

PERCEPTIONS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION
PROFESSIONALS TOWARD PLACE MEANINGS
IN NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS:

A Q-METHOD INQUIRY

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Research suggests outdoor recreational experiences have the ability to provide people with the time and the place to develop personal meanings in the out-of-doors (Hanna, 1995; Prudoe & Warder, 1981; Yoshino, 2005). Additionally, theorists indicate that cultivating relationships with outdoor settings can lead to heightened environmental awareness and attachment (Abram, 1996; Borrie & Roggenbuck, 1996; Devall & Sessions; 1998; Dillard, 1998; Martin, 1994, 1995, 1999). Those involved within the outdoor recreation profession are increasingly recognizing the importance of the meanings people attach to outdoor settings because of their ability to illuminate the values and emotions that are connected to natural resources (Williams & Stewart, 1998; Tuan, 1974a). The focus of this study goes within the profession to explore some of the views that outdoor recreation professionals have toward place meanings in natural environments.

Literature describes place meanings as complex and dynamic phenomena (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977). Human geographer, Yu-Fi Tuan (1977), theorizes that a space becomes a place “when we get to know it better and endow it with value” (p.6). For the purposes of this study, *place* [emphasis added], can be defined as a setting combined with a “deeply affective characterization crystallized from an individual’s emotions,

experience, and cultural background” (Cochrane, 1987, p. 7). Places have the potential to shape attitudes, identities, and qualities of life (Low & Altman, 1992).

There are many other concepts and constructs describing the ongoing interactions and meanings that develop between people and their external environments such as place attachment (Low & Altman, 1992), topophilia (Tuan, 1974a), sense of place (Chawla, 1992), insideness (Rowles, 1980), place identity (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983), and community sentiment (Hummon, 1992). In this study, exploring place meanings provided the broadest way to describe the ways people define their ongoing human-environment relationships.

In the context of this study, place meanings refer to “the symbols, thoughts, and feelings” (Presley, 2003, p.1) people use when describing the ways they find and create meaning through experiencing and interacting with outdoor settings of personal significance. In this context, a person’s relationship with a place can be understood as emerging from a geographical location combined with human psychological processes, activities, (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995), and histories that come together to synthesize individual place meanings. The idea of person-environment transactions unfolding over time (Abram, 1996; Relph, 1976) moves the meanings people attach to places toward open and dynamic definitions of connectedness between people and their surroundings (McAvoy, McDonald & Carlson, 2003).

Outdoor Recreation and Leisure

Outdoor recreation evolved from the primal activities of human beings. Theorists suggest activities of adults in primal societies are linked to children’s play rituals (Blanchard & Cheska, 1985). Eisen (1988) notes that play is an inherent part of the lived

experience and is genetically coded into the behaviors of humans and animals. Research has shown that humans all have a need to play. It has been suggested that as children become adults in modern society organized forms of play expression evolve into recreation during leisure (Ibrahim & Cordes, 2002).

For the purposes of this study, leisure was defined as the state of mind necessary for an individual to participate in recreational activities of their choice during time that is free from other obligations where meaning is derived from the experience itself (Ibrahim & Cordes, 2002; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Neulinger, 1974). Aristotle's notion of leisure involved three different types of activities described as functioning like a pyramid; the bottom consisting of amusement, the center as recreation, and the top as contemplation (Ibrahim & Cordes). From this perspective, experiencing leisure in the out-of-doors may consist of being amused by squirrels playing, engaging in the recreational activity of rock climbing, or contemplating the whole of nature. Attempts to conceptualize the leisure experience in the out-of-doors helps to form part of the foundation of the outdoor recreation profession (Ibrahim & Cordes).

Historically, the profession not only evolved from individual leisure needs, but from environmental degradation resulting from the settlement of North America. Destruction of natural resources combined with loss of open space due to growth in North American cities led social reformers of the late 1800's to take greater notice of the destruction humans were capable of causing to the natural environment. In the United States, the beginning of the U.S. national park system was born with the creation of Yellowstone in 1872. In 1881, the U.S. Division of Forestry was formed, which later led to the U.S. Forest Service. These events marked some of the first times in U.S. history

that federal public land was set aside and protected. These moments in time helped to define the beginning of federal preservation and conservation land management ethics involving outdoor recreational resources (Ibrahim & Cordes).

Statement of the Problem

Today, the outdoor recreation profession is varied and encompasses many facets. A contemporary definition of outdoor recreation is “organized free-time activities that are participated in for their own sake and where there is an interaction between the participant and an element of nature” (Ibrahim & Cordes, p. 5). The outdoor recreation profession encompasses the variety of ways in which this free time and interaction combined with the natural environments they take place in are facilitated, organized, programmed, and managed.

Areas of the outdoor recreation profession include local, state, and federal agencies such as local community recreation programs and federal agencies such as the United States Forest Service. Private enterprises such as eco-tourism agencies, commercial guide services, and for profit and non-profit youth development programs encompass the outdoor recreation profession. Outdoor leadership education programs and environmental education programs such as the National Outdoor Leadership School, Outward Bound, the Wilderness Education Association, and higher education outdoor adventure and recreation education programs also fit into this category (Ibrahim & Cordes). It is a complex profession made up by many individuals who have different responsibilities. Outdoor recreation professionals come in great variety, yet they all are intertwined by their involvement with the outdoor settings they work in or for.

There has been an abundance of research conducted exploring place meanings within outdoor recreation contexts (Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003; McCool, Moore & Graefe, 1994; Stankey, & Clark, 1984; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992; Wilson, 2005). The focus of these studies has been primarily on the unique attributes of geographical locations. Research along these lines has more recently shifted to holistic approaches that encompass entire landscapes and their associated meanings. (Presley, 2003). This shift has deepened some of the ways outdoor recreation professionals can utilize the meanings people attach to outdoor settings.

Current research implications for the use of place meanings within the outdoor recreation profession include utilizing the particular sentiments people have developed toward natural settings in management decisions. Theorists suggest cultivating place meaning awareness leads to stronger environmental attachment (Low & Altman, 1992). Paying careful attention to the ways these meanings emerge can help outdoor recreation professionals cater to and recognize the diversity of place meanings that exist for those who utilize outdoor recreation resources (Williams & Stewart, 1998). Ways of implementing place sensitivities into outdoor recreation programs include further implementation of community dialogue focusing on varying place meanings and perceptions; conducting local research into the place meanings that exist for specific communities, recreation resources, and activities; and including outdoor recreation participants in resource decision-making processes to allow their place meanings and values to be expressed and considered in management decisions (Presley, 2003).

These research suggestions demand an intentional and proactive approach from those within the outdoor recreation profession. It has been suggested that if outdoor

recreation professionals actively engage with the place meanings of patrons, they may be able to provide more effective services and make better leadership decisions (Johnson, 2002; MacLean, 2002; Presley, 2003). Outdoor recreation professionals may be able to further utilize place meanings by becoming aware of their own perceptions toward outdoor settings. Although an abundance of place-based research has been conducted on outdoor recreation participants, there has been little focus on how professionals within outdoor recreation understand the place meanings they themselves attach to natural environments.

