

# Outdoor Recreation, Outdoor Re-Creation and the Environment: Which Direction for Outdoor Education?

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*Who possesses this landscape?  
The man who bought it or  
I who am possessed by it?*

*False questions for  
this landscape is  
masterless  
and intractable in any terms  
that are human.*

Norman MacCaig

**RED ? - ORIGINAL  
RETURN TO  
OUTDOOR EDUCATION  
MORAY HOUSE**

## Abstract

This paper explores socio-ecological aspects of outdoor recreation and outdoor education in the light of current trends towards modernism and globalisation. It questions the purpose and the methods of outdoor education, suggesting that there are important philosophical and pedagogical reasons why an approach which includes environmental literacy should be a central focus.

## Introduction

There is a growing debate amongst academics interested in the socio-ecological aspects of outdoor recreation and outdoor education regarding the influence on these of globalisation and modernisation (Vanreusel, 1995; Higgins, 1996a; Loynes, 1996; Becker, 1996; Humberstone, 1998). Perhaps unsurprisingly there seems to be little parallel debate in the informal or professional magazines and journals which serve outdoor adventure sports or outdoor adventure education. A search through the issues of the past year of a number of such publications yielded almost no mention of any sort of ethical debate about such matters. It therefore appears that there may be differences of opinion as to the purpose of recreation or education out-of-doors.

This paper explores the *purpose* of outdoor education<sup>1</sup> and asks whether current practice in the UK acts to challenge, reflect or follow recreational trends. In this paper I seek to explore these potential purposes and endeavour to establish how these concur with a 'deep ecology' perspective.

## Outdoor Recreation in the UK

Outdoor recreation, outdoor activities and adventure sports comprise a range of activities which more or less maintain a tradition of demanding physical activity in the countryside, on land or water (inland or sea). In many countries there is a strong association between outdoor activities and hunting; the skills required to travel safely on land or water being traditionally deployed in the pursuit of 'game' (see Vanreusel, 1995). However, in the UK this is rarely the case with the various forms of activity being engaged in by different interest groups. The stylised behaviour of two such groups being epitomised by the conflict between those who hunt deer (euphemistically known as 'stalking') going to great expense to buy large tracts of

<sup>1</sup> The term 'outdoor education' is used here and in the UK generally rather than any of its synonyms. Although in particular 'outdoor adventure education' has much merit, it is not used in the UK. The absence of 'adventure' from the term may be symptomatic of a difference or change in approach discussed later.

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(Outdoor Nature Life) in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'.

land for the purpose<sup>2</sup>, and those who hillwalk in these mountainous areas having to argue a traditional 'right to roam' rather than be considered trespassers (see Wightman et al, in press).

The stimulus for recreational use of 'wild land' in Britain (and subsequently other parts of the World) seems to have come (in the 19th Century) from the 'Romantic' school of writers and artists (Blake, Wordsworth, Constable and others), as much as the subsequent inculcation in the 'national psyche' of the character value of exploration (which originally took place for predominantly political, economic and scientific reasons) as epitomised by the race to the North and South Poles, Mount Everest etc. Such factors, combined with the added social pressure resulting from the love of the Highlands evidenced by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, led to the Highlands becoming both a training ground (for the European Alps and the 'greater ranges') and a venue in their own right for mountaineers. This was to some extent also true of the rugged coasts of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland which were increasingly explored under sail and more recently by kayak (eg see Dunnet, undated). In particular the names of many of those who 'cut their teeth' in the mountains of Scotland during the early to middle of the 20th Century (Abrahams, Whymper etc) are synonymous with first ascents in Norway, the European Alps and other mountain ranges throughout the World.

