

## **Wilderness tourism: Nature-based tourist experiences in wild places**

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### **Bio**

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### **Abstract**

In recent decades wilderness environments have faced a growing demand for tourists to experience natural areas, and the tourism industry has placed an increasing interest on nature-based and adventure tourism products taking place in wilderness or other wild places. In general, the link between conserving wild places and tourist activities and experiences is probably as old as the history of protecting wilderness areas. This connection between tourism and the wilderness may seem paradoxical. On the one hand, a wilderness is often considered as a place where natural processes and wildlife rule and humans and human activities should not really exist. On the other hand, however, tourism is obviously a human activity that may conflict with the notions of a wilderness as a non-human environment and a 'white area on a map'. In this respect, the relation between tourism and wilderness and nature conservation, in general, has been a synergistic one, but as the new forms of nature-based and adventure tourism have grown, this positive relationship has turned into a conflicting one in many places. This chapter discusses the nature and role of

wilderness environments and wild places in tourism. First, the idea of the wilderness and its relationship with land ethics are introduced, followed by a discussion on the wilderness as a tourist attraction and a place for nature-based tourist experiences. Finally, governance needs for wilderness tourism are briefly debated, followed by a concluding section.

## **Introduction**

The connection between tourism and the wilderness may seem paradoxical. On the one hand, a wilderness is often considered a place where wildlife and natural processes rule and humans and human activities should not really exist. The United States Wilderness Act of 1964, for example, states that 'a wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man' (Wilderness Act, 1964). The Act is not just another policy document. In a similar way to establishing the world's first national park at Yellowstone (USA) in 1872, the world's first wilderness act created a model for global conservation and defining wilderness areas as places that offer 'outstanding opportunities for solitude' (Wilderness Act, 1964), for example.

On the other hand, tourism is obviously a human activity, whose presence per se may conflict with the above kinds of notions of a wilderness as a non-human environment (see Saarinen, 2019). In addition, the very nature of tourism is that it creates changes to places where it exists and which it utilises (Holden, 2006; Mathieson and Wall, 1982). Tourism is also seen as a process that evolves from small-scale activities to larger ones with an increasing number of visitors and impacts following the crowd (see Butler, 1980; 2010). Thus, touristic use can make wilderness areas and natural environments so popular that it may become very challenging to find solitude and experience untrammelled nature by those visitors seeking these kinds of nature-based tourism experiences.

However, despite the Western ideal of wildernesses as the last vestiges and places beyond civilisation and human influence, untouched by the modern world, they are deeply integrated to human systems (Saarinen, 2016). Nowadays, they are increasingly promoted as sites for tourism consumption and tourist experiences (Wall-Reinius, 2012; Sæþórsdóttir, Hall & Saarinen, 2011; Buckley, 1999; 2006). In tourism advertising, positive images, such as the experience of solitude, freedom and naturalness are connected to the wilderness as tourism products related to a variety of

activities that a wild, harsh and rugged nature could offer for visitors (see Sæþórsdóttir 2010a, 2010b; Thorhallsdóttir, 2007; Saarinen, 2005). Although these kinds of active and visible use of wilderness characteristics in tourism promotion may be a relatively new issue, wilderness areas have long been associated with tourism (Frost and Hall, 2010). For example, creating the first national park at Yellowstone was aimed at limiting human settlements, occupancy, sale, indigenous uses and the expansion of extractive resource industries in the area (Nash 1967, p. 108). By doing so, the national park was 'dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people' (Yellowstone National Park Protection Act, 1872). Similarly, the Wilderness Act (1964) explicitly indicates that wilderness areas should also provide opportunities to practise 'a primitive and unconfined type of recreation' in a place 'where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.' These kinds of temporal recreational mobilities by visitors and references to the 'enjoyment of people' are nowadays widely conceptualised and practiced as tourism.

