



Evidence Informed policy and practice: future research challenges in countryside recreation

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Celebrate Success

- Over the last couple of decades the Outdoor Recreation Community has done a good job of selling the message that outdoor recreation can benefit people, places and economy.



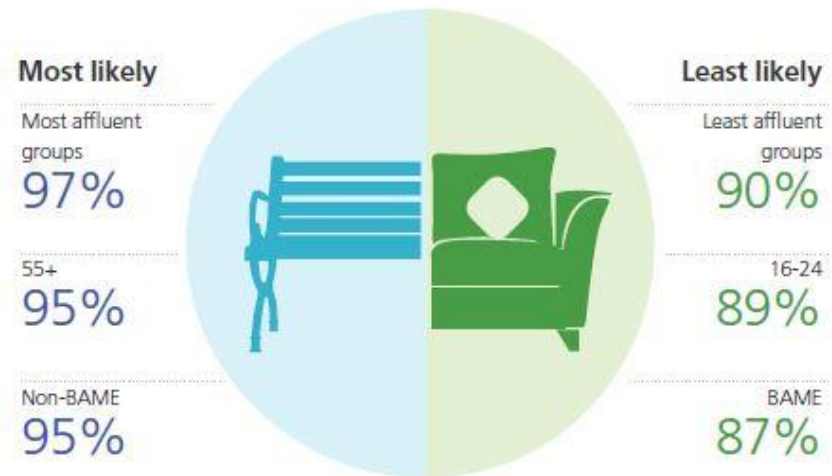
BUT

CRN - Countryside Recreation
Futures. Leeds 24 Jan 2014

Others might say!

- Investment in outdoor recreation has made no difference to the majority:
 - an elitist group of aging middle class white people reap the benefit for which the rest of society pays.
- Besides evidence is weak – case studies, & poor observational / qualitative studies

Participation in any other outdoor related activities (e.g. gardening or watching nature programmes)



Natural England, MENE 2013 Annual Report - infographic

Changing World!