### **Trends in Outdoor Recreation**

Amongst outdoor recreational activities the most traditional and potentially least equipment intensive activity is probably hillwalking. Whilst it is still possible to hillwalk without sophisticated equipment, even this activity can be supplemented with designer clothing, satellite navigation equipment etc. Many other 'outdoor' activities now take place in a highly stylised manner requiring the use of specialist equipment and locations which may include artificial urban (eg ski slopes, white-water kayak courses) or indoor venues (eg climbing walls).

Whilst there is no doubt that modern equipment and transport do make the contemporary and historic experiences different, it should be remembered that early outdoor recreators did make use of the best available at the time. Whether early or later achievements were greater or lesser for such reasons is not an issue in the context of this article. What is of interest however, is whether 'globalisation' and 'modernisation' have had an effect on the outdoor experience.

A number of authors have commented on this trend and all are of the view that this is an issue of some concern. Vanreusel (1995) considers that the situation has become paradoxical, with the modernisation and popularisation of outdoor recreational activities, which derive much of their special value from the quality of the surroundings, themselves detracting from that quality. He goes further, suggesting that this process has both 'altered the whole social meaning of sporting activities in nature' and that 'the concept of nature itself has been socially redefined' (Vanreusel, 1995:275). Whilst he neatly summarises this as a shift from an eco-centric to an ego-centric definition of the relationship with nature, this perhaps oversimplifies the issue as for many the purpose may be best described as spiritual. Naess (1997) is also critical of ego-centricism, condemning the contemporary superficiality of the 'conquest' of mountains as epitomised by the use of such combatorial terms, and the emphasis on competition, difficulty and measurement.

The use of combatorial images is a theme also pursued by Humberstone (1998). She raises concerns over the androcentricism of much recreation outdoors, suggesting that such activities reaffirm 'hegemonic masculinities' and contribute to the 'double oppression of both women and nature' (Humberstone, 1998:381). This argument is an important one as it demands a fresh look at the socio-ecology of outdoor adventure recreation and a reassessment of current trends in the light of critical feminism.

Loynes (1996), echoing Ritzer's (1993) 'McDonaldisation' theme that much of life in western society is 'provided as a standard, dependable and safe product', sees this as an additional influence of modernisation leading to a change in the contemporary experience of outdoor

<sup>2</sup> This is primarily restricted to Scotland where there are roughly 340 sporting estates covering 5.2 million acres, comprising over 50% of the privately owned land in the Highlands and Islands (Wightman, 1996).

recreation. In his view this is a worrying trend with the influence of the market having both a negative effect on individual experience of community and place (in the outdoors), and implications for providers who are in danger of 'leaving behind the values of the social movement that gave rise to the field' (Loynes, 1996:52). Becker (1996:70) voices similar concerns, describing the scale of consumer interest and expenditure on adventure activities; the 'fun-morality by which the hunt for thrill and excitement is justified; and the trend towards short high-intensity taster courses or 'excitement kits' (which he suggests are a considered a form of improved time management). He cautions that 'the consumer, hungry for excitement, develops a strange restlessness', and argues that outdoor educators have a role in the development of an education of adventure and experience' (Becker, 1996:70).

In a recent review, Ewert and Shultis (1999) come to similar conclusions to these authors, suggesting that technology (and by implication modernisation) has a powerful and pervasive influence on the backcountry recreation experience. Implicitly they highlight a number of the tensions by, for example, making the counter-suggestion that increasing access may lead to greater social concern for the natural heritage (Ewert and Shultis, 1999:28). They also make the point that whilst 'many recreationists use technology to visit the backcountry, an increasing number visit the backcountry to use their technology'; further suggesting that 'artificially contrived experiences devoid of the need for natural backcountry settings' cannot be far behind (Ewert and Shultis, 1999:28). This vision of the future has significant implications for the relationship between individuals and nature, with the prospect of a range of types of outdoor recreation, from respectful engagement through to utilitarian or irrelevant.

