

Toward a Guiding Principle "Recreational Use" The Protected Area Berchtesgaden National Park within the Region

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Abstract

Nature conservation and recreation are two purposes of protected areas. The relationship is complex and sometimes adversarial. To avoid and minimize conflicts visitor guidance is relevant. According concepts must be based upon general conditions of e.g. natural landscape, cultural history, social-economy and human needs. Understanding of recreation is also relevant. Another aspect to consider, national parks can give drive to, is regional development. However, management objectives shall not only lead to singular visitor management concepts. Important is one guiding principle as a concrete picture of the desired future state. To concretise a guiding principle data and information about recreation e.g. infrastructure and visitors is essential. The acquisition needs support of institutions located in the surroundings of the protected area. In this context the importance of recreation within the region can lead to development and expansion of a culture of collaboration. An exemplary project is worked out for Berchtesgaden National Park. Although the park plan adopts guidelines focusing on recreation it includes no guiding principle. To achieve this, listings of recreational infrastructure and use as well as visitor numbers and characteristics must be acquired. As a part of the EuRegio Salzburg Berchtesgadener Land Traunstein the German Berchtesgaden National Park borders the Austrian Bundesland Salzburg. Thus it must be strived for international-regional collaboration.

Background: Changing Times, Demands and Concepts

The link between protected areas and tourism is as old as the history of protected areas: Protected areas need tourism tourism needs protected areas. This relationship is complex by the basic meaning of protected areas. Focusing on the two primary protected area purposes nature conservation and recreation, the last mentioned is a critical component to consider. In the management of protected areas it is a major issue (IUCN 2002, UNEP 2005).

In the last decades society changed towards a recreational society. With the growth of the touristic and recreational sector the demand for nature-related activities increased (IUCN 2002). Today pressure upon nature and landscape arising from recreation are among the most relevant. According changes and developments are also affecting large protected areas: For years they have observe visits by rising numbers (NELSON & SERAFIN 1997). Therefore, the importance of managing resources and visitors is even more a key message (IUCN 2002). To apply adequate measures it needs the guidance by one overall guiding principle. To concretize this vision of the desired future situation, including diverse singular concepts to get there, the understanding of protected area recreation is essential. General conditions and altered circumstances must be investigated. In the broader context of the natural and cultural environment it requires many different kinds of knowledge, interests and values. Toward this it is helpful to first identify and analyse existing linkages between recreation and the protected area in a broader sense. In a second step relevant data and information must be collected.

Recreational Use in Berchtesgaden National Park

For Berchtesgaden National Park (see figure 1) in recreational use is to be seen a major threat. This use is characterized by changes mentioned above. The park plan of this large protected area (StMLU 2002) adopts only guidelines focusing on recreation inside the park area. To incorporate management objectives adequate to changes and demands in recreation, an overall guiding principle should be elaborated. Right now the description of recreational use inside the park region is based on only few information (see park plan: StMLU 2002) and some (estimated) visitor number (e.g. compare JOB, METZLER & VOGT 2003: 1,13 visitors/a). The InterReg IIIa project "Euregional Recreational Area Berchtesgaden National Park / Salzburger Kalkalpen" (duration: 5/2005 - 12/2006) makes needed data and information available.

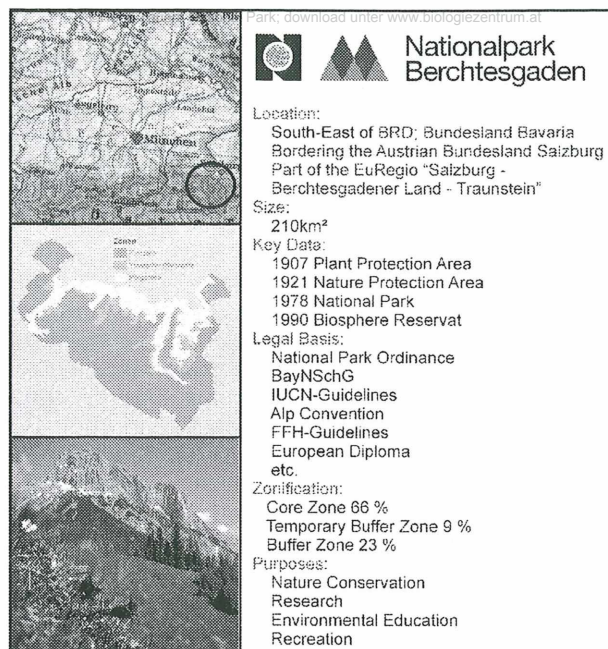


Fig. 1: Overview "Berchtesgaden National Park"

Relationship-Cube "Recreational Use"

As a starting point, must be established a better understanding of the recreational use concerning the park area. To achieve this it is helpful to analyse existing linkages between recreation and

activity (hiking, biking, skiing etc),
 spatial areas (protected and surrounding area),
 institutions (park administration and other stakeholder).

