Chapter 7
Urban Water Recreation: Experiences, Place Meanings, and Future Issues

Ingrid E. Schneider

7.1 Introduction

City sights . . . city smells . . . city sounds. In stark contrast to most urban images, water resources afford aesthetic relief among a variety of other individual and community benefits, including recreation. Water-based recreation experiences in urban environments contribute to citizen’s quality of life through opportunities for enhanced health and wellness, environmental protection, and stimulated economic development. Beyond the benefits afforded through recreation experiences, however, are the meanings urban dwellers and visitors attach to these recreation resources. Both the recreation experiences and the meanings attached to these recreation environments have short- and long-term implications for water resource managers, policy makers, and urban planners. These urban water-based recreation experiences and resources, their place meanings, and future issues associated with them are the subject of this chapter.

Prior to addressing urban water-based recreation experiences and place meanings, it is appropriate to understand the magnitude of water-based recreation. Beyond serving municipalities as water supplies and modes of transportation, water resources provide significant recreation services. Nationally, the majority of US citizens report visiting a waterside area (60%; NSRE 2000). In addition to visiting a waterside area, a variety of recreation activities depend upon water resources. For example, in 2006, 29.9 million US residents, 16 years and older, participated in recreational fishing; an additional 71 million enjoyed wildlife viewing (USFWS 2007). At the state level, 735 million visitors enjoyed state parks, many of which include water-based activities such as swimming, boating, and fishing (National Association of State Park Directors 2004). In terms of the urban water-based recreation experience, the total area covered by urban parkland in the US exceeds one million acres and recreational use of this area is significant. For example, Lincoln Park in Chicago hosts more than 12 million users each year while New York’s
Central Park hosts about 25 million visits annually—more than five times as many to the Grand Canyon (Center for City Park Excellence 2007). Parks such as these contain significant water features, which afford aesthetic enjoyment, wildlife habitat, spaces for contemplation, and other recreation opportunities.

Beyond providing recreational experiences to local residents, urban environments also host a variety of business and leisure travelers, both attracted to water-based features. Destinations with significant water features have the ability to differentiate themselves from their competitors and therefore obtain a greater share of tourism’s economic contributions. Nationally, tourism is a $1.3 trillion industry and one out of every eight US non-farm jobs is directly and indirectly created by travel and tourism (TIA 2007). City and urban sight seeing is among the top four activities for domestic tourists in the US. Further, among the ten most visited cities in the US, seven have significant water features (Travelers Digest 2007). Beyond those, consider San Antonio’s Riverwalk, Seattle’s pier, and Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. Each community embraces and capitalizes on their water resources to enhance recreation and tourism opportunities. As the evidence suggests, urban water areas are significant resources for recreation and tourism experiences that also contribute to local economies and protect natural environments.

7.2 Recreation Benefits

Upon initial contemplation of urban water-based recreation experiences, a list of activities probably comes to mind: boating, swimming, fishing, and enjoying the beach or wildlife viewing. However, beyond a simple list of activities, recreation experiences provide benefits to individuals, groups and even society as a whole. A significant line of recreation research posits that recreation experiences provide opportunities to realize benefits and suggests that individuals seek out these experiences to attain benefits. Recreation benefits represent (1) a change in a condition or state viewed as more desirable than a previous one; (2) maintenance of a desired condition and thereby prevention of an unwanted condition; and (3) realization of a satisfying recreation experience (Moore and Driver 2005). Purportedly, personal benefits of leisure exist in a chain of causality that goes from antecedent condition through motivation and participation to the realization of end-state benefits (Fig. 7.1). Antecedent conditions include management inputs (e.g., recreation space, labor, and capital) and consumer inputs (e.g., time, discretionary income, equipment, and skills). Consumer outputs are motivations (e.g., be close to nature, to relax physically, to do something with my family, to experience solitude, to test my skills and abilities, and to learn about the natural history of the area) and end-state benefits include individual activities (e.g., cognitive and physiological processes) and individual outputs (e.g., physical and mental health, friendships, knowledge, and self-esteem). For example, individuals who visit recreation areas typically report health improvements (Driver et al. 1996), stress reduction and renewal (Ulrich et al. 1990), and learning outcomes (Roggenbuck
Fig. 7.1 Abbreviated model illustrating the process and subprocesses for producing outdoor recreation benefits (modified from Brown 1984)