Recognizing how outdoor recreation professionals perceive and experience places in the out-of-doors can illuminate the meanings that currently shape the profession. Williams (2002) suggests place meanings “convey the very sense of who we are” (p.353). Additionally, Cheng, Kruger, and Daniels (2003) report that explicating place attachments in natural environments offer expectations for socially constructed behavior. Further, McDonald (2003) indicates that it may be possible to have a more thorough understanding of the particulars of human-environment relationships through exploring the beliefs of those committed to environmental awareness in their personal and professional roles. McDonald suggests people who work for and in the out-of-doors may have a greater propensity for recognizing and sensing the “vital force” (p. 14) of the natural world. Through recognizing outdoor recreation professionals’ place perceptions, attitudes, and viewpoints, it may be possible to more thoroughly understand and utilize the mosaic of place meanings that help to define the profession.

Theoretical Framework

Low and Altman's (1992) description of place attachment provides the theoretical framework for this study. Low and Altman suggest the meanings people ascribe to places are grouped into elements of affect, cognition, and practice. These theorists argue that place attachment most accurately reflects the ways people feel bonded to certain locations through emotions, personal values, and the ways in which they choose to identify with specific settings. Low and Altman's theory builds on earlier place literature to encompass the "interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviors and actions in reference to a place" (p.5).

Place attachment is a multidimensional construct and is based on three assumptions:

- (1) Place attachment is an integrating concept comprising interrelated and inseparable aspects;
- (2) the origins of place attachments are varied and complex;
- (3) place attachment contributes to individual, group, and cultural self-definition and integrity (Low & Altman, 1992, p. 4).

Low and Altman view place attachment as a complex phenomenon with a variety of interdependent attributes. Their three-pronged approach to place meaning conceptualizations (affect, cognition, and practice) can be viewed as interconnected place meaning characteristics that hold different strengths for different individuals in a variety of contexts (Low & Altman, 1992).

The affective dimension has been an integral component of place-based theory (Low & Altman, 1992). Attachment connotes the affect that in the context of this study is applied to natural environments. Places represent settings that people are bonded to

through their emotions. From this view, “settings acquire meaning through the steady accretion of sentiment” (Kyle, Mowan, & Tarrant, 2004, p. 442). Additionally, attachments to places may be considered through the positive and negative feelings people have toward certain settings (Low & Altman, 1992).

Cognitive components of place meanings have been presented in Proshansky’s (1978) description of place identity as the cognitive integration of the individual and the environment. This process of identification varies by strength and researchers suggest people identify with places that reflect elements of their own lived experience (Kyle, Mowan, & Tarrant, 2004). Further, Rowles (1980) notes the longer individuals inhabit a place, or have history in a particular setting; the more likely they will have high self identification with that environment.

In the context of this study, the practice or action component involved with the development of place meanings emerges through the ways people interact with their surroundings to achieve desired outcomes. Jorgenson and Stedman (2001) discuss this as ‘place dependence’ noting the ways certain settings allow participants to achieve specific outcomes versus to others. Leisure researchers (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2004; Moore & Graefe, 1994) suggests people seek out specific places for specific leisure experiences. Additionally, the construction of social meaning fits within this component. It has been found that meaning attached to interpersonal relationships carries over or is shared with the specific environments in which they occur (Low & Altman, 1992). Thus, greater social meaning and investment appears to elicit greater place bonding (Mesch & Manor, 1998).

Further, Low and Altman view places as having varying meanings depending on the context in which they are conceptualized. Place meanings may be layered depending on their “scale or size and scope” (p. 5). In the context of this study, a place could be considered as large as the entire earth or universe with regard to scale. They may be considered medium in scale in the context of a continent, wilderness, or a specific park. They may also be considered small such as a garden, streambed, or a specific landscape (Low & Altman 1992). Within this theoretical framework, place meanings can be understood as attachment with particular and/or universal attributes of a setting (Hutson & Montgomery, 2006; Low & Altman).

Additionally, place meanings reflect symbolic versus tangible place interaction and experienced places versus those not experienced. From this perspective, place meanings encompass real and perceived interaction. Within this theoretical framework, characteristics of place attachment result from people involved, the nature of the involvement, and the cyclical and/or temporal aspects of the interaction (i.e. past, present, future, or reoccurring contexts) (Low & Altman, 1992).

Overall, Low and Altman’s description of place attachment can be viewed as a multi-faceted concept involving patterns of,

- Attachments (affect, cognition, and practice)
- Places that vary in scale, specificity, and tangibility
- Different actors (individuals, groups, and cultures)
- Different social relationships (individuals, groups, and cultures)
- Temporal aspects (linear, cyclical) (p. 8).

Low and Altman imply the complexity of these patterns is beyond a single phenomenon. Hummon (1992) suggests affect, cognition, and practice are balanced in different ways for different people with regard to place meanings. Hummon argues no matter the balance of subjective perceptions, place meanings emerge through one's orientation toward a setting where "one's understandings of a place and one's feelings about a place become fused" (p. 262). Therefore, it is the diversity of viewpoints and meanings that outdoor recreation professionals attach to places that are the focus of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments. Because of the subjectivity that operates within place meanings, Q methodology was the chosen research method. Q methodology has the ability to measure the subjective nature of the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in the out-of-doors (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments?
2. Do the data reveal patterns related to demographic characteristics?

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined as follows:

Concourse: The communication flow of a particular topic. The concourse of a topic represents the varying ways that it may be approached from which statements are extracted for a Q-study (Brown, 1980).

Condition of instruction: Question that is answered, or the context that is used when sorting Q-statements into levels of high agreement, low agreement, and no agreement (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Factors: A collection of interrelated subjective responses (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Factor analysis: Mathematical treatment that estimates factors. Q-sorts, which represent individual points of view, are factor analyzed in a Q-study (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Factor loading: Correlation between a variable and a factor.

Landscape: “A setting for human experience and activity. In scale, it might be described as larger than a household, but smaller than one of the earth’s biogeographical regions” (Riley, 1992, p. 13).

Leisure: The state of mind necessary for an individual to participate in recreational activities of her or his choice during time that is free from other obligations, where meaning is derived from the experience itself (Ibrahim & Cordes, 2002; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Neulinger, 1974).

Non significant loading: Loading that is statistically insignificant on all factors.

Place: A setting characterized by “a deeply affective characterization crystallized from an individual’s emotions, experience, and cultural background.... [There is] a

reciprocal relationship between individuals and place, an interlocking system in which the people and place define one another” (Cochrane, 1987, p. 7).

Place meanings: The variety of ways that people describe ongoing human-environment relationships. In the context of this study, place meanings will refer to “the symbols, thoughts, and feelings” (Presley, 2003, p.1) that people attach to places that hold special meaning for them in the out-of-doors (Williams & Stewart, 1998).

