

Balancing public access and privacy concerns along developed coastal zones: Stakeholders' preferences for management actions.

Odd Inge Vistad, Norwegian institute for nature research, (NINA), Norway, odd.inge.vistad@nina.no;

Margrete Skår, NINA, Norway; **Line C. Wold**, NINA, Norway

Background and theory

According to Statistics Norway most of the shoreline around south-eastern Norway is developed or otherwise difficult to access, due to private homes and cabins, roads, railways, other land use or developments, and abruptness. The majority of the Norwegian population lives quite near this coast, emphasizing the great need for improved public coastal access. The potential for such improvement is mainly connected to these “inaccessible coasts”. One of the challenges is that the actual rules and regulations concerning legal/illegal access and behavior in such developed areas are imprecise, implying constraints, uncertainty, and even stress, both among the potential visitors (the public) and the waterfront dwellers, and there is a great potential for conflict escalation in shoreline areas.

In Norway most of the coastal areas are private land. In 1957 an Outdoor recreation act was approved, formally legalizing the custom law concerning public access rights and with quite detailed description of rights and responsibilities, both for the visitors and for the landowners. The public access right applies on land defined as ‘outfield’ (*utmark*). Defining the boundary between ‘infield’ and ‘outfield’ is especially challenging along developed shorelines (see Skår & Vistad, this proceedings). Within the planning and building sector several acts (since 1965) have included prohibition and strict regulation of building activity in the 100 meter coastal zone. Still, there has been a continuous ongoing construction activity, primarily through exemptions from the general prohibition.

We are studying a situation where some actors (‘the public’) want and need access to the shoreline, while others are already situated along the shoreline and need to protect their right to privacy. Theoretically this can be regarded as a (potential) conflict between two groups due to contrasting goals or perspectives, competing over the same limited resource (Graefe and Thapa, 2004). Lazarus and Folkman (1984: 19) introduced a stress coping model that considers the individual’s subjective interpretation of a stress transaction. Schneider and Wilhelm Stanis (2007) and others have discussed, expanded and adapted the model, as part of a quite long development within leisure constraint research. Marcouiller et al. (2008) discuss the relation between different kinds of interaction types, on the scale from Complementary interaction, through Supplementary, to Competitive, and finally, Antagonistic interaction. They introduce what they call “*three generic categories of specific management or planning inputs*” (p. 7) in their model: interpretation, adaptive site planning, and recreational technologies.

Our research question is: Along developed Norwegian

shorelines and when there is a need to improve co-existence between public visitors and local waterfront dwellers: How do these stakeholder-groups judge different applicable management measures aimed at improving the co-existence? How realistic is the ambition to meet both the public and the private interests?

The study included a list of ten potential management actions that can deal with this balance of interests along developed shorelines. The ten listed actions covered different management tactics, like *Information signs*, *Physical facilitation*, *Physical boundaries*, *Prohibition*, *Removing privatizing objects* and *Designating public recreational areas*.

Method

The study was implemented in Saltnes, Østfold County, among all the relevant groups of stakeholders (local inhabitants, cabin owners and regular campers, total N= 545) concerning coastal recreation, access needs and privacy needs along the actual private shoreline. The respondents belonging to the local inhabitants and cabin owners included both waterfront dwellers and those residing away from the shoreline. In the analysis we have identified these two groups/segments, based on where their home or cabin is located (waterfront dwellers and “the public”).

Results and discussion

Management measures that tend to favor or ease public access to the shoreline (measure C, D, E, F and G in figure 1) are significantly more favored among the non-waterfront dwellers. The waterfront dwellers are significantly more in favor of measures that tend to protect their need for privacy (measure I and H) and more against *designation of private properties as public recreational areas* (measure J), compared to the non-waterfront dwellers. All this is quite as expected. Though, two measures are both quite highly favored, and importantly: both waterfront dwellers and non-waterfront dwellers (public visitors) rate them equally high: *Using information boards saying clearly what is legal and illegal* (measure A) and *Simple marking with color showing where you should walk along the shoreline* (measure B).

The “ideal” social situation in the developed and attractive coastal zones at stake is when both the public visitors and the waterfront dwellers co-exist in rather cooperative and harmonious ways, in addition to achieving their individual amenity goals in the particular coastal area. Marcoulier et al. (2008) highlight interpretive elements (providing information) and adaptive site planning as relevant tactics in reducing tensions and assist tolerance building. The two measures (A and B) might have the potential to play an



Figure 1. Average judgment scores of ten possible management measures concerning developed and populated shoreline areas with public recreational interests. Scale from 1 (very bad action) to 5 (very good action).

important role in improving the stakeholder co-existence along populated shorelines, provided a satisfying adaptation to local conditions.

Graefe, A. R. & Thapa, B. (2004). Conflict in natural resource recreation. In Manfredi, M., J. Vaske, D. Field, P. Brown, and B. Bruyere (eds.), *Society and Natural Resources: A Summary of Knowledge*. Jefferson City, MO: Modern Litho, pp. 209–224

Lazarus, R. & Folkman, S. 1984. *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer.

Marcouiller, D.W., I. Scott and J. Prey. 2008. Outdoor recreation planning: A comprehensive approach to understanding use interaction. *CAB Reviews: Perspectives in Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Nutrition and Natural Resources* 3 (90): 1–12

Schneider, I.E., & Wilhelm Stanis, S.A. (2007). Coping: An alternative conceptualization for constraint negotiation and accommodation. *Leisure Sciences*, 29(4), 391–401.