

## **A PROSPECTIVE: LEISURE PLANNING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article explores types of models for better leisure planning. Each of the traditional models recognizes and defends a particular content position. A process model is proposed to incorporate the different positions. Each of the content models have strengths that should be included for effective leisure planning.

At the heart of environmental planning is a controversy about the methods to be used in the planning process [1-3]. Should the focus be upon the resource and its protection or upon needs of the individual for the resource and its potential use to satisfy these needs? There is a spectrum of opinion from no use under any conditions to an attitude of exploitation. The primary environmental issues of land use are bypassed.

Is the planning process any different because of environmental concerns? If the need approach is adopted, individuals will argue that the same planning process can be used. If you adopt the position of environmental factors and management first, then the "usual planning processes" will not work because the focus is on the environmental resources and not people [4]. The primary focus of the traditional planning is people and the positioning of structures and development of resources to fulfill the need [5]. Because of this sharp dichotomy, the environmental planner many times has been segregated from other planning professionals. An important issue is what type of methodology has the environmental planners missed by segregating themselves from other planning professionals [6-8].

In the past, environmental planners have given more emphasis to wilderness and resource management than the people aspect. Little concern has been

expressed about the people orientation of planning. In the past ten years, new emphases have appeared such as urban forestry, urban wildlife, and regional and urban planning [7, 9, 10]. These individuals have been concerned about the resource but they have aligned themselves with the traditional planner and have adopted and utilized their techniques in the planning of resource use in urban spaces. These individuals may serve the role of synthesizer between the traditional and the environmental planners. The environment and the needs of the population are of an equal concern. It is the understanding of environment/people interactions that will give rise to more meaningful planning and have a positive impact [4, 11, 12]. The overriding theme of such a synthesis position is the complexity of the interactions involved. The people system is very complex with its web of life and the physical and chemical relationships. When you add the impact of man upon the system and project various uses, the complexity doubles or triples. The disaster throughout history can be pointed to as man has tried to manipulate his environment for his use. Such examples as the timber exploitation, the dust bowl, and pollution. All of these are examples of man's lack of understanding of the environment and his/her trying to dominate and utilize these resources for his/her betterment. Whichever planning approach is used, one certainty from a historical perspective is that a simplistic model will not work. It creates more problems than it solves.

The question of methodology seems to be a critical issue, especially when the complexity of the planning process is associated with natural resources elements. Only through the use of some of the more sophisticated mathematical and statistical techniques can one begin to fathom the complexity and develop the depth of understanding needed to begin to unravel the complexity of the environmental and behavioral aspects and to begin to solve the problems faced by the environmental planners [7, 13, 14]. A typical question at this point is whether the methodology between the environmental planner and the "traditional" planner is similar or different. If so, how are they similar or different. The primary difference is that the environmental planner has adopted methodology from the hard sciences and the traditional planner has adopted methodology from the soft sciences. Both types of methodology are needed but the question becomes one of mixing and matching and bringing forth a new planning process that includes both types. The common theme through both methodologies is mathematical and statistical processes [13, 15]. These are the common bonds that will allow the uniform application of information. The difference is not in the processes but in the type of data collected and the methods used. What is being suggested is that a multi-dimensional model be formulated and the data collected and energized into the same mathematical and statistical models.

The basic purpose of this article is to develop an example model that represents both philosophical positions of the environmental and traditional planners and to isolate or develop associated methodology to implement such a

synthesis. The emphasis of such a model will be the development of an eclectic approach to help solve environmental/man-environment relation problems.

## PROBLEM

There have been some criticism of state plans that have been used to obtain land and water conservation monies [16-18]. These criticisms focus upon the need to:

1. develop a system that presents quality data in an up-to-date format that will allow the information to be disseminated widely and utilized in the planning process;
2. increase the continuity from the local to the national level through the implementation of better planning procedures; and
3. develop a system that has a visible information use component.

As state plans are revised, the criteria on which decisions are based are going to become more stringent. The plans will receive close scrutinizing because many of the state plans were written to obtain funding with little emphasis on follow up to show benefits or outcomes.

## NEED

There is a disparity in recreation and leisure planning processes [2, 6]. One type of process is based more on an intuitive approach (qualitative) that raises questions about the nature and the value of facilities and activities [13, 19]. The information sought is based upon status or condition. The other type of process views planning as a science (quantitative) and seeks to develop continuity among the various levels and audiences so as to provide unity through the isolating of relationships [20-22]. The natural outcome of the planning process is information use and preventative forecasting that is dynamic. The intuitive model reacts to change and the quantitative anticipates needs so that the individual can be a change agent in society.

## PROPOSED MODEL

The proposed model is composed of five phases:

1. preparatory analysis to develop a conceptual framework;
2. cluster analysis to establish market regions;
3. predictive model to establish demand in terms of outcomes;
4. input-output model to establish need based upon a comparison between demand and supply; and
5. math and simulation model to help decision-makers assess change.

The sequence of this analysis is from general to specific with each phase being interlocked back to the previous phase to establish a type of continuous analysis. The analysis is so structured to provide information to decision-makers at each level. The emphasis is upon a system analysis to predict and compare, then, the use of the comparison to project needs and determine how these needs will change through time.

