

Introduction

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MMV4 conference reflects a significant trend: management and monitoring of visitor flows in recreational and protected areas are topics of growing importance worldwide.

As the IUCN and UNEP statistics demonstrate, the global number of existing protected areas is increasing. A positive trend can be also observed in the UNESCO selection of natural world heritage sites. To these, we must add numerous smaller areas that also have special natural or cultural heritage values, but do not have a special protected status. Many of these areas do not only serve the protection of natural and cultural values or biodiversity, they are also important points of attraction for tourism and recreation. These areas must be professionally maintained and managed if they are to conserve their natural and landscape values in the future.

These proceedings reveal the increasing attention on important issues and contain contributions concerning five central themes:

1. Local community and nature based tourist, regional development, social and economic impact of recreational tourism.
2. Social perception of landscape and sustainable development. Visitor's preferences and images of nature and wildlife.
3. Impact of recreational activities and tourist use, wildlife disturbance and models of social carrying capacity.
4. Tools and needs for advancement of research in visitor monitoring methods, visitor modelling and data management, methods for simulating recreational behaviour.
5. Significance of visitor monitoring data for management, planning and policy and for visitor information.

These themes are discussed by scientists and managers from almost 30 countries and we are pleased to welcome so many to this MMV4 conference. This active participation confirms the involvement in the network of experts that has been developed to such prosperity in few years.

As far as the MMV4 topics communication's strategy is not enough prominent at this stage, but we believe this attention should be improved. This will be our suggestion for next edition.

The following proceedings contain the contributions which were accepted for presentation at the MMV4 conference. The short papers made by the invited keynote speakers are also included.

In order to guarantee scientific quality, each submitted presentation was given a blind reviewing by two international experts who read the contributions critically and commented them anonymously. Many were accepted, others were returned for a minor or major revision. As linguistic quality was not a criterion for acceptance, the contributions were edited in the compilation of the proceedings. We would like to give sincere thanks to all the reviewers for their support.

At this point we would like to recognize all those who contributed to the success of the MMV4 conference. Special thanks go to the partner institutions in making this conference possible. We thank the members of the International Steering Committee for their valuable guidance and suggestions.

Last but not least we would like to thank session and workshop chairs as well as all the contributors, upon whose work the scientific quality of the MMV4 conference depends.