Much of the previous analysis focuses on the nature of the adventure experience from the perspective of the participant. However, increasingly justifiable and sometimes strident concerns have been raised over the effect of the participant on the area they come to visit. Some effects such as the erosion of footpaths, disturbance of nesting birds are obvious, whilst others such as the transmission of diseases such as *Giardia* are less so. In the UK there are now restrictions placed on access to certain areas at certain times of the year, particularly where rock-climbing conflicts with the bird nesting season (eg Banks, 1994). On the whole these seem to be accepted by the outdoor community.

An issue of a particular conflict which seems little debated in the climbing press, is that through the development of new rock-routes and the current trend of climbing in very 'thin' winter conditions, considerable damage may be done to vegetation which is almost entirely restricted to these areas (Bunce, 1988). Criticism of such activities may well be regarded as justifiable and the climbing community would do well to avoid it. However, some forms of damage, such as footpath erosion should be set into context in relation to landowners bulldozing access tracks into mountainous areas, and also the management practices applied to these areas for hunting, agriculture or forestry which have enormous effects on biodiversity (Lister-Kaye, 1994). This situation is of concern to environmentalists as well as outdoor recreationists, and it would surely be in the political interests of both to ensure that there was as little conflict between them as possible.

### **The 'Purpose' of Outdoor Education**

Much has been written (especially in recent years) on the purpose of outdoor adventure education. Authors who have sought to define it (or chose to avoid the issue by describing commonalities) consistently place emphasis on the importance of direct unmediated experience out-of-doors as the key quality. In this regard it has much in common with experiential education, and indeed many use the terms interchangeably. It is perhaps safest to say that often the 'out-of-doors' is the venue and 'experiential' the method applied in the endeavour to orchestrate certain developmental or learning outcomes. Brookes (1993) and Higgins and Loynes (1996), offer reasons why there can be no single definition of outdoor education but do provide summaries and analyses of common themes. Nonetheless, in order to progress the debate it does seem fair to summarise the intention of outdoor educators as the promotion of aspects of personal, social and environmental education through direct (adventurous) experience out-of-doors (see Higgins et al, 1998 for an attempt to summarise a European

consensus).

In order to achieve long-term personal, social and environmental education, most outdoor educators argue that the 'student' needs to learn how to deal with such issues themselves and this requires that they take responsibility for their own learning. In other words they must have confidence in their own ability to make the most of educational or life experiences. This in turn requires an ability to reflect on such experiences, have confidence in their ability to act (in life and in the pursuit of such learning), and consider the implications before doing so. This accords with general 'progressive' educational aspirations in the tradition of Dewey, Bruner, Piaget, Friere and others.

Outdoor educators (at least in the UK and Europe) seem shy of stating what *knowledge* students might be expected to gain and what *content* there should be in such courses. It seems reasonable to expect content to be variable as long as it achieves the aims (when these are stated). However, in addition to exploring attitudes and values and so-called 'multiple intelligences' (in the sense of Goleman, 1997) effort might be made to ensure that students learn something of the techniques and skills of outdoor recreation, and environmental knowledge such as biogeochemical cycles and ecological principles. The outdoors is the ideal place to gain experience of such material, which is vital to an understanding our 'connection' to the Earth and the consequences of our actions. These are key principles in developing 'environmental literacy' and awareness of 'sustainability'.

### **The 'Method' of Outdoor Education**

The argument put forward for an experiential approach is that it is not possible to truly know something without direct personal experience of it. It follows that the deeper the knowledge, the greater the emphasis on deeper experiences (Devlin, 1994). So for example, a multiplication table may be learnt by rote, but a storm at sea (sound, sight, smell, taste and physical movement) must be experienced, and is unlikely to be forgotten. In this sense outdoor education shares much in common with 'constructivist pedagogy' where 'the individual constructs and adds to this knowledge by frequent visits to the real world' (Dahlgren and Szczepanski, 1998:20). For the outdoor educator the out-of-doors provides 'reality itself' and, crucially, an arena where many of the relationships (between self, others, environment and workplace) which occur in day-to-day life can be modelled and explored and the message taken home.