Thus, wilderness areas and national parks are profoundly related to tourism and the recreational use of those areas by non-local people. From the very beginning of the conservation movement and the evolution of the modern tourism industry wilderness environments were considered targets and co-products of the global tourism phenomenon that was constantly calling for new and different kinds of attractions. However, in order to provide nature experiences and outstanding opportunities for solitude, for example, there needs to be some regulations on the touristic use of these areas. Indeed, due to the very nature of tourism as a growth-oriented catalyst of change, wilderness and nature experiences (as we now conceptualise them) are not infinite in the hands of the tourism industry.

Originally, the attempts to limit the growth of tourism in wild areas was based on a carrying capacity thinking (Butler, 2010; Wagar, 1964; 1974; Lucas, 1964). It meant that researchers and managers tried to define the maximum number of tourists in a given space and time, without causing unacceptable changes in the physical, economic and socio-cultural environment and to visitors' satisfaction (Butler, 1999; 1996; Getz, 1983; Mathieson and Wall, 1982). Nowadays, governance approaches to managing the relationship between tourism and wilderness conservation are based on area-specific models (see Hendee, Stankey and Lucas, 1990) or broader sustainability and responsibility thinking in tourism (see Saarinen, 2014a; Sharpley, 2000; 2009; 2013; Blackstock et al., 2008). This chapter discusses the nature and role of wilderness environments and wild places in tourism. First, the idea of the wilderness and its relationship with land ethics are introduced, followed by a discussion the wilderness as a tourist attraction and a place for nature-

based tourist experiences. Finally, management and governance needs for wilderness tourism are briefly debated, followed by conclusions.

### **Wilderness use and land ethics**

Wilderness environments are considered to represent the last existing fragments of untrammelled nature, untouched by civilisation and human activities. The International Union for Conserving Nature (IUCN), for example, has labelled the 'highest' protection area category as Strict Nature Reserves (1a) and 'wilderness' (1b)(Saarinen, 2019). According to the IUCN, wildernesses are considered to be large, unmodified or slightly modified areas, retaining their natural character without permanent or significant human habitation. In this respect, the wilderness represents a space external and in opposition to people, culture and civilisation (see Cronon, 1998; Nash, 1967). At the same time, however, wilderness areas are defined and redefined, managed and used by people.

The wilderness may conjure up distinct meanings and images based on the natural characteristics of those environments. Still, different kinds of objectives and values, often contradictory ones, are connected with the idea and use of the wilderness (Saarinen, 2005; 1998a). The wilderness is a value-bounded and ethically-loaded idea and place, and our notion of a wilderness as a place reflects our specific relationships to it and the types and levels of activities we consider acceptable in a place called a wilderness. As stated by Tuan (1974, p. 112), the wilderness is 'a state of mind'. Due to this personally, socially and culturally coded nature of the wilderness, it is difficult to find any single and universally accepted definition for the wilderness concept (see Short, 1991; Nash, 1967). For land management and conservation uses, various 'objective' or technical definitions have been outlined. In the United States, for example, the minimum size for a wilderness area is 2020 hectares, and their basic characteristics are that they should be in a natural state, have no roads and contain natural fauna (Public Law, 1964). The corresponding minimum size in Finland is 15,000, in Australia 25,000 and in Sweden 50,000 hectares (Saarinen, 1998a). Thus, even these objective (numerical) measurements vary depending on the societal context.

The early conservation movement of wilderness areas and wild places in general was not purely ecological or biocentric aiming to conserve the natural environment for the sake of nature itself (Butler, 1998; Hall, 1992; Nash, 1967). There was an implicit emphasis on what we would now call a sustainable use of natural resources (see Enders and Remig, 2015a). Indeed, Crober (2015) and many other scholars connect early the conservation movement with sustainability thinking by

arguing that the basic principles of sustainable development, in general, has its origins in the 18th century idea of ‘sustained yield’ in forestry (i.e. natural resource use and management) and especially in 19th century nature conservation (Enders and Remig, 2015b; Hall, 1998). Influenced by the sustained yield approach. Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the United States Forest Service in the 1910s, introduced a so-called wise use, or utilitarian conservation approach, in natural resource management, which is often seen as a historical antecedent of sustainable development thinking (Butler, 1998).