### **Phase I**

This is a preliminary stage of analysis for the development of a conceptual framework. The first step will be to find and establish data sources at the national and state level like the census that can be used to develop base line information. These data sources should contain a range of social and economic variables. The data should be analyzed using factor analysis to establish some type of conceptual continuity [23]. A statewide survey should be designed to supplement these data sources to provide complementary information, especially in the area of leisure behavior and participation characteristics and factors that stimulate or inhibit participation [24, 25]. The data from the state survey should be factor analyzed so as to establish a conceptual leisure model. Most studies that use social and economic variables have a difficult time isolating significant variables that can be used as an indicator to recreational behavior factors in terms of explanation of variance [26, 27]. One reason for the inconsistency in the data is the lack of the development of conceptual models among variable types that will be compatible with the range of multi-variate techniques [28, 29]. The conceptual dimensions have been isolated as the primary element to improving the predictive potential of these types of variables.

### **Phase II**

The next step in the analysis process is the use of the isolated factors in cluster analysis to establish representative areas throughout the state [30-32]. All political subdivisions should be classified into one of the established cluster types identified [33, 34]. Representative communities should be selected to conduct an in-depth study [35, 36]. These areas once isolated represent various market areas and all further analysis in terms of the establishment of models and equations should focus on each as a unit. The type of analysis used in this phase is one used by marketing and business to establish a system of isolating different models that provide for better predictive potential upon some type of regional representation [37, 38].

### **Phase III**

The next step is the development of a regression model that utilizes the dimensions isolated in Phase I as independent variables. These variables should

be regressed against a typology that gives information in terms of demand, that is, outcomes from the experience [39-41]. The primary purpose of this analysis is to establish a predictive equation for each area identified in the cluster analysis that is reliable and valid [27, 42]. The intended use of this information is the ability to predict demand not only in terms of active participation but also from the type of experience as it relates to outcomes [43-45]. These outcomes in terms of the developed dependent variable must relate to the range of experiences from maximum to minimum involvement.

#### **Phase IV**

This is the active comparison between the demand isolated in Phase III and the opportunities available in the community [46, 47]. The resulting difference between these comparisons is the need in the community for additional opportunities to expand the experiences of the citizens [34, 48, 49]. The supply must be measured in terms of some type of facility inventory [50-52]. Just as a statewide survey was conducted to isolate the demand, the other part of the statewide survey would be to inventory current facilities as well as potential areas available for development. This type of information should be collected as part of Phase I, but it will not be used until this phase. The facility inventory must be related to a mapping of the community in terms of future development [54-56]. During this phase is where input is related to output to obtain a comparative difference.

#### **Phase V**

In this phase math causal and simulation models should be developed to give an indication about change based upon a set of input parameters [56-59]. The basic nature of this model will be to provide a system in which hypotheses can be projected and these hypotheses can be tested to determine the difference between actual and observed values [26, 60]. This is the ultimate test for any model. The observed values can be added to the data and the model refined in a dynamic type of programming. This type of gaming model is also an essential element for ease of use of planners because the only information they have to provide are the individual observations and then they can interact with the computer to project what would happen if changes would be made in their community [31, 32, 61].

### **SCOPE OF STUDY**

In order to complete Phases III through V, only a limited time and manpower commitment is needed. It would take two or three people about six months to complete each of these phases because they represent data analysis. Phases I and II, represent hard data collection and will require nine to twelve

months with three to four to aid in the collection and analysis of data. At present the proposed model of analysis represents a risk but where multi-variate and math models have been used by planners it has yielded good results. The bottom line in terms of effectiveness is its ability to help the planner make decisions. The complexity of the model is needed to focus upon a system that will provide an in-depth view of many relationships but in its final stages is simple to use. The proposed model represents a deviation from traditional planning in recreation. The focus of this type of model is upon a quantitative, scientific application of information as a tool to help decision-makers. Information data bases have to be built up over years and as they improve the basic model formulated will involve and become a more effective planning tool. One positive tangible benefit that can be illustrated to planners is that these type of tools have a high degree of reliability, they will become an integral part of their procedure used as a tool to help their community.

## CONCLUSION

The basis of this section is identifying differences between the proposed and traditional models. The proposed model is one based on process not content. Each of the traditional models recognizes and defends a particular content position. The proposed model is eclectic. Its basic function is one of prediction based upon the development of quality input data. This input data can represent either end of the continuum and the basic factor that will determine how much of which type of content depends upon its prediction ability. Another dimension of the process model is that it is cyclic in relation to information use [62, 63]. Information starts at one point and works its way through the model until it reaches a final application phase which is then fed back as input into the initial stage and recycled through the information process. This means that the ultimate test of the usability is not its prediction power but how well the models work in the real world and helps in the application of information. The ultimate question is how useful is the information supplied to the professional?

This opens a new issue of methodology and the professionals separation and background to use the information supplied [64, 65]. The key point is that the information supplied cannot be utilized in a cookbook fashion. The basic assumptions underlying the processes must be well understood so that the individual or professional will be able to know the limitations of the information provided is not abused [66]. Most often what happens is that once a technique is learned or a model is provided for information use, it is mechanically learned and the data is extrapolated and misused because the data and technique are extended beyond its limits. The result is that the technique and model are blamed but the technique is not being utilized as it should.

What is being recommended is that a training workshop be developed so that the basic assumptions and use of the information product is well understood. This does not suggest that the individual knows how to use the technique but knows how to use the information generated. The other important dimension helping those who know how to use the technique to understand how well the model is doing in the world of practice. This is a linkage that is not possible if the professional does not understand the basic nature of the proposed model.

The purpose of this article has been to review model types and develop an example that has application for man-environment relations. The type of model being recommended is one based upon process, not content, so as to incorporate both positions into an eclectic approach that will take the best of both and increase the prediction power and use of planning information [15, 18]. The key focus of such models is the complexity involved and demands a highly sophisticated methodology to insure the proper level of understanding for application.

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