

Institute of Environmental Sciences

Title: Reimagining River Stewardship- the role of values embedded in leisure activities ‘with’ rivers

Name of Supervisor: Prof. dr hab. Małgorzata Grodzińska-Jurczak
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Background information:

River stewardship is an increasingly important approach to preserve the European countryside and rivers flowing through rural areas. It “comprises all efforts to create, nurture and enable responsibility of landowners and resource users to manage and protect land and its natural and cultural heritage”. One way to conceptualize this kind of stewardship is through people-nature relationships. The contemporary western-scientific discourse understands people-nature relationship through the lens of ‘ecosystem services’ (ES) or more recently Nature-Contribution-to-People (N-C-P), which puts emphasis on cultural and emotional aspects .

This project concerns rivers that are important locally and essential to the wellbeing of communities on the Polish and Swedish countryside. By focusing on locally significant rivers, this study will expose the complexity of relations between outdoor leisure and river stewardship between cases in Poland and Sweden.

The main question to be addressed in the project:

In what ways relational values embedded in outdoor leisure alongside rivers flowing through rural areas translate into river stewardship?

The overall goal:

to explore the transformative capacity of outdoor leisure practices to pave the way for river stewardship on the Polish and Swedish countryside.

Information on the methods/description of work:

This research utilizes a sequential exploratory mixed methods approach integrating both qualitative and quantitative tools for data collection. Additionally, the study targets rural river sites in Poland (cases) and Sweden (cases) with the goal to capitalize on potential differences in terms of local environmental heritage. Specific rural river sites are to be determined through spatial analysis of social media data.

Special requirements from the student:

A potential candidate should possess knowledge in designing and executing interdisciplinary research. Foundations to work in an R environment are an additional advantage. Evidence of high-quality academic writing in English is necessary.

Place/Name of potential foreign collaborator:

Marianna Strzelecka, PhD, Linnaeus University, Sweden

References

- Brown J, & Mitchell B. (2000) The stewardship approach and its relevance for protected landscapes. *The George Wright Forum*, 7, 70–79.
- Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.