It is challenging to evaluate how these historical centuries-old processes actually influenced the politics and institutionalisation of sustainable development in the 1980s (Saarinen and Gill, 2019), but they all have common ground with anthropocentric attitudes towards the environment. The classical Brundtland Commission definition, stating that sustainable development is development that 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987) primarily focuses on human needs with an argument that caring for the environment and natural systems is not only good but indispensable for us and for our future.

In addition to the broad idea of anthropocentrism, there are numerous different approaches, categorisations and attitudes towards nature and the wilderness and their uses, such as biocentrism and ecocentrism (see Jamal, 2019; Bauer, Vasile & Mondini, 2018; Fennell, 2006; Glacken, 1992). Pietarinen (1987), for example, has outlined four basic attitudes towards forest and wilderness environment: utilism, humanism, mysticism and primitivism. With the exception of the last one, these attitudes are anthropocentric to different degrees. Utilism underlines the unrestricted right of people to use the natural environment and the wilderness as a source of raw materials. Even highly excessive exploitation can be accepted and later compensated for through ever-advancing technological solutions. From a humanism perspective, the use of a wilderness environment should promote human development attaining ethical, aesthetic and mental equilibrium, i.e. not only as a source of raw materials for economic growth that is still considered necessary for societal development. Mysticism connects humans to a larger spiritual entity formed by nature, emphasising an experiential unity between us, the natural and the ‘divine’. Primitivism (i.e. biocentrism or deep ecology) underlines the need to recognise the intrinsic value of the wilderness environment that is an equal entity with human systems. From this perspective, humans have no special rights to exploit nature and human well-being should not rest on a foundation that causes negative impacts and damage to the wilderness (see Fennell, 2006; Saarinen, 1998a).

Obviously, biocentric or deep ecology approaches do not support a touristic use of the wilderness, as they evidently cause negative impacts on the environment. From the anthropocentric perspective and for the touristic use of wilderness areas, Aldo Leopold's (1949) idea of land ethics is interesting as it connects the use of the wilderness with the current notion of and need for sustainability. In his seminal work *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold suggests a new kind of ethics to deal with people's relationship with the land and the animals and plants which live and grow upon it. In his land ethics, 'a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise' (p. 224–225). Therefore, we can utilise the wilderness in different ways, including for aesthetic, recreation and tourism reasons, but with a great responsibility: While using the wilderness, humans need to limit their effect on it, otherwise we may destroy the natural capital our own existence depends on. As pointed out earlier, this is also the message of the need for sustainable development by the Brundtland's Commission (WCED, 1987).

Although Leopold was critical of recreational development, as he considered it fragmenting wilderness, in a principle level his land ethics acknowledges that a change is inevitable in human-nature relations, and in order to cope with the change in a 'sustained' way, there needs to be 'flexibility in the structure' but also adjustments i.e. regulations (Leopold, 1949, p. 216). The land ethics approach connects humans with the wilderness in a way that partly challenges traditional Western understanding of human-nature relations, being based on an opposition between organised society and wilderness or culture and nature (see Saarinen, 2019; Castree, 2014; 2015). In this respect, land ethics can help us to see that there has never been humans without nature and vice versa, empowering us to think that tourism and the wilderness can coexist but with certain conditions and ethical guidelines.

### **The wilderness as a tourism environment**

Compared to many extractive industries, such as forestry and mining, tourism represents a different kind of economy in terms of the use of wilderness environments (see Sæþórsdóttir and Saarinen, 2016a; 2016b). Despite being a large, global-scale activity, the tourism industry is often seen as being 'softer' towards (destination) environments in its operations (Holden, 2006; 2003).

