

Assessment of landscape transformation in protected areas

Pereira, S.R.
Fernández, J.
Herrera, J.
Olea, J.

Abstract

Mountain protected landscapes continuously endure conflicts of appropriation that bear inherent transformations. One type of direct intervention is by Commercial Concessions within these areas, affecting their landscape value. The aim is to determine conceptual gaps in Environmental Impact Studies regarding landscape assessment and propose a way to improve them in this sense. Shortcomings regarding landscape are checked in different normative frameworks and tensions are analyzed through the case of a Commercial Concession grant within a Mountain Protected area in the South-Central Andes of Chile (38°22'S;71°35'W). Weak or absent definitions of landscape are found in normative frames and Environmental Impact guidelines. A reductionism of landscape as mere viewshed units avoids a proper differentiation for several types of economic transformations and conservation management purposes therein. Hence, transformations affecting the inherent value of landscape are latent under monitoring and legislation abiding practices. Tensions between protected areas and commercial concessions depend on landscape management strategies which are associated to capital gain uncertainties by risking the nonuse-value of landscape. This uncertainty as a natural insurance value can be integrated to conceptual analyses assessing landscape transformations and report their depreciation. These transformations of landscape value are deemed necessary to be implemented in Environmental Impact Assessment without having to discretize bipartite purposes in protected areas by assessing landscape value through conceptual and economic analyses.

Author keywords

Commercial concession
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