Greater social plurality

Demographic trends

Hyper - connectivity

Aspects of identity changing

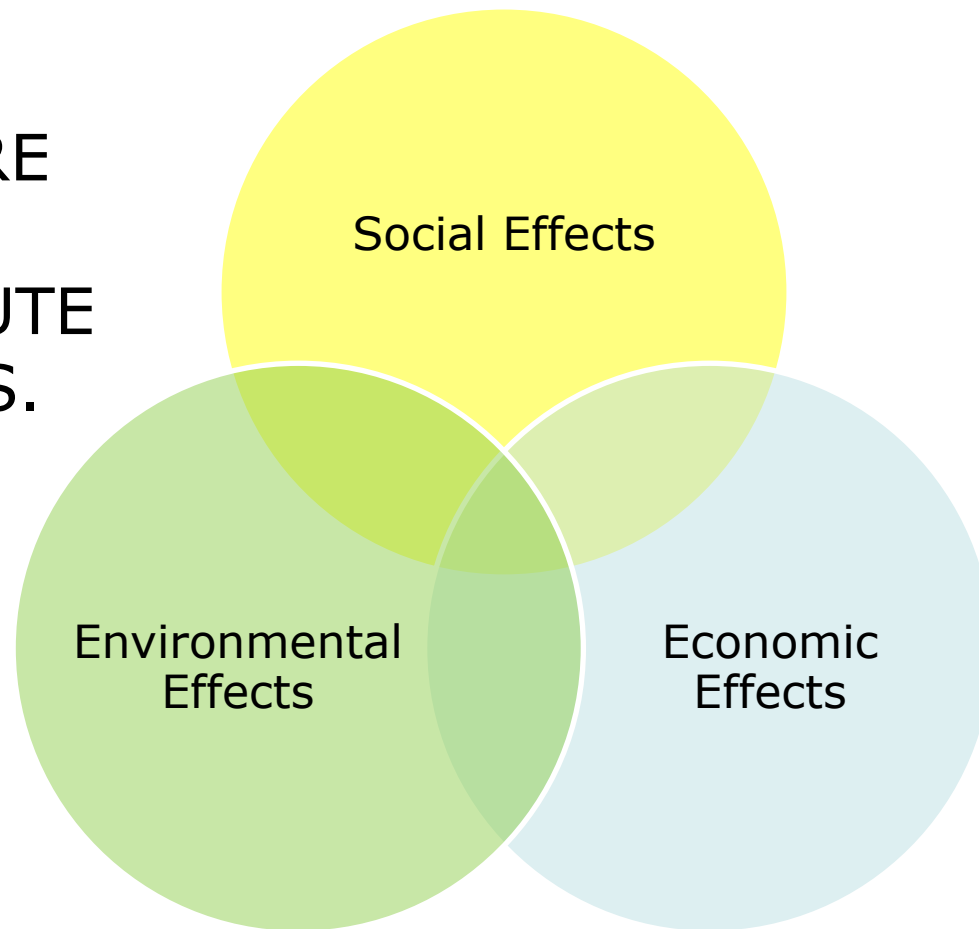
Greater social mobility



Ref: Foresight Future Identities (2013)

3 Big Areas of Challenge

MEASURE
AND
ATTRIBUTE
EFFECTS.





Social Evidence Need Challenge

- We need to know more about:
 - The social benefits of access to the outdoors: e.g. social interaction & cohesion, skills, employment, education
 - At a local scale - where people recreate, who recreates, what motivates, what are the barriers.
 - BAME & disadvantaged groups: barriers, motivations, behaviours
 - Physical and mental health effects: inc proximity effects, dose, setting

Environmental Evidence Need Challenge

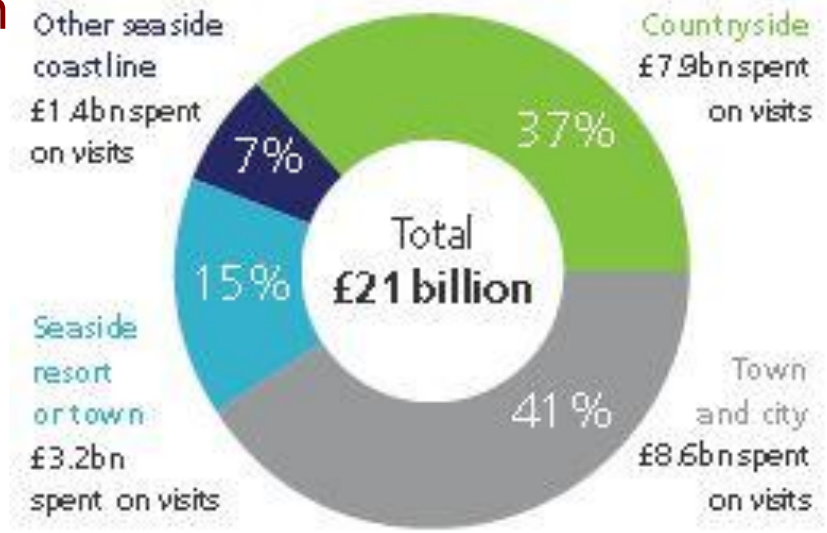


- We need to know more about:
 - Effects of recreation patterns on the biological environment: noise, disturbance, eutrophication, ground compaction
 - The condition of recreational infrastructure
 - Importance of biodiversity in urban areas
 - Utility of recreational spaces re urban drainage, microclimate modification,
 - Spatial design to maximise benefits
 - Impacts on social environment: noise, aerial pollution, exclusion.

Economic Evidence Need Challenge

- We need to know more about:
 - Who is spending what, where, and why?
 - Micro-economic impact of different interventions at different scales
 - Revealed preferences rather than declared preferences.
 - Cost-effectiveness of proven Benefits e.g. Physical health

- There are lots of assumptions about the virtues of recreational outdoor tourism
 - they must be challenged.



The 6 Research Practice challenges



Sample size

Elapse time

Controls or Comparators

Counterfactuals

Methods & Tools

Evaluation



Things to do in your patch!

- Every site to do one experiment per year
- Share your data
- Work with others (partners, academics, communities)
- Take advantage of natural experiments
- Volunteers & students

Questions?