et al. 1991), among other benefits. Benefits are not only afforded at the individual level. For instance, at the community level, the use and availability of recreational resources add positively to quality of life perceptions (Stein et al. 1999). Further, recreation environments contribute to economic development opportunities as well as enhance property values (Lindsey et al. 2004). Perhaps of particular interest in the 21st century are recreation’s health and wellness benefits, environmental protection, and economic development opportunities.

Health encompasses aspects of physical, mental and social well-being (WHO 2007). Recreation and leisure professionals are aggressively addressing the obesity epidemic in the US through initiatives such as “healthy parks, healthy lives” and “step up to health” (e.g., National Recreation and Parks Association). At the start of the 21st century, nearly one in three US citizens were completely inactive, and only one of four attained enough physical activity to meet recommended physical activity guidelines (defined as at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity for five or more days of the week) (CDC 2001). On a related note, the percent of overweight and obese US residents exceeded 65% (Hedley et al. 2004). Even though 80% of US citizens participate in outdoor recreation (Roper ASW 2004), almost 25% report no physical activity during leisure time (Ewing et al. 2003). Urban water bodies provide significant opportunities for physical activity through on- and off-water experiences. Given urban water bodies typically incorporate trails, and they serve as magnets for physical activity (Shafer et al. 2000). Invariably, such trails and urban park systems
are important for active living in that they accommodate a diverse set of activities (Sallis et al. 1998) and retain a relatively safe and pleasing appearance that attracts recreational use (Humpel et al. 2002). Similarly, swimming and water sports provide opportunities for physical activity for all ages and abilities.

Beyond physical health, the mental health benefits afforded by water-based recreation experiences are similarly important. Arguably, the stress-relief function of merely viewing water, moreover the benefits of recreation experiences in and around water, can lessen the severe impact of mental illness. Data developed by the massive Global Burden of Disease study (http://www.who.int/topics/global_burden_of_disease/en/) reveals that mental illness accounts for more than 15% of disease in established market economies, such as the US. The use of leisure to cope with illness and stress is both documented and important. In the early 1990s, Coleman and Iso-Ahola’s (1993) seminal publication conceptualized the functions of leisure as a way to cope with stress and maintain good health. Evidence for this ranges from Calstatiano’s (1994) findings that three major groups of activities (i.e., outdoor-active sport, social, and cultural-hobbies leisure) reduce stress to Iwasaki’s extensive work (cf. Iwasaki and Mannell 2000, Iwasaki and Smale 1998) on leisure as coping. Given the stress encountered in urban environments, the stress-relief benefits of water-based recreation experiences are of paramount importance.

Importantly, perceived benefits are differentiated by proximity to the recreation area. Anderson et al. (2008) explored distance from a water-based recreation resource and its ability to differentiate visitor perceived benefits. Three benefit factors—enjoy nature, mental and physical health, and social interaction—were important to both proximate (within 15 miles, per management suggestion) and distant visitors (greater than 15 miles), but proximate visitors identified all benefits as more important. In particular, learning and solitude benefit experiences were more important to proximate visitors than distant visitors. Such findings are important to understand the benefits of water-based recreation sites for urban residents, particularly the benefit of solitude, given the continued “noise pollution plague” in urban areas (Goines and Hagler 2007).

When considering urban water policy and planning, the assessment and monitoring of recreation derived benefits to individuals and community’s is essential. Since the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act, federal land management agencies have increasingly focused on the documentation of outcome-based performance that seeks to better justify budgets, formulate policies, and make decisions. While quantification of such benefits is complex and daunting, significant progress has been made and continued efforts are advantageous at all planning levels.