Place attachment: Reflects the ways people feel bonded to certain locations through emotion, cognition, and practice (Low & Altman, 1992).

Play: Action of the young that “has connotations that stress its special world of order and symbols that make possible action that is open to the creation of the novel and the innovative” (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, p. 23).

Phenomenology: A philosophical orientation that seeks to illuminate and describe the essence of a phenomenon as it reveals itself in the lived experience (Van Manen, 1990).

P-set: Intentionally chosen individuals selected to participate in a Q-study to provide a holistic understanding of possible views toward a phenomenon or context.

PQMethod 2.06: A statistical program for data analysis maintained by Peter Schmolck and is in the public domain downloaded free at www.qmethod.org.

Q-factor analysis: Factor analytic treatment that involves interpreting factors that illuminate common views from a sample of people.

Q Methodology: A research strategy used for the scientific study of subjectivity utilized through “a distinctive set of psychometric and operational principles that,

when conjoined with specialized statistical applications of correlational and factor analytical techniques, provides researchers a systematic and rigorously quantitative means for examining subjectivity” (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p.7). Q methodology illuminates the ways people communicate points of view toward any phenomenon.

Q-set: Stimulus statements derived from a concourse given to participants for rank ordering in a Q-study (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Q-sort: A technique used in a Q-study to represent an individual’s perception through the rank ordering of self referential responses on a factor array that can be factor analyzed (Brown, 1993).

Recreation: “Voluntary non-work activity that is organized for the attainment of personal and social benefits including restoration and social cohesion” (Kelly & Godbey, 1992, p. 21).

Sense of place: Collection of meanings, feelings, beliefs, values, and emotions that a person attaches to a specific location that creates embedded memories and responses (Tuan, 1974a, 1977).

Significant loading: A loading on a factor that is not due to chance.

Subjectivity: Points of view on any phenomenon (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Variance: A measure of statistical dispersion indicating the spread of scores around the mean.

Z-score: A measure, which represents the distance of a score from the mean of a data set.

Assumptions

Assumptions in this study include:

1. Q methodology was determined best to meet the purpose of this study, as it is able to systematically explore the subjectivity that outdoor recreation professionals bring to places in natural environments.
2. Stimulus statements extracted from prior research literature represent an appropriate and accurate Q-set for this study.
3. Participants in the study were assured anonymity to support them in responding in an honest and reliable fashion.

Limitations

1. The views illuminated by this instrument do not necessarily reflect all possible viewpoints participants may have toward the phenomenon under study.
2. The results from Q-studies are not to be generalized inductively. Views that are illuminated in Q-studies can be generalized back to the phenomenon being studied, not to a larger population of people.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the beliefs of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings. This chapter reviews selected literature related to the development of the concept of place within human geography and natural environments. Additionally, it reviews selected research literature that illuminates perceptions of place meanings within outdoor recreation contexts.

Human Geography

People process information about the world to help refine, enrich, and create personal interpretations of reality (Blumer, 1969). “Like talented weavers using the world as our loom, we produce fabrics of understanding based on our experiences” (Shostak, 1999, p. 1). People experience the world through the senses producing a variety of outcomes. Theorists suggest that human-environment relationships define personal identities and create meaning in the lived experience (Abram, 1996; Low & Altman, 1992; Van Manen, 1990). Low and Altman theorize that it is the ways in which people process relationships with surrounding environments that form the meanings of place. Humans have been making meaning out of person-place interactions throughout ancient history.

Maps were some of the earliest documents that indicated how people made sense of their physical surroundings. Maps from ancient Egypt often depicted spirits in certain landscapes. Other mystical creatures found on ancient Egyptian maps perhaps warned travelers of certain dangers, emotions, or meanings associated with specific settings. Additionally, early American explorers exemplified this tradition. As the North American frontier was unlocked, explorers needed to know exact locations of water sources, travel routes, hunting routes, and rendezvous points, which were often marked with depictions of beasts, other mythical characters, and legends and folklore of the time (Galliano & Loeffler, 1999). The ways in which those historical places were experienced were communicated through mapping meanings that the elements of the earth's surface represented for those cultures (Ryden, 1993). "Thus, since the beginning of written communication, maps have remained a prominent expression of places, their names, and their meanings" (Galliano & Loeffler, 1999, p. 3). The study and meaning of early geographical understandings and depictions are part of the foundation of modern place theory.

Tuan (1977) suggests places emerge within geographical landscapes with the applied meaning from those who interpret them. Geography was the first academic field to systematically study places at length and in-depth (Roberts, 1996). Geography originally examined places as collections of objective information. It is considered a science that investigates the planet's natural regions, climatic tendencies, landforms and peoples (Hartshorne, 1939). The transition in interpretation of a space to a place with embedded personal meanings led to a geographical investigation from a humanistic point of view (Tuan, 1977).

Human geography is a discipline that explores the possibilities and synthesis of metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics from geographical perspectives. Human geography seeks to uncover the symbols, environmental perceptions, landscape aesthetics, and cultural meanings that different settings elicit. In presenting a “humanized conception of the natural” (Entriken, 2001, p. 427), human geographers attempt to bridge the gap between human and environmental meaning resulting in conceptualizations of reciprocal person-environment transactions (Roberts, 1996). Human geographers examine person-place relationships through attempting to understand what drives and shapes the human spirit in its relationship to its surroundings (Tuan, 1974b). This use of geography is a major shift or extension from its original purpose.

Human geographer, Yu-Fi Tuan (1974a, 1974b, 1977), describes the phenomenological meanings of place through the emotional bonds people form with physical settings. Phenomenology is a philosophical orientation, which seeks to understand the essence of a phenomenon during the lived experience and illuminate its fundamentals before reflection of such experience begins (Van Manen, 1990). A phenomenological approach has been a common philosophical orientation among humanistic geographers to explore the meanings of a place through the personal lived experiences of others (Tuan, 1974a). It has been suggested that emotional place bonds evolve from objective meaning and understanding to more creative conceptualizations of how places shape expressive attitudes and beliefs of observers (Van Noy, 2003). A phenomenological approach to the development of place meanings combines objective and creative inquiry to link an individual’s past place interactions to the present, constructing place meaning through “continuity of experience” (Van Noy, p. 151).

Human geographers have used phenomenology to help them describe the essence of place meaning continuity (Roberts, 1996).

Tuan (1974b) contends the meanings of a place could be found in the expressive symbols people use when they want to give a setting greater emotional and personal sentiment. Tuan suggests that to understand a place is to understand the make-up of a person. He notes that emotions people attach to locations move the experience of a space to a layer of meaning beyond practical functions that mundane locations carry. He elaborates on his conceptualization of place through descriptions of the spirit, personality, and sense of place meanings that certain locations hold for those who experience them.

