

Being Outdoors: Challenging and celebrating diverse outdoor leisure embodiments and experiences

Guest Editors

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The benefits of being outdoors in a leisure context are widely acknowledged. The benefits reported from across a broad range of outdoor experiences (recreation, adventure, education, camps, therapeutic and tourism) share many similarities. Benefits include improvement and/or development in;

- Health and wellbeing
- Social/interpersonal skills
- Leadership and facilitation skills
- Personal, emotional and reflective abilities
- Confidence and identity creation
- Technical skills
- Enjoyment, novelty and fun.

Despite the diversity of outdoor studies, the practices and discourses that shape outdoor experiences are far less diverse. White, masculine and middle-to-upper income ideals of 'being outdoors' are pervasive and privileged. Key voices, such as Allison and Pomeroy (2000), Gray (2018), Humberstone and Pedersen (2001), and Warren, Roberts, Breunig and Alvarez (2014), have challenged researchers to critically engage with outdoor discourses and practices that exclude. They have called on outdoor scholars and practitioners to question how experiences of 'being outdoors' can be reimagined. For example,

- How can research contribute to understandings of diverse ways of 'being outdoors' (e.g., slow/fast, small/epic, meaningful/meaning-less, intentional/accidental/spontaneous, freely chosen/obliged)?
- How can outdoor experiences be made accessible to diverse populations (race, gender, sexuality, age, health, geographical and/or ethnicity)?
- How can different methodologies and methods open up insights and knowledge of outdoor embodiment?

As part of this challenge there is a need to extend consideration of 'being outdoors' beyond being 'in nature' to recognise that everyone is outdoors as soon as they step outside of a building and that being outside is not, today, always a pre-requisite for experiencing components of nature.

This special issue invites articles that explore how outdoor experiences have been and are shaped in particular ways and to what effects. Moreover, this special issue takes particular interest in how dominant discourses can be challenged and reshaped in order to make outdoor experiences available and accessible to, and enjoyed by, diverse people and in diverse ways. We are interested in exploring how thinking and, consequently experiences, of the outdoors can be/are/have been opened up to embrace diverse ways of 'being outdoors'. This special issue seeks to provide an intersection for a range of fields to critically explore theoretical and practical ways of opening up outdoor experiences. In this way, the special issue is shaped to provide analysis of leisure in the outdoors (and indoors) in relation to nature and beyond bucolic definitions of nature and the outdoors.

Submissions may cover a broad range of themes and perspectives. Contributions may include scholarly and empirical research from diverse and reflexive perspectives. We seek an international collection of scholars and researchers. Appropriate topics for this special issue include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How income, age, gender, sexuality, health and geography shape opportunities for participation in the outdoors
- How discourses and norms shape/influence the participation of diverse populations in outdoor activities and/or experiences
- How certain outdoor experiences are privileged over others and what effect this has on conceptualisation of and participation in outdoor activities
- Exploration of non-dominant/non-normative experiences of 'being outdoors'
- How outdoor experiences can be encouraged, rethought and redesigned for populations that do not usually participate in the outdoors or perceive they do
- How to change socio-cultural, economic and political barriers to outdoor participation
- Understanding how outdoor experiences are shaped through outdoor education and/or school camps for participants, parents, teachers, and administrators
- Exploring applications of 'slow' theory (food and tourism) to outdoor experiences
- Exploring the juxtaposition of expedition or 'epic' experiences of the outdoors against the celebration of small and everyday experiences of 'being outdoors'
- The position of the urban outdoors in discussions of outdoor leisure and recreation

Outdoor experiences have largely been made exclusive through discourses that articulate narrow participatory borderlines and definitions. This special issue seeks to generate and extend conversation about how to open up possibilities for how outdoor experiences and subjects are understood.

Key Dates and Submission Information

Please send proposed paper title, name of author/s and an abstract of no more than 300 words to the guest editors; Dr. Mandi Baker (mandi.baker@laureate.edu.au), Professor Neil Carr (neil.carr@otago.ac.nz) and Associate Professor Emma Stewart (Emma.Stewart@lincoln.ac.nz) by the 30th of September, 2019.

Timeline:

31 July 2019 -Opening of the call for papers

30 September 2019 -Expressions of interest

1 November 2019 - Authors informed about decision regarding expressions of interest

31 March 2020 – Submission of full papers by authors

References

Allison, P., & Pomeroy, E. (2000). How shall we "know?" Epistemological concerns in research in experiential education. *The Journal of Experiential Education*, 23(2), 91-98.

Gray, T. (2018). Thirty Years on, and Has the Gendered Landscape Changed in Outdoor Learning. In *The Palgrave international handbook of women and outdoor learning* (pp. 35-53). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Humberstone, B., & Pedersen, K. (2001). Gender, class and outdoor traditions in the UK and Norway. *Sport, education and society*, 6(1), 23-33.

Warren, K., Roberts, N. S., Breunig, M., & Alvarez, M. A. T. G. (2014). Social justice in outdoor experiential education: A state of knowledge review. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 37(1), 89-103.

Warm Regards, *Mandi Baker*

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Please note: I do not work on Fridays.



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