Nowadays, wilderness environments attract a substantial amount of tourists, and some wilderness areas may have millions of visitors per year (see Saarinen, 2013, 2014b; Sæþórsdóttir, 2011).

Countries where wild natural areas still exist can treat them as a capital asset and earn money by exporting the 'wilderness experience' (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010a; 2010b), which is also seen as providing

a rationale for protecting wilderness areas in many places (see Hall and Boyd, 2005; Butler and Boyd, 2000).

The link between conserving wild places and tourism is probably as old as the history of protected areas (Frost and Hall, 2010). Still, the wilderness and its key characteristics have not always been positively perceived attraction elements for people and their recreational and touristic consumption needs. According to Short (1991, p. 6) 'fear of the wilderness was one of the strongest elements in European attitudes to wilderness up to the nineteenth century', and Europeans transferred that fear or even hate towards wild places to their colonies in North America, Africa and Australia, for example (see Connor, 2014; Hall, 1998; 1992; Tuan, 1979). The wilderness was considered a place that is inhabited by 'wild beasts' and that is beyond civilisation and the sphere of human control (Nash, 1967, p. 1–2).

In general, the growing demand for tourists to experience wilderness areas has been based on the altered positive attitudes towards the environment (see Sæþórsdóttir, Hall and Saarinen, 2011; Frost and Hall, 2010), and the development of transportation systems and accessibility has integrated even the most remote wild places closely to the global tourism market and its economic circuits (Sæþórsdóttir, 2011; Saarinen, 2005). As a result, wild natural environments are 'universally regarded as a source of pleasure' (Wang, 2000, p. 80) and the tourism industry has become a significant user, stakeholder and element of change in wilderness environments (Saarinen, 2013; Buckley, 1999; 2006).

Wilderness tourism is usually considered an independent or individualistic form of tourism. Traditionally, activities such as backpacking and hiking have been linked to wilderness recreation (Pigram and Jenkins, 1999; Brown, 1980; Wolfe, 1964). However, in the past two or three decades the growth of wilderness tourism has been largely based on a rise in organised forms of nature-based and adventure tourism (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010a; Buckley, 2006; Cloke and Perkins, 2002). These new tourism forms in the wilderness involve activities such as mountain biking, snowmobile trekking, rafting, horse riding, hiking, sport fishing, husky safaris, motorised boat tours and even four-wheel drives. All these activities can play with the images of naturalness, freedom, solitude and wildness, but in practice, they may also be in conflict with traditional wilderness characteristics and cause conflicts among wilderness users and negative changes to wilderness experiences (see Vail and Heldt 2004; Buckley, 1999; Vaske et al., 1986; Manning, 1985).

Based on a wide variety of current tourism activities in wilderness areas there is obviously a diverse scale of tourist experiences and motivations that can be linked to touristic visits to the wilderness. As indicated earlier, solitude is often listed as the key quality and a desirable state of mind for wilderness visitors (see Roggenbuck, Williams and Watson, 1993; Hendee, Stankey and Lucas, 1990). Solitude and especially the conditions for experiencing solitude is also one of the most studied issues in wilderness tourism (see Manning, 1985; 2003; Williams, Roggenbuck and Bange, 1991; Hammitt, 1982). The basic question is how many visitors can a wilderness, or a certain trail, river route or camping area, host in a given time without jeopardising the opportunity to experience solitude by the visitors. These kinds of practical wilderness management questions have led to conceptually interesting research on crowding, encounter norms and social carrying capacity, for example (see Saarinen, 2014b; 2013; 1998b; McCool and Lime, 2001; Williams et al., 1991; Lucas, 1964).

However, these issues turned out to be both theoretically and practically complex questions that are contextual and highly dependent on a large number of 'variables'. The encounter norms, for example, have been noted to vary depending on the numbers of contacted people that one comes into contact with in a certain time and space in wilderness visit, but also group size (both one's own and the one contacted), behaviour, activities, ethnicity, pets etc. may have an effect. In addition, different kinds of values, and nature attitudes and environmental and many other situational factors can play a major role in terms of how individuals and/or groups evaluate contacts as acceptable or unacceptable in wilderness settings (see Patterson and Hammitt, 1990; Vaske et al., 1986).