Tuan describes spirit in the context of places that make themselves known to the observer. The spirit of a place is said to exhibit awe that it commands in literal comparison to a spirit that perhaps inhabits a cemetery or home. Just as the human spirit may make itself known or as we may come to know it in a variety of forms, the spirit of a sacred place may operate in the same way (Tuan, 1974b).

Tuan describes the personality of a place through the uniqueness that it holds. Like human beings, Tuan felt places developed and exemplified “signatures” (Tuan, 1974b, p. 233) over time through applied meanings that were assigned to them. He contends that the personality of a place develops just as the personality of a child becomes recognizable to a parent. In the same way a parent watches and recognizes the personality of their child grow and change, “regions have acquired unique ‘faces’ through prolonged interaction between nature and man” (p. 234), which Tuan thought was revealed through awe and affection.

Tuan (1974b) suggests the awe of a place is exhibited through its personality characteristics of sublime-ness and independence. Places that dominate natural environments like Mount Everest in Nepal, Half Dome in Yosemite National Park and Niagara Falls on the border of the United States and Canada all have awe as part of their personality. These places command attention due to their sheer size and dominance over their surrounding landscapes.

Conversely, ordinary places elicit affection “in the same sense that an old rain coat can be said to have character” (Tuan, 1974b, p. 234). Places are imbued with the character that is assigned to them by those who experience them over long periods of time. Places, like the old raincoat, may represent objective use and meaning that over time transforms into something comforting, dependable, and nurturing with a personality that can be only understood with a history of experience (Tuan).

Tuan (1974b) asserts that places have a spirit and personality, but it is only a person who can have a sense of a place. Tuan (1977) suggests that to sense a place is to know it on a personal and intimate level. The senses allow for in-depth human interaction with the world and for the various perceptions of that world to evolve. “The senses are not passive mechanisms receiving data. They are active, exploratory systems attuned to dynamic meanings or patterns already present in the environment” (Roberts, 1996, p. 65). Tuan notes that long-term sense engagement is what creates one’s sense of place over time. On a deeper level, Tuan and others suggest people can have a sense of place subconsciously through touch, smells, sites, and sounds that leave experiential memories and feelings embedded in one’s identity (Low & Altman, 1992; Tuan, 1974b).

Tuan identifies these embedded feelings as place stability. He offers that to travel the world would create less environmental awareness than staying in one place and getting to know it intimately over time. He suggests that learning the various layers and patterns of stability of a specific setting creates deeper and more authentic meaning than visiting far away places for short periods. For Tuan, the meanings of a place are captured most powerfully through repeated exposure and ‘rootedness’ in particular settings. Tuan notes the differences in meanings attached to places of repeated exposure and those that only hold meaning to the eye (Tuan, 1977, 1974b).

Tuan (1974b) theorizes that as one is continually forming emotional bonds to a setting, it not only becomes a place with imbued meaning, but can be understood as a field of care. While “public symbols” (p. 235) offer themselves as aesthetic and pleasurable sites, often instilling awe and amazement in observers, he describes fields of care as eliciting more subtle emotional responses. A public spectacle could be represented as a place that is widely known as sacred such as a formal city garden or the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Alternatively, a field of care may be best represented as a local community park or a secret swimming hole on a slow moving river that is not dependent on “ostentatious visual symbols” (Tuan, 1974b, p. 238). Rather, these settings become meaningful through repeated exposure and internalization of the setting into the pattern of one’s own life over time (Lowenthal, 1961).

Tuan’s theory of place meanings through emotional attachment presents itself on a continuum involving the public symbol or more universal notions of environmental meaning to fields of care or being attached to a particular place over time with more intimate and perhaps less explicit meaning. All parts of the continuum are important and

meaningful, successfully reflecting different modes and possibilities of place meaning conceptualization. Another human geographer who defines the discipline, Relph (1981) offers a middle ground approach to utilizing all parts of the place meaning continuum through a humanistic perspective of compassionate and clear seeing.

Relph's (1981) ideas appear to overlap with Tuan's 'field of care' through articulating place meaning as an intentional attitude of compassion and humility that may and perhaps should ideally occur on all parts of the place meaning continuum. Relph offers a place ethic in suggesting that meaningful place connection emerges through "quiet and unassuming recognition that this is how things are and an understanding of the best ways to act so what now exists is disrupted as little as possible" (p. 183).

Relph (1981) describes the experience of places through being able to see with clarity the individual attributes of landscapes that make them unique, and that it is only possible to fully experience a setting with a quiet and compassionate mindset. In describing his approach to place meanings, Relph gave voice to the nineteenth century painter, John Ruskin (1856), who contends "the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is see something, and tell what it saw in a plain way...To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion,- all in one" (p. 278). To Relph (1981), it is the attitude, perception, and "compassionate intelligence" (p. 185) of the observer that appear to define the individuality of place meanings (Relph, 1976).

American philosopher, Edward Casey (2001) elaborates on Tuan's and Relph's original notions of individual place meanings to further deepen understandings of the connections between self, body, and landscape. Classic western views of personal identity have revolved around the notion of personal awareness or consciousness. From

this view, thinking defines the self apart from any environmental influence. Physical settings remain without consciousness and provide only insignificant context for identity to emerge. Identity is thought to be created in the mind and space exists in the physical environment devoid of meaning or identity.

Casey rejects this notion and contends that places are essential to the formation of one's identity. To Casey, the construction of one's sense of self is an intrinsic episode of place awareness and interaction. This notion of place-identity co-construction moves beyond viewing place meanings as reciprocal interactions (though important to recognize) to a relationship between person and a place that is constitutive, essential, and necessary. Casey indicates "there is not place without self; and no self without place" (p. 406).

To Casey, landscapes represent collections of undifferentiated space that coax places to emerge through human-environmental meanings and perceptions. Places are seemingly connected to others and to the horizon marking the boundary to yet another place imbued with personal meanings. From Casey's perspective, individuals have no choice but to incorporate the world of places into their lives and interact with them, both in particular and universal contexts. Casey suggests,

without landscape, we would be altogether confined to the peculiarities of a particular place...without the body, even this one place would pass us by without leaving a mark on us, much less inspire us to act toward it in novel ways or to transcend it toward a more extensive cosmic whole (p. 419).

Conceptualizing relationships between body, landscape, place, and self promotes a wide conceptualization of place meanings to emerge through explicating the integration of co-dependence and co-construction of people and place identities.

Place Meanings and Natural Environments

Conceptually, place has been described as a center of felt value “incarnating the experience and aspirations of people. Thus it is not only an arena for everyday life....[it also] provides meaning for that life” (Eyles, 1989, p. 109). Theorists suggest feeling bonded to a setting is a principle need of being human to provide stability in personal identity and in understanding our notions of self (Casey, 2001; Eyles, 1989). Human identity and interpretation of meaning in the world is shaped largely by synthetic and built environments. Places in the out-of-doors beyond the perceived realm of human influence are an important aspect to the characteristics of place meanings. However, it’s important to acknowledge that these perceptions emerge in the modern world of constructed and controlled environments (Riley, 2002).