### **Trends in Outdoor Education in the UK**

There may be national variations in the degree to which students are directed towards the learning outcomes noted earlier but it seems likely that in the UK at least, both the outcomes and the approach may have changed over the years. It is now fairly common practice for academics interested in outdoor education in the UK to describe the approach taken by early authors such as Hahn, Drasdo and Mortlock (eg Nicol and Higgins, 1998a; Bowles, 1995; Loynes, in press) in terms which emphasise the nature of the outdoor educational experience as relatively unstructured and focussed on adventure. Bowles (1995) goes farther and suggests that 'enchantment' is a key aspect of the experience. Higgins (in press, a), Loynes (in press) and others have argued that there has been a significant change in the current approach to outdoor education in the UK. This will be described later, but rather than review such work, the following 'case study' may serve to illustrate a significant characteristic of such change. Glenmore Lodge is the National Outdoor Training Centre for Scotland and is located in the Cairngorm Mountains. It was opened in 1948 on behalf of the Scottish Education Department, when its stated purpose was 'to use the excellent natural surroundings offered by mountain, loch and forest, to experiment with forms of education which assist the individual to discover his or her physical, mental and spiritual potentialities' (Loader, 1952:14). In the introduction to her book (written 20 years before Drasdo (1972) and Mortlock (1973, 1984) made their contributions), Loader expresses the need for direct experience of nature thus:

*'In olden times only the wise men went up into the hills and out into the open spaces to find in*

*the solitude and eternal silences the peace, inspiration, and spiritual sustenance that enabled them to maintain their calling as advisers and teachers. Today, after having regarded Nature as a hostile force for so long, ordinary people are finding, as the wise men did, that the key to happiness is within themselves.....'* (Loader, 1952:15).

There are two points of note here. First, that the Centre was operated on behalf of the Scottish Education Department and second that it was to 'experiment' with forms of education such as those stated above by Loader. Contrast this with the current situation where Glenmore Lodge is administered and run by 'Sport Scotland' (the Government Agency responsible for sport in Scotland) for the training and assessment of outdoor leaders in National Governing Body Awards, and training of elite outdoor sportspeople. A glance at the biannual brochure also reveals an increasing emphasis on courses which are essentially recreational in nature. Fifty years have passed and emphasis has shifted from *education* of a very broad and 'experimental' form to *recreation, training* and *competition* for adventure sports. The reasons for this change were political and particular to the circumstance, but leave Glenmore Lodge well suited to meet a specific contemporary need.

A change from 'experimental' education to 'recreation' is something of a pattern which may be seen in much formal outdoor educational provision in the UK (Higgins, in press, a). This change can be described as a shift from 'broad and relatively unstructured experiences' to either 'highly focussed, processed' or 'recreational' experiences. Whilst such changes may be perfectly reasonable for Glenmore Lodge, the stated purposes of formal outdoor education (noted earlier) are somewhat different. This raises a central question: is the contemporary approach to outdoor education likely to achieve its stated intentions?

