

Addressing Challenges in Managing Recreation in Protected Areas in an International Context: the International Summer Schools on Natural Resource and Recreation Management in Protected Areas

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Abstract

The management of natural resources and recreational activities in protected areas requires complex strategies. This is an important issue for recreation and environmental planners worldwide because conflicts are common wherever different land use activities occur in the same area. In order to successfully address these issues, recreation planners need to acquire a profound knowledge of ecological and sociological methodological skills and the ability to work in multi- and interdisciplinary environments.

The objective of the Erasmus-funded IP summer school is to enhance understanding for the complexity of protected area management and the need of involving several disciplines to develop sustainable solutions for these challenges. This summer school aims to contribute to the advancement of protected area management in Europe by training students from several countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, USA) in protected area management. The 2-week summer school takes place every year since 2011. The summer school is organised as a combination of indoor seminars at Leibniz Universität Hannover and several field days in Harz National Park where students work on actual planning case studies. This national park is heavily used and several conflict lines between recreation and nature conservation can be found. Topics covered during the summer school are habitat management, wildlife conservation, recreational and visitor planning, and environmental education. Students learn methods from various disciplines, including ecological (e.g. habitat and species mapping and monitoring), landscape design and planning (e.g. design plans) and sociological (e.g. visitor counts and surveys, conflict management) techniques and skills and apply these during their field days. Scientists and practitioners from relevant disciplines will contribute to the course.

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