Certainly the benefits described above are not mutually exclusive. For example, individuals walking for exercise along waterways can enjoy the wildlife along the way, listen to or read interpretive material about the area as they walk, as well as get immediate stress reduction by taking in the area’s viewscapes. This same trail may house several restaurants or cultural exhibits that encourage economic expenditures and benefit the community from a tax revenue perspective. Finally, this water-adjacent trail and its surrounding environment provides habitat for birds, small mammals and fish that urban citizens appreciate and seek out. In essence,
the benefits related to urban water-based recreation experiences and resources are important for both individuals and the communities to which they belong: socially, environmentally and economically.

7.3 Place Meanings

Beyond benefits, however, urban water-based resources in which we work and play evolve into places infused with meaning. As planners and geographers consider it, place moves beyond space and refers to a combination of “setting, landscape, ritual, other people, personal experiences, care and concern for home . . . in the context of other places” (Relph 1976). Williams (2008) summarizes the extensive work on place since the 1970s and identifies four approaches to place: (1) place as an attitude towards a geographic locale or resource, such as sense of place or specialness of a place, (2) place as meaning and relationship that exists at both individual and cultural level where individuals have relationships with places and culture’s assign meaning to places by protecting them, (3) place as environmental philosophy where moral reasons demand place protection, and (4) place as sociopolitical processes that, by nature, produce conflicts over appropriate uses and values.

The growing emphasis on collaborative ecosystem management has increased interest in place-based concepts within the natural resources field and the recreation field is no different. Place attachment caught the attention of outdoor recreation academicians in the 1980s. Place attachment has most often been described and measured by two primary dimensions in a recreational context: place dependence and place identity. Place dependence is defined as the potential for a place to satisfy the needs of an individual and how that place compares in the satisfaction of needs compared to another place (Stokols and Shumaker 1981). Place identity is defined by Proshansky (1978) as “a subculture of the self-identity of the person consisting of, broadly conceived, cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives”. Place meanings can evolve both within individuals and throughout a site’s environmental history. Within individuals, as experience with sites builds, so does the meaning of a place. For example, as one has more and varied experiences with a water body, the meaning of and relationship with the water body changes. In terms of a site’s history, consider the Cuyahoga River which actually caught on fire repeatedly from 1936 onward due to pollution (see Chapter 1). In the 21st century, however, the River Valley is now protected as a National Park, but portions remain areas of critical concern.

Place identity and place dependence have been reliably assessed in as few as four items each (Williams and Vaske 2003) and therefore, can easily be incorporated into existing visitor or community questionnaire efforts (Table 7.1). Moving beyond identity and dependence, however, requires qualitative assessment of place meaning. Additionally, identification of special places through stakeholder mapping or auto-photography can add rich contextual data layers useful in urban planning and management. Like perceived benefits, differences in place attachment
Table 7.1 Questions regarding place identity and place dependence (from Williams and Vaske 2003). Items are measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree

**Place Identity**
- I feel “X” is a part of me.
- “X” is very special to me.
- I identify strongly with “X”.
- I am very attached to “X”.
- Visiting “X” says a lot about who I am.
- “X” means a lot to me.

**Place Dependence**
- “X” is the best place for what I like to do.
- No other place can compare to “X”.
- I get more satisfaction out of visiting “X” than any other.
- Doing what I do at “X” is more important to me than doing it in any other place.
- I wouldn’t substitute any other area for doing the types of things I do at “X”.
- The things I do at “X”, I would enjoy doing just as much at a similar site.

exist even within the same area. Warzecha and Lime (2001), for example, found differences in place attachment between recreational users of two rivers in the same management area. Specifically, respondents demonstrated significant differences in tolerances for encountering other watercraft based on their level of agreement with attachment statements (place attachment increased, tolerance for encounters decreased). As such, they suggest providing more than one type of recreation opportunity could help prevent visitor displacement and provide opportunities for visitor solitude. Subsequently, identifying the meaning of and relationships with urban water-based recreation areas is essential for effective management and planning.