Many of the studies focusing on visitor perceptions on encounters and crowding rely on the measurement of (overall) visitor satisfaction (Connelly, 1987), which has also turned out to be a problematic concept for wilderness management (Hendee, Stankey and Lucas, 1990) as overall satisfaction may depend on many other elements than encounters or perceived crowding alone. In addition, human satisfaction is obviously a subjective matter, and as noted by Manning (2003, p. 109), 'the same type of recreation opportunity might be judged as very satisfying to one visitor and substantially less satisfying to another visitor.' In a situation where the touristic use of a wilderness area is increasing, this leads to a serious management problem based on what is termed the displacement process. Visitors who are sensitive to crowding, for example, will search for other areas for their wilderness visits and, thus, the user segments of a particular site may turn to 'visitors less sensitive to crowding' (Manning, 2003, p. 109). Therefore, wilderness tourism management and governing the tourism industry cannot be based on perceived impacts and satisfaction of the visiting



tourists alone. There needs to be factors other than the visitor satisfaction or the industry's ethics alone involved.

### **Thinking about the limits to growth in wilderness tourism management**

In some places the scale of wilderness tourism may have reached a level that questions the softer side of the industry compared to some other economic uses of the wild. Indeed, the increasing popularity of tourism in wilderness areas poses a threat to the biodiversity values of these areas (Buckley, 1999, 2006). Increasing tourism can also conflict with wilderness experiences focusing on an unconfined type of recreation (Higham, 1998). This resembles Hardin's (1968) tragedy of commons situation. Although the tragedy of commons is a complex and problematic framework in practice (see Ostrom, 1990), it can be applied to the wilderness experience context at a general level. In the tragedy of commons situation, increased and unrestricted public access to a common resource (wilderness area) would ultimately deplete the shared limited resource, i.e. wilderness experiences based on a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. In this respect, it is quite evident that the increased touristic attractiveness of wilderness areas has this kind of challenges for the carrying capacity and management in many wilderness areas (Hendee, Stankey and Lucas, 1990, p. 401). This has created a need to set a limit to growth in wilderness tourism, but the exercise of determining maximum use levels has turned out to be a complex task (see Saarinen, 2013; Lindberg, McCool and Stankey, 1997; Butler, 1996).

Traditionally, wilderness management has focused on two related but often conflicting elements: environmental conditions and use levels (Lindberg, McCool and Stankey, 1997). The former refers to wilderness characteristics and how they are protected, while the latter focuses on how many visitors and/or different kinds of visitors and visitor groups can be allowed to enter an area in a given time period. This focus on visitor numbers is based on carrying capacity thinking in resource and tourism management (see Butler, 2010; 1996; Hendee, Stankey and Lucas, 1990; Wagar, 1974; Lucas, 1964). However, these two aims focusing on resource conditions and use levels are connected in complex ways, e.g. due to the noted contextual nature of wilderness experience, encounter norms, visitor satisfaction and (social) carrying capacity. In general, this complexity creates what Lindberg, McCool and Stankey (1997, p. 462) call 'a confusion of inputs and outputs' in wilderness management. For example, a general objective for wilderness management can be to provide a high quality visitor experience while sustaining the wilderness and its functions in a material way. In order for these two kinds of goals to be achieved in wilderness tourism

management, Lindberg, McCool and Stankey (1997) have listed several conditions for it. These include objectives such as a need for a widely accepted agreement on the type of desired social and resource conditions, an agreement on the desired level of these conditions and a need to understand the relationship between use levels and impacts for a selected set of (objective) indicators.

According to Lindberg, McCool and Stankey (1997, p. 463), these kinds of 'requirements are rarely, if ever, met', which makes the focus on tourist numbers and the use of carrying capacity thinking alone challenging in wilderness tourism management.