Understanding human attachments to places in natural environments is not an easy task given the diversity of interpretations associated with what constitutes a natural environment. Natural environments and nature are endlessly complex and multifaceted concepts that may be understood in a variety of ways (Marshall, 1992). For the purposes of this study, natural environments may best represent settings in the out-of-doors, where outdoor recreation professionals have chosen to work, recreate, and live that are beyond the perceived realm of human influence and control.

How do people make meaning out of places in the out-of-doors? Environmental literature illuminates some of the common themes of connectedness between people and

places such as the awe, wonderment, and inspiration that may be experienced in the natural environments (Dillard, 1998; Muir, 1894; Olson, 1956; Thoreau, 1937). Deep ecologists, Devall and Sessions (1985) suggest connecting deeply with places in natural settings involves the intermingling of one's sense of self and wisdom derived from the earth. Orr (1992) and Abram (1996) suggest that connectedness between humans and the out-of-doors depends on the details and extent of the experience. As previously mentioned, Tuan (1974a, 1977) theorizes that evolving relationships people form with places are a result of time spent in a setting and the intensity of the interactions.

A pioneer in outdoor environmental thinking and outdoor recreation, Aldo Leopold (1949), who wrote the *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, offers further insight into place meanings in the out-of-doors. After managing the Carson National Forest in New Mexico, Leopold took a job at the University of Wisconsin in 1933 and bought a farm in the northern part of the state. He kept a detailed diary of his land, which since has been described as a synthesis of philosophy, naturalism, and science. Leopold developed the notion of land ethics and suggests humans should strive to live with natural geographies as opposed to against them (Leopold).

From Leopold's perspective, place meanings and ethics overlap. Leopold's ethics encompass the community of the natural world. Leopold suggests that all ethics, rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in that community, but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for). The land ethic simply enlarges the

boundaries of the community to include soils, water, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land (p. 203).

At the time of this writing, this type of environmental thinking situated Leopold with other naturalist philosophers such as Thoreau and Muir who emphasized a deep and transcendent epistemology based on landscape interaction and internalization. From Leopold's perspective, decisions that supported compassionate approaches and actions toward natural landscapes were considered right and decisions that did otherwise were wrong. Much in the same ways that human geographers suggest people make meaning out of landscapes, he suggests that the development of a land ethic is an evolutionary process involving both intellect and emotions (Leopold).

David Abram (1996) offers a contemporary vision of place meaning conceptualization, which builds on the foresight of naturalist philosophers who came before him. Abram describes the essence of place engagement as a "participatory" (p. 262) sensual experience on the part of the observer. Abram notes that many environmental thinkers have neglected the perceptual sensory experience, therefore missing much of the complexity and richness of place meaning (Abram, 1988).

Abram envisions one's sense perceptions in the out-of-doors as working in reciprocal harmony with the setting to create meaning. By acknowledging such reciprocity, Abram (1996) suggests that "place-specific intelligence" (p. 262) emerges. Abram notes "the human mind is not some otherworldly essence that comes to house itself inside its physiology. Rather, it is instilled and provoked by the sensorial field itself, induced by the tensions and participations between the human body and the animate

earth” (p. 262). Intelligence, according to Abram is not uniquely human, but is shared with the whole of nature through sensual person-place interaction (Abram, 1996).

Abram (1996) elaborates on the intelligence and the identity of outdoor places, suggesting “that each terrain, each ecology, seems to have its own particular intelligence, its unique vernacular of soil and leaf and sky” (p. 262). Abram views place perceptions holistically and views place meanings as unique co-constructions between all life and landscapes. He contends that place experiences and identities are encompassed “by all beings...Each place its own psyche. Each sky its own blue” (p. 262).

Abram (1996) claims that the rhythmic and experiential ways people and places interact with each other are eternally documented in the “oral histories and songs of indigenous peoples-in the belief that sensible phenomena are all alive and aware, in the assumption that all things have the capacity for speech” (p. 263). From this perspective, place meanings may be thought of as the language of the earth and its beings, or perhaps of all things encountered in the lived experience. “By denying that birds and other animals have their own styles of speech, by insisting that the river has no real voice and that the ground itself is mute...We cut ourselves off from the deep meanings in many of our words, severing our language from that which supports and sustains it” (Abram, p. 263). For Abram, engaging in this discourse allows for therapeutic remembering of place meaning that re-connects observers to the “more-than-human-earth” (p.272) essence that nurtures humankind.

Outdoor Recreation Place-Based Research

The study of place meanings across disciplines has been informed and approached from a variety of views (Patterson & Williams, 2005). Low and Altman (1992) suggest

that place theory has evolved similar to other social science concepts, beginning with treating a concept as consensus, then erosion of consensus, followed by systematic theoretical positions. Some theorists contend the study of place has not yet reached the third stage of concept development (Stage III research, systematic theoretical orientation), because of lack of conceptual clarity. However, other place researchers contend conceptual clarity can only be gained by viewing the study of place as “a domain of research informed by multiple research traditions” (Patterson & Williams, 2005, p. 364).

This later view situates place-based theorists in a position to gain greater conceptual clarity through embracing the diversity of place-based research (Patterson & Williams, 2005). In other words, the study of the phenomenon of place is meant to be diverse and many suggest must be diverse because of the characteristics of place meanings. Similarly, outdoor recreation researchers exploring place meanings have used a variety of theoretical orientations in examining the meanings of place through both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Historically, outdoor recreation researchers have attempted to describe the meanings of place as they relate to specific recreation, leisure, and tourism sites (Stokowski, 2002). Place meanings have been researched in wilderness contexts (Williams et al., 1992), memories to specific land features (Hull, Lam, & Vigo, 1994), activity specific and emotion specific responses to national forests (Moore & Graefe, 1994), and through descriptions of place transformation in tourism communities (Stokowski, 1996).

Outdoor recreation place-based research has more recently shifted to holistic approaches that encompass entire landscapes, their associated meanings, and sentiments. (Presley, 2003). Human geographers suggest that individuals who are emotionally and cognitively bonded to a place may protect that setting because of their affective attachment to it (Relph, 1976). Research on parks and outdoor recreation places suggests that this notion holds true in certain contexts (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2002; Kaltenborn 1998; Kaltenborn & Williams, 2002; Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003; Stedman, 2002; Vaske & Korbin, 200; Walker & Chapman, 2003). These findings have deepened some of the ways in which the outdoor recreation profession may be able to utilize and value place meanings in order to promote pro-environmental beliefs. Overall, research along these lines can continue to be beneficial to those who recreate in the out-of-doors and the profession by making outdoor place meanings, preferences, sentiments, and benefits explicit to managers and leaders in the field.