Rubens (1997, 1998) conducted qualitative research on links between outdoor education, adventure and learning, and set his findings in context through a comprehensive review of the educational and psychological literature. He argues that the current literature on motivation in learning suggests the value of a 'mastery' approach to learning and contrasts 'narrow' and 'broad' views of adventure. 'Narrow adventure' experiences are in essence activities which are short in duration and focus on high thrills, but require little effort on the part of the student who takes minimal responsibility for his or her actions. Zipwires, ropes courses and abseiling may be cited as examples. He contrasts this with 'broad adventure' which provides the converse, but most notably requires the student to take responsibility for their actions and sustain effort. Such activities are characterised by, for example, journeys by canoe or on foot. Rubens makes a strong case that 'broad adventure' encourages a mastery approach to education which leads to a willingness for students to take responsibility for their actions in later life. 'Narrow adventure' appears to have no such benefits. There are other advocates of such an approach who are worth a mention. For example Orr (1996), writing in the context of environmental literacy, promotes the value of 'slow knowledge' which he suggests is about *avoiding* problems rather than 'fast knowledge' which is about *solving* problems which occur because not enough thought is given to avoiding them. Hodgkin's (1986) article on 'Mountains and Education' is permeated with the notion of the importance of effort, failure and above all 'apprenticeship' (the long-term relationship between someone who knows a bit more and someone who knows a bit less). There is also a growing body of knowledge concerning the influence of 'significant life experiences' (Tanner, 1980) on those developing an interest in the environment and in pro-environmental behaviour. In essence this research indicates the importance of direct childhood experiences of nature and the countryside in this process. The initial research by Tanner has recently been supported by a number of authors (eg Palmer and Suggate, 1996) and has been shown to have similarities in a number of countries (Palmer et al, 1998).

However, a great deal of anecdotal evidence together with survey results (Nicol, in prep; Higgins, in press, a) suggests that the trend in outdoor education is towards the provision of short duration, high excitement experiences of the type noted above. Furthermore outdoor activity courses at outdoor centres have become shorter in recent years, reducing the prospects of even a full week 'apprenticeship'. In such short courses there is little likelihood of students having much opportunity to focus on 'connections' (which might be personal, social or

environmental) or develop awareness of the 'consequences' of their actions. Additionally, there are now far fewer teachers of outdoor education working in schools in the UK, and this exaggerates the dominance of high-intensity residential outdoor centre courses (Higgins, in press, a).

Some of the above arguments are based on literature review rather than research, and Barrett and Greenaway (1995) rightly point out that there have been few serious attempts to assess the effectiveness of outdoor programmes, leaving those who design courses without much to underpin their work. However, in a more recent review of 96 studies into the effectiveness of outdoor adventure programmes, Hattie et al (1997) found gains in personal and social educational outcomes both during and (remarkably) after the programme. They found considerable variations according to the nature of the programme, but noted that outcomes improved in longer programmes and with older participants.

Whilst there appears to be growing conviction that the longstanding claims concerning the benefits of education outdoors may be best justified in the ways suggested above, careful research and comment is of obvious significance to the way the process of outdoor education is approached in the UK. However, at present funds for research are scarce, little in the form of an academic/professional interface and a weak professional structure for the dissemination of relevant material.

### **Outdoor 'Re-Creation' and Deep Ecology**

In discussing the work of the World Wilderness Foundation, Laurens van der Post (1987) uses the term 're-creation', and in so doing seems to suggest that something has been lost which is of importance in understanding nature. There is a sense in which 'creation' implies a spiritual connection to nature.

*'As we get more and more experience we find the only way forward is not through groups but through individuals, so our whole aim is to re-create or re-educate, individuals through nature to see life from nature's point of view.'*

Devall (1990) also makes deliberate use of the term, drawing together a number of thoughts on the shallow approach to the outdoors taken by those recreating in it. He focuses attention on the contemporary shift away from the vision of those such as Muir and Nansen who saw outdoor recreation as the opportunity to rediscover our connection with the land, our primal senses and spirit. This theme is explored in some detail in an earlier paper (Higgins, 1996a).

Trends in the relationship between those who recreate or educate outdoors and the natural heritage suggest a shift away from 're-creational' engagement. This seems somewhat paradoxical, considering the claims for direct involvement with the natural world. Indeed, Horwood (1991) suggests that experiential education (outdoors) has a great deal in common with deep ecology<sup>3</sup> which implies a deep connection to nature. He suggests that the 'methodological implications of deep ecology are highly compatible with experiential methods, and the value implications of experiential education are close to the values of deep ecology, although more restricted to the human species' (Horwood, 1991:24).