7.4 Future Considerations

As population and development intensity increase in water-based recreation areas, so do the associated resource management and policy challenges (Budruk et al. 2008, Cordell 2000, Manning 1999, Driver et al. 1996). Of particular interest for the future of urban water-based recreation environments are the diversifying population, an increased interest in cultural and heritage tourism, and conflict management.

**Diversifying Population:** A diversifying populace will influence urban water-based recreation experience preferences and place meaning. The projected population shift is significant. By 2050, non-Hispanic Whites are expected to comprise about half of the total population, down over a quarter percentage from 2000 (US Census Bureau 2006). The impact of the population shift is and will continue to be marked in urban environments. Hispanics, Asians, and Blacks remain more likely to reside in large metropolitan areas than the population as a whole (Frey 2006). Hispanic populations are the fastest growing group as identified by the Census
The foreign-born population of the US underwent a 7.9% increase between 1990 and 2000 and, in 2000, half of the 28.4 million foreign-born population migrated from Latin America.

To meet the needs of a diversifying public and create a more resilient community, the values and preferences both within and between groups should be assessed and monitored. For example, Sasidharan et al. (2005) explored inter-ethnic differences in type of urban park use, as well as intra-ethnic variations among Hispanics and Asians in two similar metropolitan areas. Their survey found that ethnic respondents visited in larger groups, Hispanics/Latinos preferred water activities and that the acculturation to the US did not have a significant impact on outdoor recreation choices. Few studies examine the impact of immigration on leisure experiences. Given the urban pattern of immigration, identifying the role of water-based recreation opportunities to adjustment in the US and as an expression of ethnic identity are important areas of inquiry. Similarly, understanding how urban water-based recreation opportunities contribute to sense of place and community among immigrants is important.

Planning and management implications of the diversifying population include assessing urban water-based recreation sites for their (1) ability to accommodate large groups, (2) levels of development in relation to preferred development levels, (3) language use, (4) perceived physical accessibility, as well as (5) perceived sense of welcoming by newer residents. Similarly, planning processes need to incorporate the knowledge that stakeholders are diversifying and, as such, reconsider typical media outlets and primary languages used to invite public participation to enhance diversity and coverage. Likewise, typical planning processes and forums may not be culturally appropriate for newer residents and participatory planning may be completely new to immigrating urban residents (Chapter 8).

Sidebar #1 Diversifying Population: Cuyahoga Valley National Park (Floyd and Nicholas, 2008)

Illustrating the challenge of the demographic change is visitation to one of the most recent urban National parks: Cuyahoga Valley National Park in urban Ohio (established in 2000). The 32,864-acre park adjoins the urban areas of Cleveland and Akron. Primary activities at the park include hiking, bicycle trails, a historical depot and Brandywine Falls. The 2000 US Census indicates Cleveland’s diverse racial makeup as 50% Black, 42% white, and 7% Hispanic or Latino of any race. However, a 2006 National Park Service study indicated a visitor base that is 97% non-Hispanic white. Efforts toward a visitorship that represents the local population might include assessing staff composition in comparison to the population, assessing perceived discrimination among visitors and non-visitors, and auditing marketing and interpretative materials to ensure representativeness.
Cultural/heritage Tourism: Due to their history and diverse stories, urban areas serve as primary culture and/or heritage based tourist destinations. This is particularly true of urban water-based areas which developed as transportation and industrial centers, transitioned through industrial periods, and are experiencing rebirth as sought-after housing and recreation sites. Cultural or heritage based tourism is the fastest growing US leisure travel segment (Nicholls et al. 2004). TIA defines a cultural/historic tourist as someone who engages in cultural, arts, historic or heritage based activities or events. According to national data, a total of 118.1 million US adults participated in cultural or heritage tourism in 2002 (TIA 2003). Tourists interested in cultural and heritage experiences are both an attractive and emerging travel market due to their higher expenditures and longer lengths of stay than non-cultural based tourists (TIA 2003). However, as urban areas seek to enhance or revitalize their culture and heritage around water, assessing the impacts of increased visitation will be mandatory to ensure social sustainability. An increase in the number of tourists can negatively impact sense of place, community cohesion and viability. Further, to maintain the attractions, consideration of the environmental sustainability associated with increased tourist numbers is essential.

