

Overview of Presentation

Human Dimensions Research (HDR) is one of the newest areas of emphasis in the evolving fields resource management and planning. A human dimension is a general term used to describe the application of the social sciences to natural resource-related problems and issues. The human dimensions' approach as consisting of two components. The first emphasizes acquisition of sound information that explains human thought and action regarding wildlife using the concepts and methods of social science. The second component involves determining how to use that information in wildlife decision making. Over the fifteen years, resource managers, policy makers and planners have been applying the human dimensions' approach to management of natural and community resources. Likewise, many institutions of higher education have responded to the need for a human dimensions' approach by offering courses that focus on this important topic. Human dimensions is essentially the combination of social science research methods, communication theory and process with "real world" issues associated with community and resource planning, economic development and resource management. This lecture will address variety of topics, to include, but not limited to managing tourism growth; planning, management and design of natural areas with people in mind; environmental planning for sustainable rural communities; managing growth in the urban-rural interface; integrated coastal and ocean planning & management; outdoor recreation planning and development. It will conclude with a general discussion of the "potential and pitfalls" of this research arena.

Biography Robert A. Robertson

Rob Robertson is an Associate Professor in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment in the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture at the University of New Hampshire. Current research and outreach involvements are focused on the social and economic dimensions of natural resource planning and management. More specifically, Dr. Robertson is actively involved in research and outreach activities intended to improve the process (and develop new tools) by which stakeholders participate in natural resource and economics development related decision-making and on reducing non-response bias in survey research. Funded research projects have generated over \$1 million dollars of support in a research arena with limited funding for his activities. Forty-three different local, state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations and foundations have committed human and financial resources. These include applied research projects for the Northeast Consortium, the Northeast Science Center, NH Sea Grant, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Coastal and Ocean Science, the Federal Highway Administration, NH Fish and Game Department, the NH Office of State Planning, the NH Department of Environmental Services, White Mountain National Forest, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, among others. Many of these organizations had never previously funded social science research. Findings from these projects have been published in seventeen different peer reviewed journals. These journals represent a broad cross-section of periodicals published by national and international professional societies. Published peer reviewed papers embody discipline based science focused on the theoretical or methodological dimensions (e.g., Rural Sociology, Human Organization, Human Ecology, Journal of Environment Planning and Management), as well as those with a focus on a particular resource management issue which tend to be more interdisciplinary in nature (e.g., Marine Policy, Journal of Aquaculture Economics and Management, Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, Society and Natural Resources). He has served or serves on a number of technical advisory committees with a focus on the evaluation and application of social science research methods to resource management programs and policies, including the Science and Statistics Committee of the New England Fishery Management Council, the Committee for Social and Economic Sciences of the Atlantic States Marine Fishery Commission, Expert Panel I-93 Expansion Project, NH Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Advisory Committee, Coastal Training Program Advisory Committee associated with the Sandy Point Discovery Center, NH Sea Grant Scientific Advisory Committee, Faculty Liaison to the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association, the Technical Advisory Committee to the Northeast Regional Aquaculture Center, among others.