The different links can be illustrated as a relationship-cube (see figure 2).

Within park management the focus is frequently on the interrelated and overlapping concepts of recreation and nature conservation. It can be observed, that conventional management and planning procedures that focus on activities only within protected area boundaries are insufficient to content with the actual developments. Successes have been achieved by emphasizing linkages among protected areas, the surrounding areas and planning regions (NELSON & SERAFIN 1997). Protected areas are part of their region in ecological, economic, social, educational, infrastructural and other sense. They must be understood, planned, managed and decided upon as an integral part of the regional context in which they find themselves (NELSON & SERAFIN 1997). Existing dynamics must be incorporated in the different processes much more intensively. By communicating and working with a broad range of regional stakeholders much can be done much to ensure that recreation works for the park as well as for the people living in it or nearby (IUCN 2002).

In resume treating recreation for Berchtesgaden National Park the location of the protected area plays an important role: Being part of the EuRegio Salzburg - Berchtesgaden Land - Traunstein the German national park borders mostly the Austrian Bundesland Salzburg. Thus cross-border approaches are relevant: The park area, the German transition zone and the neighbouring Austrian area must be considered.

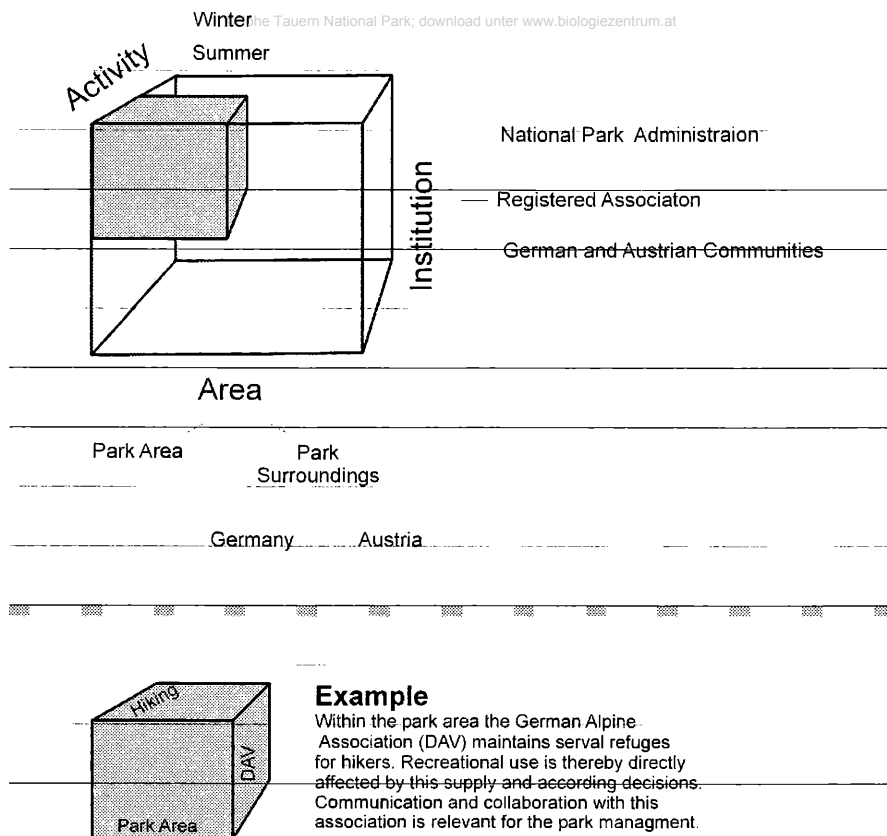


Fig. 2: Relationship-Cube "Recreational Use" for Berchtesgaden National Park

"Recreational Use"-Data

Recreation can be analysed by splitting this abstract object in relevant aspects. This illustrates the "Recreation-Model" in figure 3.