Related to cultural/heritage tourism is the concept of sustainable tourism, which encompasses all three pillars of sustainability: ecological, social and economic. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), sustainable tourism development “meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future... management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems”. Certainly sustainable cultural/heritage tourism development related to urban water resources will be essential to a destination’s long-term success. The WTO has a list of indicators to consider for sustainable tourism planning, including those specific for urban sites (WTO 1996, Table 7.2).

Sidebar #2 Telling River Stories: A Program Highlighting Distinctive Urban Water-Oriented Recreational Heritage

Patrick Nunnally, Executive Director

Telling River Stories, a program led by the University of Minnesota and featuring half a dozen community partners from Minneapolis and St. Paul, capitalizes precisely on the shift from urban industrial to urban recreational landscape. Between 1880 and 1930, the flour mills at St. Anthony Falls led the world in the production of flour. Today, the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone, often utilizing the same material fabric and buildings from the glory days of milling, is home to over $2 billion in reinvestment, houses approximately 4,000 new residents, and hosts more than a million visitors a year to the
Table 7.2 Sustainable tourism indicators: core, urban and cultural/heritage (World Tourism Organization 1996)

Core Indicators of Sustainable Tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Specific Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Site Protection</td>
<td>Category of site protection according to IUCN* index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Stress</td>
<td>Tourist numbers visiting site (annum/peak month)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Use Intensity</td>
<td>Intensity of use – peak period (persons/hectare)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Social Impact</td>
<td>Ratio of tourists to locals (peak period and over time)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Developing Control</td>
<td>Existence of environmental review procedure of formal controls over development of site and use densities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Waste Management</td>
<td>Percentage of sewage from site receiving treatment (additional indicators may include structural limits of other infrastructural capacity on site such as water supply)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Planning Process</td>
<td>Existence of organized regional plan for tourist destination region (including tourism component)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Critical Ecosystems</td>
<td>Number of rare/endangered species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Consumer Satisfaction</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction by visitors (questionnaire based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Local Satisfaction</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction by locals (questionnaire based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Tourism Contribution to Local Economy</td>
<td>Proportion of total economic activity generated by tourism only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Composite Indices

A. Carrying Capacity                          Composite early warning measures of key factors affecting the ability of the site to support different levels of tourism
B. Site Stress                                 Composite measure of levels of impact on the site (its natural and cultural attributes due to tourism and other sector cumulative stresses)
C. Attractiveness                              Qualitative measure of those site attributes that make it attractive to tourism and can change over time

Cultural Sites – Built Heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Suggested Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Degradation</td>
<td>Restoration costs</td>
<td>- estimated costs to maintain/restore site per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Levels of pollutants affecting site</td>
<td>- acidity of precipitation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Measures of behavior disruptive to site</td>
<td>- traffic vibration (ambient level)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- number of incidents of vandalism reported</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determining Tourism Capacity</td>
<td>Use intensity**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of Safety</td>
<td>Crime rate and type</td>
<td>- number and type of crimes against tourists reported**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban Environment</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Suggested Measures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Safety</td>
<td>Crime levels</td>
<td>- number of crimes reported (e.g., theft and assault)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types of crimes committed</td>
<td>- traffic injuries as a % of population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traffic safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncleanliness</td>
<td>Site attraction**</td>
<td>- counts of levels of waste on site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowding at Key Urban Attributes</td>
<td>Use intensity**</td>
<td>- traffic congestion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degradation of Key Urban Attributes</td>
<td>See Cultural Sites Built Heritage below</td>
<td>- length of wait</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Threats</td>
<td>Air pollution measurements</td>
<td>- air pollution indices (e.g., sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, particulates) - number of days exceeding specified pollutant standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drinking water quality</td>
<td>- availability of clean water (e.g., can tap water be consumed on site)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type and extent of communicable diseases</td>
<td>- statistics on disease prevalence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noise levels</td>
<td>- records on decibel count at key locations</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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*International union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