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<sup>3</sup> The term 'deep ecology' has been around since 1972 and should be attributed to Arne Naess. Its principles are well articulated by an increasing number and range of authors. Naess' (1986) lecture on the subject is illuminating, but for a fuller account see Naess (1989) where he describes 'deep ecology' as a way of conceiving the world and ourselves such that the intrinsic value of life and nature is obvious. For a full historical perspective see Reed and Rothenberg (1993).

## Outdoor Education: Leading or Following?

In the light of the above perspectives where is outdoor education? One conception of outdoor education has it located in the relationship of individuals with the environment. This appears to have been an implicit traditional approach permeating teaching methods in the UK. In other countries (eg Scandinavia) this relationship is an essential aspect of outdoor activity. For example Tellnes (1993) reports the Norwegian Board of Nature Administration as stating that *Friluftsliv*<sup>4</sup> (outdoor nature life) 'creates a base for environmental consciousness, good health, higher quality of life and a sustainable development' (Tellnes, 1993:12).

However, the trend in the UK now seems to be towards a utilitarian approach to education outdoors. This is perhaps hardly surprising as there is no curricular requirement for outdoor education and providers have had to make use of a wide range of justifications for what they do (Higgins, in press, b). As noted earlier these often focus on personal and social education with the activities being used as a means of delivering these. Indeed, following intense lobbying the Minister for Education announced (in January 2000) financial support for outdoor education centres on the basis that such activities have a discernible impact on pupils' relationships in school (Revell, 2000).

In the process of delivering an outdoor programme outdoor centres now employ a wide range of activities which mirror those popular in outdoor recreation. Alpine skiing, mountain biking, rafting, snowboarding, visits to climbing walls etc are now popular but very few outdoor centres ever take groups away on camps or journeys (walking, canoeing or sailing) (Higgins, in press a; Nicol, in prep). The use of a wider range of technologies and toys has spawned more and more qualification structures and this has led to an increasing focus on the technical and safety aspects of staff training at the expense of staff development in personal and social education and environmental literacy (Higgins, in press b; Nicol, in prep). This situation is both paradoxical for the stated current purpose of outdoor education and (at best) pointless for the environment. Given that formalised outdoor education in the UK has been widely available for around 30 to 40 years (Parker and Meldrum, 1973) it seems reasonable to suggest that outdoor educational experiences may well have had an historic impact on outdoor recreational trends. If this is the case then we may well expect current activities to make their own contribution towards modernism and globalisation.

This argument suggests that whilst outdoor education in the UK can claim to do much of educational merit, there is little evidence of a trend to encourage either environmental knowledge or a deeper relationship with the natural heritage. In this sense it does seem to be following a recreational trend and is not attempting to counter the trend towards ego-centrism suggested by Vanreusel (1995).

### Pedagogical Implications

Brookes (1993:15) suggests that 'the difference between outdoor education as escapism and outdoor education as the lived experience of worldviews<sup>5</sup> lies with what the teacher knows'. He goes on to suggest what this might mean; in essence 'to be able to read educational ecologies (eg how knowledge is socially constructed and defined), 'offer alternative understandings of the nature of knowledge' and 'experience of alternative ecologies of ideas' (Brookes, 1993:16). Outdoor education of a recreational type may well have a role, but it is not the one Brookes advocates.

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<sup>4</sup> *Friluftsliv* is in essence 'outdoor nature life'. As an important cultural tradition it is mainly informal activity in the countryside, which may be activities such as walking or skiing, or hunting, gathering berries and mushrooms etc. It is also formalised to meet a range of outdoor learning or therapeutic expectations (Tellnes, 1993).

<sup>5</sup> Brookes (1993) uses the term 'worldviews' (or mindsets) to mean ways of seeing the world which are either absorbed tacitly from everyday experiences, or educationally constructed as a function of the structure of the school and its practices etc.

