

LANDSCAPE ANALYSES IN MANAGING ECOLOGICALLY, CULTURALLY AND VISUALLY SUSTAINABLE LAND-USE AT TOURIST DESTINATIONS

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Abstract

Natural and rural landscapes are often the major tourism attractions among foreign and domestic visitors to Finnish Lapland. Primary production has been held ground for hundreds or even thousands of years in Lapland. Amenities and services constitute also important driving forces in tourism. It is a challenging task to create the infrastructure and implement the urban technology needed for accommodation, transport, nature activities and other services without disturbing or threatening the processes of nature, the local culture or the aesthetic values.

Landscape features reflect the ecological, cultural and visual values and sustainability of regions. Landscape features of Levi and Ylläs tourist resort were identified in Ounasselkä fell region in western Finnish Lapland in EU-financed project 'Tourist Destinations as Landscape Laboratories - Tools for Sustainable Tourism', LANDSCAPE LAB.

Landscape analysis form a toolpackage to combine urban and landscape structures at tourist destinations which are sensitive to changes. They constitutes the first step in planning sustainable tourism and help managers to identify natural and cultural values of destinations, their importance to tourism business and impacts of tourism on landscape.

For example the analysis of symbolic meanings of landscapes indicated regional and local characteristics of landscapes which make places special and meaningful to local people and tourists. Furthermore, the analysis of landscape structure pointed out the areas or zones that have different ecological productivity and susceptibility to change (carrying capacity). The analysis of green belt hierarchy showed the places where the nature areas and green belts, including the traditional cultural environments, rural landscapes and biotopes, are becoming fragmented inside the urban structure or the urban areas of the tourist destinations.

It is important to have the means to process the gathered landscape data into a spatial form and to combine all the information (Geographical Information System) for the landscape analysis as syntheses of ecologically, culturally and visually sustainable land use.

Key Words

landscape analysis, values, land use planning, sustainable tourism