**May be a function of change in level of crime or changes in level of reporting.

region’s Central Mississippi Riverfront Park. In St. Paul, which lagged behind its neighbor by some two decades in making the “turn toward the river”, the figures are not as startling, but nevertheless the trend is clear: The Twin Cities have turned to face their origins on the Mississippi River, and visitors from all over the world are coming to the cities.

Often, what they are coming to see is the history and culture of the area. Again, water is the draw, and the world-renowned Guthrie Theater moved to the Minneapolis riverfront, opening a new theater in 2006. A host of shops, restaurants, and night spots have grown up around the Guthrie. What is missing, though, is a deeper, richer sense of how this landscape has evolved over time, and what the complex tapestry of human stories that have played themselves out in this landscape have to tell us about being urban, and about the river. This is where Telling River Stories comes in. Using a web-based platform (www.riverstories.umn.edu) that will ultimately feature an array of
downloadable materials, the project seeks to repopulate the urban river corridor with the people and the stories of how the landscape has changed over time. Web-based materials will be supplemented by on-ground installations that provide “accidental learning” opportunities for people who have come to the riverfront for other reasons. Finally, materials developed in support of other components of the program will be made accessible to the public through tours, storytelling, and other programs. Again, there’s something magical about the urban river that makes this program sing.

**Telling river stories** capitalizes on the person-to-person contact that comes from the act of telling, even mitigated through digital and other media. Ultimately, the project captures something of the elusive quality of voice, rekindling connections between people and enriching the experience for visitors, whether they are new to the region or, long-time residents, or new to the riverfront.

**Telling River stories** highlights stories and the experiences of water. Rivers are dynamic; indeed all waterfronts, whether facing onto rivers, lakes, bays or the ocean, reflect something of the contrast between the fluidity of water and the stability of constructed landscapes. This ever-changing quality, reflected in varying qualities of light, images of motion, and sounds of waves and wind, makes waterfronts some of the most attractive landscapes in the modern American city. These are ideal places for a variety of recreational, touristic, and heritage-based activities, of literally countless types.

**Telling river Stories** speaks to some of the oldest ways humans communicate. “Tell me a story” we beg our parents, and, if we are from an indigenous culture such as Australian aboriginal people, or the native people of North America, that story contains a map of the surrounding landscapes. Stories establish relationships, traditions, and knowledge of what’s important and holds us together.

The Mississippi riverfront in the Twin Cities was designated in 1988 as part of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA), a unit of the National Park system. The waterfronts in St. Paul and Minneapolis therefore take their place among the “crown jewels” of urban waterfronts in the US. These places, and the public and private agencies that manage them for purposes of tourism, outdoor recreation, public interpretation, and heritage conservation, testify to the enduring importance of urban waterways as valued landscapes.

**Conflict Management:** Given the increasing pressure on urban water-based recreation resources, as well as diversifying use and place meanings, conflict is inevitable. Therefore, the need to acquire the expertise in conflict resolution is omnipresent among managers, planners, and administrators (Hammitt and Schneider 2000). While recreation conflict may appear as an antithesis of both managerial and visitor goals, it has a potential positive influence in that it can (1) indicate when
an aspect of the current system needs attention, (2) lead to ideas and solutions of superior quality because of the multiple parties and perspectives involved, (3) keep an organization at a higher level of stimulation, and (4) at the very least, prevent stagnation. Conflict management can either be destructive or constructive in nature. Fortunately, conflict resolution potential is high among recreation groups compared to conflicts between other entities (Floyd et al. 1996). Conflict can develop among the variety of stakeholders involved in recreation management and has been modeled at nine levels (Little and Noe 1984; Fig. 7.2):

