff and stakeholders can begin articulating and sharing their unique knowledge, experiences, and perspectives on a geographic place.

Third, the GMUG case clearly demonstrates that a broad range of people—from organizational representatives to lay persons—have the willingness and capacity to participate in collaborative national forest planning processes when given the opportunity. The postmeeting questionnaires from the GMUG process demonstrate that stakeholders show clear preferences for processes that afford opportunities to articulate and share nuanced, individual interactions with and knowledge of geographic places. Such stakeholders desire a participatory process that gets

away from "acre counting" of management areas and builds capacity for being full partners in national forest planning, including defining management objectives, guidelines, and monitoring protocols. Obviously, the LWG process used on the GMUG is geared toward people living relatively close to the national forest and, therefore, may not necessarily include a representative set of values, uses, and desired conditions for the larger population. However, recent research on incorporating spatial analyses of social values for public lands in random sample surveys shows promise for getting a more representative set of values, uses, and desired conditions (Brown 2005, Brown et al. 2002).

The constantly evolving terrain of place-based planning affords opportunities for partnerships between planners, managers, and researchers that can be productive and educational for everyone involved.

In conclusion, national forest planning is evolving as innovative planners and managers attempt to address the ever-increasing diversity of demands on federal public lands. Much of the innovation is taking a place-based approach. It is not an area where research is providing tools and answers. Indeed, research in place-based planning is in its infancy in federal public land planning, although a larger body of research is developing in urban and regional planning. As a result, planners and managers are constantly experimenting and adapting approaches to their specific contexts. Interestingly, the constantly evolving terrain of place-based planning affords opportunities for partnerships between planners, managers, and researchers that can be productive and educational for everyone involved. The nature of place-based dialogue among stakeholders also requires the different skill sets of planners, managers, and researchers, especially skills in multiparty negotiation, conflict management, and interpersonal and group communications. These skills bring planners and managers into contact with social science researchers they may not have worked with before. The working relationships that evolve can be of tremendous benefit to all parties.

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Metric Equivalents

When you know:	Multiply by:	To find:
Acres	0.405	Hectares
Feet (ft)	0.305	Meters

Appendix 1: Workshop Participants

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Appendix 2: Research Questions

Research questions were identified by the group by using a brainstorming process. Participants then identified their highest priority questions. The six questions that ranked highest in importance are listed first, followed by the other questions the group rated important and of interest but less pressing.

- How do local and nonlocal social processes interact to create place meanings?
- How do relevant management groups (e.g., demographically defined groups, activity groups, gender groups, ethnic groups) differ in place meanings?
- How do meanings for specific recreation and tourism sites become negotiated within social groups?
- Under what condition(s) (planning processes) does a management focus on place attachment and place meaning reduce or avert increases in conflict?
- What are the different meanings of place elicited by different research methods (e.g., surveys, diaries, narratives, 2nd document analysis)?
- How are changes in place meanings affected by changes in the physical environment?
- How do place meanings relate to community identities? (Keep in mind multiple communities.)
- How do place meanings change over time for recreationists, communities, user groups, tourists?
- What are effective strategies to assess place meanings (particularly issues of representativeness of **all** stakeholders)?
- How do place meanings and place attachment differ or change throughout one's life course?
- How do place meanings change in the face of threat?
- How are changes in place meanings affected by changes in the political context of a place (e.g., wilderness designation)?
- How do stakeholders' place attachments and place meanings relate to their view of resource and recreation/tourism management?
- What roles do education and interpretation (broadest sense) play in developing place attachment and place meaning?
- How do disruptions of place affect individuals' psychological construct of the disrupted place?

- What kinds of spatial scales seem to be effective for management?
- Is place attachment always positive to the person who is attached? (To whom or to what?)
- What is the effect of shifting demographics on the range of meanings for recreation and tourism places?
- What kinds of spatial scales seem to resonate with recreationists and tourists?
- How do we understand how recreationists and tourists "fit" (more than just describing differences) into settings that also entail other uses (year-round, seasonal, etc.)?
- What available technologies can assist in understanding and locating place meaning?
- What management techniques effectively promote place attachment?

Appendix 3: Gunnison Basin Landscape Working Group Summaries[1]

Taylor Park landscape was discussed at two Landscape Working Group Meetings:

- **September 24, 2003, in Gunnison:** A large percentage of this landscape is currently actively managed as a theme 5, with spectacular views and recreational opportunities in a theme 4/theme 8 setting.

  Three groups discussed this landscape. Much of the discussion in all of the groups centered around the idea that with increased people comes increased impacts. It was difficult for participants to discuss other resources than people, recreation, and the way people travel. One group did not directly discuss future management in themes but did view their opinion that:

  - In theme 4, the Forest Service should control and enforce recreation, and designate dispersed camping sites.
  - In theme 5, the Forest Service should keep timber roads open for recreation.
  - In all areas that allow for all-terrain vehicle use, improve management.

  One group noted corrections/changes to the current management theme display. A theme 2 should be applied to the Tincup Cemetery, which is located on National Forest System lands noted on table 3 map. The Manganese and Doctor Park area should be displayed as a theme 4 area, rather than a theme 3. The South Kellen Creek (east of American Flag Mountain) should currently be displayed as a theme 3 rather than a theme 4 because it does not receive high recreation use, nor does it have high recreation value.

  This same group discussed the Park Cone area, and participants thought it is receiving an increase of road and trail use. Future management of the area south of Park Cone to Slaughterhouse (as displayed on map 3 from a theme 5) should shift to a theme 3. The Cameron Creek Trail should continue as a motorized trail. Future management of the area east of Willow Creek should shift from a theme 4 to a theme 1 for future management (see map 3). Also manage the area around Sanford Basin as a theme 1, not a theme 4. Continue to manage the Texas Ridge Trail and surrounding areas as a theme 3 and keep the trail nonmotorized.

[1] Source: USDA FS 2005.

There is concern over timber production in the future in the Pie Plant Creek area, but the concern was not clarified.

Another group discussed the area west of Mirror Lake and into the Pitkin landscape. It is currently managed as a theme 1, and participants want this area to shift to a theme 3 to allow for some logging and fuel reduction. This group also agreed that the current management themes within this landscape should continue into the future, but that enforcement, regulation, and management should be improved.

- **October 9, 2003, in Crested Butte:** Two groups discussed the Taylor Park landscape unit. One group recommended that in the southeast corner the theme 1 management should move toward theme 3 "for the benefit of the proximate community."

  One group recommended in the American Flag Mountain area, to move from a theme 4 to a theme 3, which, in their opinion, may help to help protect single-track trail use. They also recommended a special designation (theme 2) in this area to protect a rare salamander species (delineated on the group 2 map).

  The Taylor Canyon area is currently shown as a theme 8, but one group recommended it should be managed in places with a theme 7 emphasis because of the residential/forest intermix.

  In the Union Park area, there was agreement that the current and future management is within theme 5 management, but all participants in one group agreed that Lottis Creek should not be dammed for future water development.

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