The focus of this study is on the experiences of outdoor recreation professionals and their views toward their own place meanings in outdoor settings. There is currently a lack of research, which describes the experiences of those who facilitate direct experiences in the out-of-doors (Foran, 2005). One study that has been conducted on those who facilitate direct experiences in outdoor settings suggests that if outdoor leaders wish to utilize place meanings, they may be able to do so more effectively by exploring their own understanding and articulation of them (Hutson & Montgomery).

Hutson and Montgomery report in their study that outdoor leaders' views toward place connection in the out-of-doors were highly related. However, an interesting distinction was revealed within these shared meanings. One view toward place meanings

emerged as universal-spiritual connection to nature, while a second view revealed itself as an emotional connection to the particular elements of a place encountered. Both views illuminate natural-world connectedness, but the means by which this connectedness was described has a complex difference illuminating both the universal and particular feelings of place bonding described by outdoor leaders (Hutson & Montgomery, 2006).

Hutson and Montgomery's work utilized Q methodology as a research strategy to uncover the some of the personal place meanings of outdoor leaders. This research strategy contributes yet another layer to the diversity of place-based outdoor recreation research specific to the experience of those who facilitate and manage direct experiences in the out-of-doors. It is the purpose of this study to build on Hutson and Montgomery's findings utilizing a greater variety of participants within the outdoor recreation profession and Low and Altman's (1992) theory base to frame the study.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This study was designed to illuminate the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in the out-of-doors. This chapter will elaborate on the research strategy of Q methodology. This chapter includes a description of the considerations with the use of human subjects, participant selection (P-set), methodology, research design, and analysis. Because of the subjective nature of place meanings, Q methodology was the chosen research strategy. Q methodology has the ability to illuminate the subjective nature of the ongoing perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward the meanings they attach to places in the out-of-doors (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Use of Human Subjects

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Oklahoma State University (OSU) must review any research study that involves the use of human participants. Approval was gained from the institutional review board before data collection began. A copy of the approval letter is provided in appendix A.

Participant Sample

Participants for the study were chosen intentionally to provide a holistic understanding of the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments. The group of people who participate in a Q-study is called a P-set. For this study, sampling was purposive and utilized snowball technique. Participants were invited who were both novice and experienced outdoor recreation professionals and pre-professionals who represent a diversity of positions within the profession. Individuals were invited to participate in the study who manage, program, coordinate, lead or led a variety of outdoor recreational programs, activities, and resources including camp counselors, outdoor education professionals, environmental educators, adventure educators, university outdoor recreation educators and leaders, natural resource managers, and community, state, and federal agency outdoor recreation professionals (Ibrahim & Cordes, 2002). Participants were contacted by letter (Appendix B) to request participation in the study and completed a consent form (Appendix C) before data collection. The researcher set up appointments with the participants at their convenience. A total thirty (N=30) outdoor recreation professionals participated in the study.

Q Methodology

Q methodology is a research strategy based on the scientific study of subjectivity (Brown, 1993). It is utilized to explore the intricacies of people's thoughts, beliefs and viewpoints toward a particular topic. McKeown and Thomas (1988) describe Q methodology as a

distinctive set of psychometric and operational principles that, when conjoined with specialized statistical applications of correlational and factor analytical techniques, provides researchers a systematic and rigorously quantitative means for examining subjectivity (p.7).

The statistical applications involved with Q methodology help illuminate the subjectivity that operates within individuals (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). William Stephenson introduced Q methodology in 1935 as a way to study peoples' subjective points of view on a specific topic or in a particular context or situation (Brown, 1980). Q methodology is used to understand arrangements of subjectivities from individual viewpoints and can illuminate differences and similarities within those subjective dimensions (Dennis, 1986).

Q-studies are utilized to explore the same subjective dimensions that qualitative researchers are often interested in. These subjective dimensions are organized from discourses surrounding a given phenomenon to form a concourse. In other words, a concourse is the flow of communication that surrounds a topic. Typically, Q-studies are carried out by a person or a group of people rank ordering stimulus items on a continuum using their views to assess and structure the importance of each item in comparison to other items according to a condition of instruction. A condition of instruction acts a guide for participants to use in sorting the items (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Stimulus items can be anything that can be ranked according to one's point of view such as statements, photographs, or colors (Robbins, 2005). The operation of sorting these items is called Q-sorting. The arrangements of items are then subject to factor analysis. Factors that emerge from this process represent groupings of subjectivities that exist within a particular sample (Brown, 1980).

In this context, subjectivity can be defined as the distinct way a person communicates her or his view over other points of view on a particular topic. Additionally, Q methodology views subjectivity as something that is operant and behaved any time people communicate their particular perceptions on a topic. Further, subjectivity is considered contextual and opinions are considered interconnected. This interconnectedness of groupings of subjectivities is precisely what Q-method is able to illuminate (Robbins, 2005).

Q method versus R method

Stephenson (1953) designated this methodological approach to research as Q as opposed to R to distinguish it from more traditional research methodology that emphasizes factoring tests, traits, or constructs that are considered stable. R methodology focuses on methods of expression, typically of traits, without taking an individual's point of view into consideration (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Further, R method approaches to research operate under the assumption that such traits operate out in the world in a coherent and independent way that can be measured (Robbins, 2005).

Alternatively, Q methodology is focused on factoring persons and their points of view as methods of impression to elicit "factors of subjectivity directly from the population rather than a priori measures determined by researchers" (Robbins, 2005, p. 211). This assumption is quite different from R method approaches to research. As opposed to trying to measure traits that are 'out there' in the world, Q methodology instead seeks to determine segments of subjectivities that a person or groups of people have toward a particular context or phenomenon.

However, Q and R approaches to research should not necessarily be considered as contradictory research strategies. Q-studies are often considered as exploratory research projects that may later lead to R method approaches. The two approaches can certainly complement each other. The main difference between these two research orientations is described succinctly by Robbins (2005). He suggests:

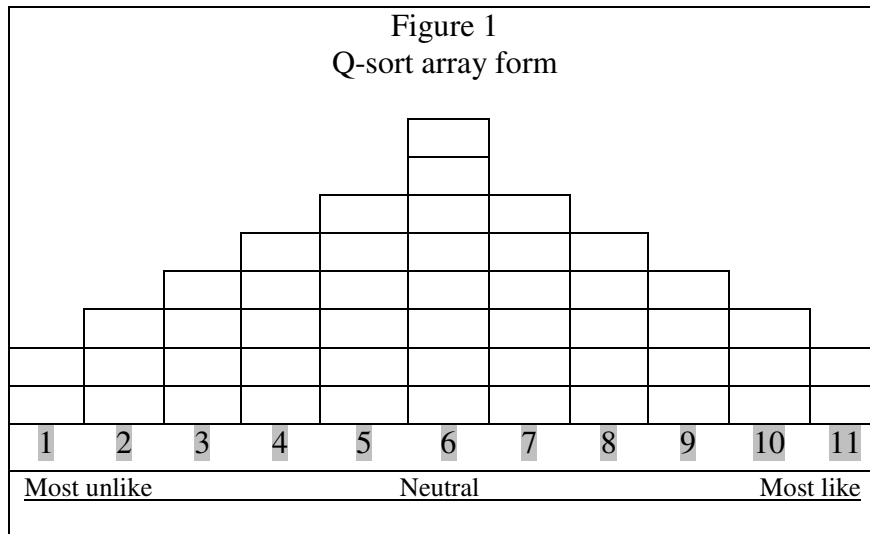
Q methodology seeks to determine the structures of subjectivity and their variance, whereas R methods seek to characterize populations of subjects. R methodology can reliably ask and answer the question, “What proportion of women support gun control?” Q-method, on the other hand can reliably answer the question, “What are the variations of opinions about guns, and what are their internal logics?” (p. 211).