1. **Visitor to Visitor** – Emanating from a variety of sources including personal or social values as well as simply activity style, visitors conflict with one another either directly or indirectly. Motor boaters and canoes, walkers and joggers, or simply family groups and individual recreationists can conflict upon site or sound of one another. Evidence of others, such as litter, also induces visitor conflict. The percent of visitors experiencing conflict ranges from 10% to 40%.

2. **Visitor to Management** – Deviating from trails, ignoring regulations or interfering with other visitor’s experiences can be sources of conflict for managers with regard to visitors.

3. **Visitor to Community** – Unexpected, unwelcome or unruly visitors can negatively impact the community and be a significant source of conflict between visitors and communities.

4. **Management to Visitor** – Changes in access, fee implementation, or other apparent infringements on the freedom associated with recreation are common sources of management conflict with visitors.

5. **Management to Management** – Given the multi-jurisdictional nature of water resources, conflicts among the many management and planning agencies are typical and may be due in part to organizational missions, values and operating procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Source” of Impact</th>
<th>“Recipient” of Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors – Visitors</td>
<td>Visitors – Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Park – Visitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Community – Visitors</td>
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</table>

*Fig. 7.2 Interaction model for various levels of recreation conflict (Little and Noe 1984)*
6. **Management to Community** – Management plans for water recreation resources may not align with community plans and, as such, result in conflict between the agency and community.

7. **Community to Visitor** – The hustle and bustle of daily urban life is likely a stark contrast to the preferred recreation experiences. As such, the community itself may detract from and be a source of conflict for visitors.

8. **Community to Management** – A variety of stakeholder groups within the community—special interest groups, influential citizens—exert pressure on management with regards to operations and opportunities and, as a result, conflict may arise.

9. **Community to Community** – Like visitors or managing agencies, communities themselves have differing values, desired levels of visitors and preferences for development. As such, communities that work at odds to each other’s missions or values will be at odds. Further, competition for visitors or market niches may drive conflict between communities as well.

Recreation management provides a variety of techniques to minimize visitor conflict. Typically, management tactics are categorized as: (1) direct, through regulations or rules; (2) indirect, through education and information; or (3) as building bridges and involving the public. Beyond visitor conflict, conflict resolution processes have involved three stages: (1) analysis, (2) confrontation, and (3) resolution. In the analysis phase, issue identification is the primary goal that provides the foundation for the second stage, confrontation. Confrontation involves further engagement to focus on the most contentious issues where major conflicts are defined, alternative courses of action are generated, and solutions are evaluated. Finally, conflict resolution is attempted. As resolution seeks to prevent further escalation, it works toward building sustainable relationships and structures that allow for equal identity among involved parties. However, this traditional approach is ineffective in that stakeholders neither are equally involved in the processes nor do singular answers to the conflict exist. As such, greater integration of all groups at the inception of any problem is highly recommended.

Though resource conflict may be inevitable, the opportunities and meanings afforded by urban water-based recreation areas are astounding. The high quality of life, environmental protection, and stimulated economic development reap benefits for both individuals and communities. These benefits provide only an outer layer of the importance of urban water environments, which ultimately create and possess meaning for urban dwellers and visitors alike. Understanding how the opportunities and meanings will change along with the US population and its increased interest in cultural/heritage tourism will be vital for continued progress in urban planning. Similarly essential for successful urban water-based areas is a comprehensive understanding and use of effective conflict management skills. Working with, and for, the diversifying public will ensure that urban water-based recreation areas develop in ways that effectively meet the needs of residents, visitors, and future generations.
7.5 Resources

Center for City Park Excellence: With the help of CCPE data, you can use the data provided at the link below to see how your city compares to others. http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=20531&folder_id=3208

References