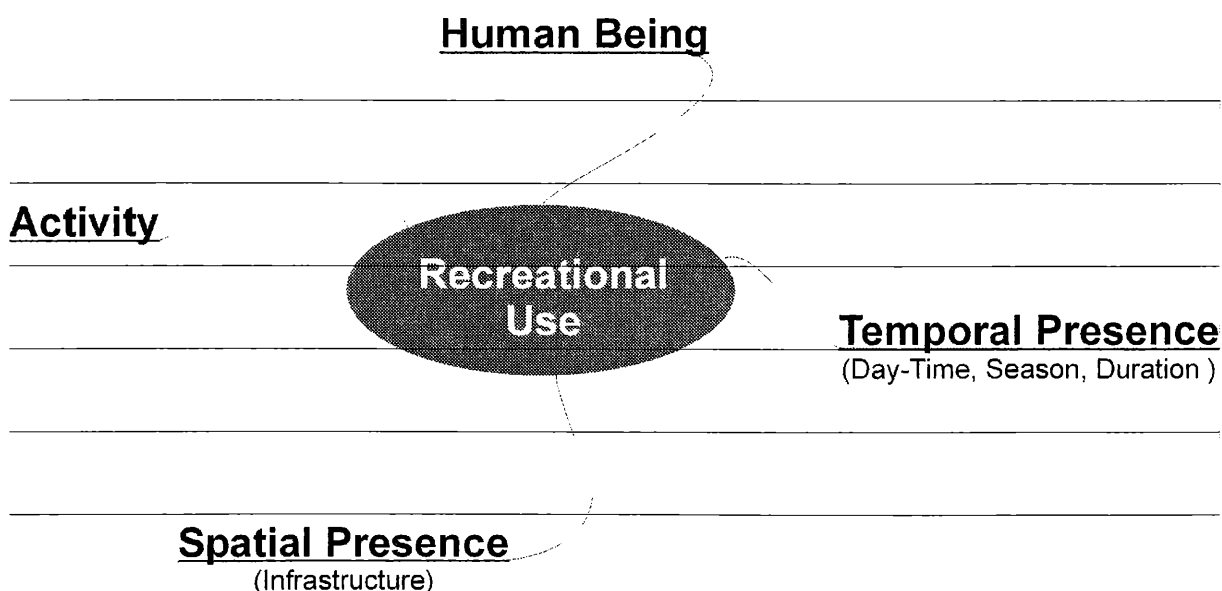


Fig. 3: Recreation-Model

Based on the recreation-model and the relationship-cube, relevant data can be identified and collected. Insight in to the relationship between the data is given by figure 4. All (spatial, temporal, attribute) data concerning stakeholders, recreational infrastructure and visitors is managed by databases. Thereby for all responsible within the region (park and surroundings), data use, analysis and availability is simplified. By the help of diverse software programs (e.g. GIS, Statistical applications, tools for simulation) all data and information can be brought together to give an exhaustive overall picture of recreation usage and utilization within the park area.

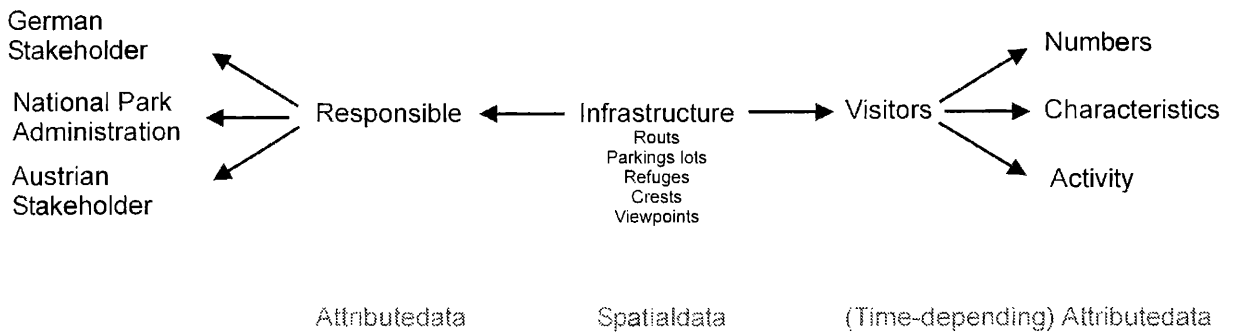


Fig. 4: "Recreational Use"-Data-Sources for Berchtesgaden National Park

Conclusion

Analysing relationships focusing on recreation can help to build up partnerships. All-embracing situation descriptions enable the elaboration of guiding principles for protected areas within its regions. To involve surrounding areas and other stakeholder can be looked upon favourably. This can give drive to a regional culture of collaboration and is definitely a factor for success in protected area management.

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