

Ideas of nature – our research

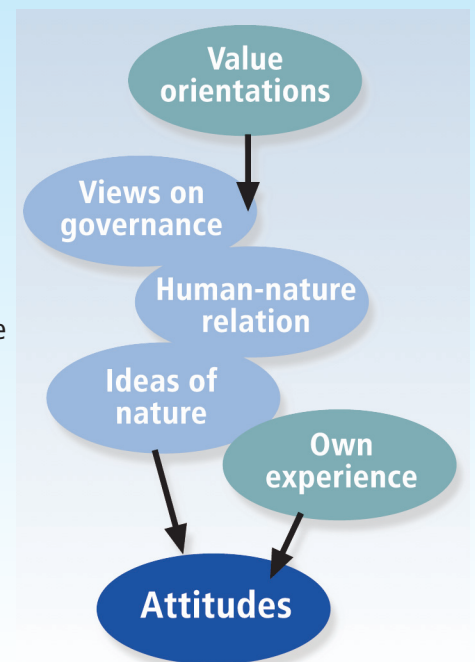
What do we do?

We conduct research on what nature means to people, because we believe that better environmental policies require a better understanding of public views on the natural environment. We use social scientific methods such as questionnaires, in-depth interviews and group discussions to do this.



Some of our findings:

- Public views on nature management are often regarded as uninformed and unreliable and therefore not considered in decision making processes. However, we find that people's views are often well-embedded in people's experiences and worldviews
- People's attitudes towards management options are shaped by a number of factors, such as their views on the relationship between humans and nature
- Differences in attitudes do not imply that the underlying values differ: Often, key values (e.g. the desire for balance) lie behind diverging views on management options
- We need to better understand exactly what underpins people's views to find solutions that are widely acceptable



Why is this important?

- Public views tend to be more complex than policymakers and conservationists might think. Simple, broadbrush awareness campaigns might thus not achieve their objectives. Instead, more diverse and targeted approaches are needed
- Values implicit to conservation and land use policies should be made explicit, and their objectives need a more open debate
- We need more than simple opinions polls to understand public – including our own – views on the management of our natural environment