Alternative wilderness tourism management approaches are based on the recreational opportunity spectrum (ROS) and the limits of acceptable change (LAC) approaches. ROS is a practical tool used for managing a diverse set of wilderness recreation and tourism opportunities based on different physical, social and managerial settings (see Manning, 2003; Brown, Driver and McConnell, 1978). By describing a range of these settings, selected types of touristic offerings and opportunities can be defined for wilderness visitors. According to Kliskey (1998, p. 79) the ROS 'is based on the assumption that the more variation in the environment, the more the variation in the types of experiences a typical user could enjoy'. Based on this call for variation, the ROS involves a zoning approach that aims to provide a diversity of touristic opportunities on a continuum from 'developed' to 'undeveloped' environments (Clark and Stankey, 1979; Brown, Driver and McConnell, 1978) from which wilderness visitors can decide where to go based on the settings they prefer to seek (Sæþórsdóttir, 2011). Past research has demonstrated that some wilderness tourist groups do value developed facilities, structures, services and security backup by the wilderness area management, while other groups prefer freedom and unregulated settings (see Saarinen, 2103). The ROS thinking helps managers to plan diversity in touristic opportunities and to decide how much development, i.e. facilities and infrastructure, should be provided in different kind of areas (zones). Thus, the same wilderness area could provide a variety of wilderness experiences without fully displacing any visitor segment out of the area.

The LAC model was developed for managing wilderness areas by defining what tourism impacts on the environment can be considered acceptable (Stankey et al., 1985; Clarke and Stankey, 1979), and what management actions and guidelines are needed to ensure that the tourism activities and their impacts remain constrained within the defined LAC (Hendee, Stankey and Lucas, 1990). Therefore, LAC thinking acknowledges that tourism activities do mean impacts on the wilderness and, thus, in order to have tourism there needs to be a framework that defines the accepted limits of impacts. LAC thinking originates partly from carrying capacity thinking, as it focuses on how much and

what kind of tourism use would be too much in a certain wilderness area or sub-area (Stankey et al., 1985; see Lucas 1964; Wagar 1964). These kinds of questions are increasingly relevant in the current situation, where use levels and forms of tourism can rapidly grow and change (Butler 1996, 2010). This has even led the Responsible Tourism Partnership (2019) network to suggest that the LAC approach would be the most useful methodology 'for avoiding or managing overtourism', in general. Due to the complexity and scale of the overtourism phenomenon and its management, however, that may be an unrealistic expectation. Overtourism includes not only having too many tourists in the same space in a given time period (crowding), but also wider structural socio-economic changes in host-guest and other stakeholder relations (see Milano, Cheer and Novelli, 2019; Nofre et al., 2018). These may be rather difficult to manage by a framework that has been designed for public lands and activities that take place mainly in natural settings.

Unlike the ROS, the LAC approach emphasises the use of various integrated planning processes to determine indicators for identifying appropriate management strategies and plans (Manning, 2003; Hendee, Stankey and Lucas, 1990). The LAC process involves four key elements: the identification of acceptable and achievable social and resource conditions; a creation of understanding of the relationship between existing conditions and those judged acceptable; defining management actions that will assist in achieving these conditions; and a monitoring and constant evaluation of the management and use processes (Stankey et. al., 1985). The use of the LAC model has also revitalised carrying capacity thinking in tourism (see Butler 2010; Cocossis and Mexa, 2004). Interestingly, carrying capacity has been occasionally interpreted as an application of sustainable tourism (Butler 1999). The carrying capacity approach aims to offer time- and space-specific answers to sustainable tourism development at the local level (Saarinen, 2013; Bramwell 2007; Hunter 1995). There are some similarities between the concepts (see Cocossis and Mexa 2004; Butler 1996), including the shared challenges of the past, such as providing unrealistic expectations of simple solutions based on an ideological rhetoric (see Saarinen, 2014a; Sharpley, 2000, 2009; Lindberg, McCool and Stankey, 1997; McCool and Lime 2001).