As R method generalizes to populations, Q methodology seeks to capture and interpret communicated points of view that may be generalized back to the phenomenon being studied. The differences in these two research methods reflect strategies that are useful for different research processes, purposes, and agendas (Robbins).

Concourse Development

In a Q-study, communicated perceptions about a domain of subjectivity are often obtained through personal interviews and/or prior research literature to form a concourse (Robbins, 2005). A concourse is the communication flow of a particular topic representing the varying ways that a topic may be approached from which stimulus items are extracted for Q-sorting (Brown, 1980). A sample of stimulus items called a Q-set is utilized in a Q-sort. A Q-sort is the collection of stimulus items participants sort according to their own points of view when answering a question or a condition of

instruction. A Q-sort helps participants use their lived experience to communicate certain points of view over others systematically through the positioning of stimulus items across a continuum on a Q-sort array (Figure 1), which represents a model of their subjective perceptions.



Q methodology utilizes the Q-sort for data collection, and these models of subjectivities are subject to factor analysis (Brown, 1993). The stimulus items used for this study were a set of written statements.

In this study, statements that formed the Q-set were structured (Brooks, 1970) from place-based research literature and two prior Q-studies (see Hutson & Montgomery, 2006; Wilson, 2005) that reflect place meanings found in natural environments according to Low & Altman’s (1992) description of place attachment. This process was carried out to ensure a broad representation within place theory in that the statements all reflect specific ideas or notions within themes of place meaning that can be connected to outdoor settings.

After collecting all possible statements, they were put together because they were alike in some way to reveal themes. Clarifying statements within these themes is an attempt to diversify the statements to represent a range of perceptions associated with the ways people find meanings in places in the out-of-doors. The Q-set (Appendix D) was extracted from these broad themes to reflect heterogeneity in the statements representing differences in the collection of place meanings that describe a variety of views or ways to conceptualize place meanings in natural environments. According to Low and Altman's (1992) theoretical framework and related research literature, the groups of statements were organized into broad themes of 1) affect, 2) cognition, 3) practice, 4) scale, 5) social actors/relationships, 6) temporal, and 7) transpersonal. Concourse theory demands intensive efforts to capture any likely opinion about the topic of study, which is to be represented in the Q-set (Stephenson, 1988). Finally, statements in the Q-set that were similar, redundant, or unclear were eliminated.

Research Design and Procedure

Prior to the sorting procedure, a researcher's script was read to participants (Appendix E) by the researcher in which the participants were asked to recall a place or places in the out-of-doors that were personally meaningful, significant, and embedded in their memories. This request extends from the assumption supported in place-based literature and Low and Altman's (1992) theoretical framework that humans find emotional significance in particular places over the course of their lives for a variety of reasons (Relph, 1976). Research has shown that significant places can represent emotional fields of care, security, stability, symbolic lifelines, and act as life anchors (Brown & Perkins, 1992; Hummon, 1989; Marcus, 1992; Relph, 1976).

The participants were then presented with an uncategorized group of 48 statements with a number on each representing the Q-set. They were asked to read through the statements and to sort them into three piles according to 1) place meanings that they are most likely to find in an outdoor setting of personal significance; 2) place meanings that they are least likely to find in an outdoor setting of personal significance; and 3) place meanings that they are neither most likely or least likely to find in an outdoor setting of personal significance. Participants were then asked to rank order the statements on the Q-sort array form (Figure 1 & Appendix F) according to a condition of instruction. The condition of instruction to which participants sorted each statement was “How do you find meaning in a place in the out-of-doors?” Careful attention was given to the language used on the statements and on the condition of instruction to elicit particular place meanings using Low and Altman’s (1992) description of place attachment as a theoretical framework.

Participants sorted the statements on Q-sort array forms with a code to maintain anonymity. Participants were asked to sort the statements beginning with their strongest most like and most unlike perceptions according to the condition of instruction. Participants were forced to compare each and every statement and assign value to the statements depending on where they were placed on the Q-sort array. Participants were then asked to continue filling in the cells until each of the statements was represented on the form. The number of cells stacked in each column was 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 6, 5, 4, 3 and 2 across the continuum having a value range of 1 (most unlike) to 11 (most like) (see Figure 1)

Participants were then given a chance to make any changes deemed necessary. After participants completed the sorting procedure, the researcher recorded the statement numbers directly on a separate identical Q-sort array form, which represented the raw data to be analyzed. Data collection lasted between 30 and 45 minutes.

Once the Q-sort was completed, participants were asked to fill out a demographics questionnaire (Appendix G) with information on gender, age range, race/ethnic group, occupation, number of children/grandchildren and years as an outdoor recreation professional. The questionnaire also included two open-ended questions asking further explanation of the ways the statements were sorted and in what contexts.

Additionally, participants were asked if they were willing to volunteer to be contacted by phone for a possible follow-up interview following the sorting procedure. A phone interview researcher script and protocol was utilized (Appendix H). Two phone interviews were scheduled with high and pure loaders for two of the three factors. Participants who chose to participate were asked for a first name or a code name they could remember and a phone number on the demographics questionnaire. This procedure consisted of an interview by phone that lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. Participants were asked about the sorting procedure and their perceptions toward place meanings.

Data Analysis

Individual Q-sorts represent a record of participants' subjective perceptions. Once all Q-sorts were completed, scores and matrix dimensions were entered into PQmethod 2.11 software. PQmethod is a statistical program maintained by Peter Schmolck and is in the public domain downloaded free at www.qmethod.org. In Q-studies, the statistical applications involved serve to reveal interrelated subjectivities in the form of factors.

The results from this study were analyzed by correlating the Q-sorts, principal components factor analysis of the correlation, and the computation of factor scores (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). The correlation matrix determines the number of Q-sorts, those that are correlated, and those that are uncorrelated. Factor analysis statistically shows which participants are grouped together determined from their Q-sorts and extracts factors. Factor scores indicate the relationships between Q-sorts and factors.