This is a view with which Humberstone (1998) would have sympathy. By raising concerns over aspects of Friluftsliv and deep ecology, suggesting that proponents of these must be cautious to avoid criticism on the basis of elitism and male-centredness, she is asking for educators to acknowledge and employ Brooks's (1998) 'alternative ecologies of ideas'. If outdoor education concerns itself with social and environmental literacy and justice there must be a willingness to review current practice in this light.

A discussion such as this raises the issue of values. It is relatively comfortable to alight on certain values and state that these are the ones which will be promoted through (outdoor) educational experiences. However, this inevitably leads to the issue of whose values are being promoted and for what purpose. The foregoing analysis of the relationship between outdoor education and recreation is not intended to imply one value rather than another. It is intended to question whether outdoor education does what it says it does, and to suggest that the educational use of the natural heritage (as opposed to some other location) requires justification.

Rodger (1993) advocates 'awareness' as a key value in environmental education. He suggests we should view this in the context of 'humans as users, managers, protectors, admirers and respecters of the environment'. He points out that only the last of these is untainted by 'what we can get from it'. However, a number of authors have argued that man's impact on the planet demands a particular approach to education outdoors (Crowther, 1984; Crowther et al, 1998; Martin, 1993; Cooper, 1991; Higgins, 1996a,b; Nicol and Higgins, 1998a,b ; White, 1998). Common themes are the development of environmental awareness and knowledge, awareness of human dependence on physical and ecological principles, and the consequences for the Earth (and ourselves) of individual and collective actions. Martin (1993) suggests that the use of adventure activities to assist in this process of 'developing an alternate view of the world in this manner is the most desirable and defensible rationale for outdoor education' (Martin, 1993:10).

#### **A 'New' Sense of Purpose for Outdoor Education**

The above authors suggest what 'knowledge' might be the basis of this form of outdoor education and a range of ways in which this can be achieved. For the outdoor sector to decide if this is an appropriate educational endeavour requires a willingness to examine a range of questions associated with human recreational relationships with the natural heritage and the origins and contemporary purpose of outdoor education. Above all as 'professionals' (paid or unpaid) outdoor educators should be able to explain 'what they are teaching', 'why they are teaching it' and 'how they are doing so'. Furthermore, they should be able to explain how their training, experience and qualifications (in educational as well as technical areas) make them suitable to do the job. The outdoor sector in the UK is diverse and has in recent years been poorly funded and subject to considerable legislative pressures. This has not been conducive to constructive reflective practice in regard to these questions, but this questioning process now seems well overdue.

The influence of modernism in outdoor recreation is pervasive and has become evident in outdoor education. This trend seems likely to polarise outdoor and environmental education. Indeed, Parkin (1998) suggests that the link between outdoor education and environmental education is tenuous because the former primarily see the outdoor environment as a setting for outdoor programmes. However in terms of origins, pedagogy and opportunity outdoor education has a great deal in common with environmental education (Crowther, 1984; Crowther et al, 1998; Martin, 1993; Cooper, 1991; Nicol and Higgins, 1998a,b). If outdoor educators fail to take such important educational opportunities, there is little justification for locating such courses in nature.

Tanner (1980) suggests that the purpose of environmental education 'must be the creation of an informed citizenry which will actively work towards' the goal of 'maintenance of a varied, beautiful, and resource-rich planet for future generations'. Whilst I have personal empathy with this as a motivation for education outdoors, my concern that students should have



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opportunities to develop their own values is greater (Higgins, in press b). Rather than educate for any particular environment or sustainability viewpoint (Jickling, 1994) this approach is in sympathy with Brooks' (1993) view of the role of outdoor educators. An approach of this nature is far more demanding and requires more sensitivity than purely teaching an outdoor activity (with or without the most recent technology). However, I believe that an ability and determination to make *full* use of outdoor educational opportunities must define the profession. This will in turn lead to student and professional satisfaction and credibility for the use of outdoors as a valid educational venue .

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