However, sustainability thinking in wilderness management may have the capacity to evolve towards practical structures and frameworks aiming to guide wilderness tourism development towards more responsible and ethical ways of utilising wild places in tourism (see Sæþórsdóttir, 2011). This is urgently needed, as many of the traditional planning and management models treat wilderness environments as 'islands', or territorial units with strong boundaries. In reality, however, wilderness environments are relational spaces with porous boundaries connecting these areas and

their changes to wider regional, economic and global processes. Indeed, sustainable wilderness tourism should include a systemic approach that goes beyond a single area management focus alone, involving adjacent lands and communities. In addition, in the Anthropocene age and with climate change policies, the sustainability management of wilderness tourism should involve compensation measures (e.g. carbon offsetting) considering tourists journeys from and back to home. This has turned out to be a major challenge for the tourism industry, in general, and the aviation sector, for example, but it may be a reality in a relatively near future (see IATA, 2019).

## **Conclusions**

Remaining wilderness areas have become integral parts of modern tourism and its constantly evolving operations. It is evident that tourism and different forms of nature-based tourism will increase in wilderness areas in the future. Already today, there is a diverse scale of tourist motivations and experiences that are linked to visits in wilderness environments, and many of these motivations go beyond the traditional ideas of experiencing solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation in wilderness environments.

Growing tourism and the increasing presence of the tourism industry is often regarded as a major threat to wilderness values and characteristics. Based on this, there is an increasing need for context- or zone-specific wilderness management guiding and also setting limits to growth for wilderness tourism. This is nothing new. However, the present scale of the tourism industry and its growth needs represent a new level of challenge for wilderness tourism management. Due to the estimated growth of global tourism and the rapidly evolving nature-based tourism activities, the traditional wilderness values and characteristics of a given area may be lost in the future. Buckley (1999; 2006) has stated that the current trend of growing commercial tourism is important to recognise, as it is likely to create major challenges for wilderness management and managers. The reason is that compared to 'unconfined types of recreation', commercial tourism is an economically and politically highly influential and powerful activity, especially in peripheral regions with limited livelihood options other than evolving tourism that demands more access to the remaining wilderness environments (Saarinen, 2013). For Buckley (1999) this causes concerns about the political capacity of wilderness managers to steer these areas towards conservation and limit the growth of tourism if management for tourism and tourism development is to be 'given a higher priority' in the future (p. 191).

Indeed, wilderness areas are vulnerable resources for tourism and its impacts. As noted by Higham (1998, p. 27) 'wilderness areas are arguably the most sensitive physical resources for tourism'. While this is correct, and probably increasingly so, there is also a long symbiotic relationship between tourism and wilderness conservation (see Frost and Hall, 2010; Hall, 1992; Bukowski, 1977). Based on this, tourism has not necessarily been a negative issue for wilderness conservation and adjacent local communities (see Fennell, 1999). However, due to the current pace of growth of the tourism industry, this potentially symbiotic but also potentially conflicting relationship between wilderness conservation and tourism calls for wilderness management thinking that does not only acknowledge the co-existence between humans and nature, but also realises the related threats in the growth of wilderness tourism. In this way, tourism could be 'viewed as a renewable resource that, if cared for properly, can be utilised indefinitely' (Hollenhorst, Houge-MacKenzie and Ostergren, 2014, p. 306). Indeed, this 'proper caring' refers to the need to set the limits to the growth in tourism by creating structures and collaborative processes and practices that lead the industry on a sustainable development path within an overall sustainability framework (Saarinen and Gill, 2019; Bramwell, 2011). Approaches such as land ethics could help us to set such limits, but only if there are wider structures, regulations and actions that govern the industry and its impacts not only inside but also beyond the (porous) boundaries of wilderness areas.

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