Varimax rotation and z-score calculation of each statement for each factor was carried out. In Q-studies, factor rotation may be performed using statistical algorithms or manually using theoretical reasoning to test “interesting possibilities” (Robbins, 2005, p. 213) that may exist among the segments of subjectivities generated from the participants in the study. Varimax factor rotation is considered a more objective approach, and was chosen for this study. In utilizing Varimax rotation,

factors are aligned in an orthogonal fashion along perpendicular axes so Q-sorts that load high on one factor will load low on another, maximizing the distinction and differentiation of subject positions while minimizing the correlation among factors (Robbins, p. 213).

Through these statistical treatments, PQmethod is able to determine clusters of Q-sorts that correlate highly with each other and not with others, illuminating distinct factors.

It’s important to note that in Q-method factor analysis, it is persons who are correlated. The characteristics of the responses depend on the persons performing the Q-sorts (Brown, 1980). The purpose of the mathematical applications of the Q-sorts is to illuminate shared points of view through statistical treatment. Resulting factors represent a collection of common subjective responses. A particular loading from an individual

participant on a factor indicates her or his point of view relative to the point of view generated by the factor of “common or idealized subjectivities” (Robbins, 2005, p. 213).

Factors represent interrelated subjective responses from those who completed the Q-sorting procedure and are displayed in a composite factor array. The composite factor array is generated for each factor representing a co-constructed theoretical point of view from those who performed the Q-sort. The mathematical treatment indicates statements that are statistically different between any two factors called distinguishing statements. The positioning of distinguishing statements is unique to one factor. Z-scores for each statement for each factor represent a statement’s position on the composite factor array. Z-scores can be compared across factors illuminating the number of units of the standard deviation a statement is above or below the mean of the normal distribution. These scores were converted to a 1 to 11 scale for each factor, which illuminates a statement’s array position for each composite factor array. In this study, a score of 11 for a particular statement on a factor implies that participants who helped to define that factor endorse that statement as one that is ‘most-like’ how they find meaning in an outdoor place. A score of 1 for a particular statement on a factor implies that a statement is ‘most-unlike’ how they find meaning in an outdoor place.

It is the factor scores that are used primarily in interpretation versus factor loadings as often observed in R methodology (Brown, 1993). Factor scores can be thought of as the common or mean scores associated with a statement on a given factor, which help to explicate the view it represents (Brown, 1980). Factor significance is determined by theoretical and statistical significance. Through analysis of the theoretical

factor arrays, distinguishing statements between factors, and exit questions on the demographics questionnaire, the factors were interpreted.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Data

The objective of this chapter is to provide results of the statistical analysis and qualitative description and interpretation of these data. The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments?
2. Do the data reveal patterns related to demographic characteristics?

Elaboration on the characteristics of the participants who took part in the study is provided followed by data analysis and interpretation.

Description of Participants

The thirty outdoor recreation professionals who participated in the study were asked to complete a demographics questionnaire (see Appendix G). Demographic characteristics of professional areas of expertise and work functions are displayed in Table 1. The factor matrix provides additional understanding of the characteristics of the outdoor recreation professionals who participated in the study.

Table 1

Demographics of outdoor recreation professionals

<u>Professional Area</u>	<u>Primary function</u>					<u>Totals</u>
	Management	Programming	Education	Leadership	Other	
Outdoor Leadership	1	2	-	2	-	5
Resource Management	6	-	-	-	1	7
Youth Development	1	1	1	1	-	4
Outdoor Education	-	-	2	-	2	4
Adventure Education	-	1	-	2	-	3
Environmental Education	1	-	1	-	1	3
Other	-	-	2	-	2	4
<u>Totals</u>	9	4	6	5	6	30

*Note: The primary function 'other' category includes interpretation, facilitation, risk management, and coordination

*Note: 1 participant picked more than one area and function and was placed into the 'other-other' category

*Note: 1 participant did not answer all demographic questions and was placed into the 'other-other' category

The participants included 30 outdoor recreation professionals from a variety of backgrounds who live in the Midwestern United States. Twenty-five participants described their ethnicity as Caucasian. Four participants described their ethnicity as Native American and one as Asian. The participants included 15 males and 15 females. Years working as outdoor recreation professionals ranged from one year to 43 years of experience. Participants were between 18 and 60 years of age. Twelve participants were between the ages of 18 and 30, three participants were between the ages of 31 and 40, six participants were between the ages of 41 and 50, and 9 participants were between the ages of 51 and 60.

This group of outdoor recreation professionals worked for summer camp, local, state, federal, non-profit, and commercial agencies in a variety of capacities and functions. Five participants defined themselves as most experienced in outdoor leadership, seven in resource management, four in youth development, four in outdoor education, three in adventure education, and three in environmental education. Participants included wildlife biologists, park rangers, state land managers, outdoor leaders, professors of recreation and leisure studies, nature center employees, outdoor program coordinators, camp directors, camp counselors, and undergraduate and graduate students studying and working in outdoor recreation contexts.

Factor Solution

Data from the sorts were correlated and principal components factor analysis was used with Varimax rotation. Through factor analysis, PQmethod arranges clusters of Q sorts that correlate highly with each other and not with others illuminating distinct factors. These factors represent the interrelated subjective responses from those who

completed the Q sorting procedure. Factor scores demonstrate the relationships of individual sorts to a factor. Subsequent to the calculation of factor scores for each sort, z-scores for statements were calculated (see Figures 2-4). Z-scores allow for comparisons across the factors by revealing how many units of the standard deviation a statement is above or below the mean of the normal distribution. These scores were converted to a 1 to 11 scale for each factor, which is considered the array position. Twenty out of the thirty participants loaded for a three-factor solution. The three factors represent distinct groupings of viewpoints that show few similarities (see Table 2).

Table 2			
<u>Correlations Between Factor Scores</u>			
Factor	1	2	3
1	1.000	0.3698	0.2789
2	-	1.000	0.3723
3	-	-	1.000

Statistical and theoretical criteria were utilized in arriving at three-factors. Factor loadings are essentially correlation coefficients. In other words, factor loadings indicate the co-relation between each Q sort and the composite or theoretical factor array (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

The standard error (SE) for factor loadings is found through $SE = 1/\sqrt{N}$ (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). N represents the number of statements or items in the Q-set. Typically, correlations are considered statistically significant if they are between 2 and 2.5 times the value of the standard error. For this study, the equation $1/\sqrt{48} * (2.5) =$

0.36 was used to determine the necessary size of a correlation to be considered significant for each loading (Brown, 1993). It was determined that individual loadings at 0.40 and above would be used to determine the sorts to define each of the three factors. An X marks each of these loadings on the factor matrix (see Table 3).

It is assumed that a participant who loaded on a particular factor shares similar opinions with others who helped to define the viewpoint (Robbins, 2005). However, certain participants tend to align with particular points of view more strongly than others. Participants who have a high loading on a particular factor “represent relatively pure articulations of a subject position” (Robbins, 2005, p. 213). These participants are called high and pure loaders. For instance, female-5 (see Table 3) has a factor score of 0.7466 for factor 1, 0.0834 for factor 2 and 0.1317 for factor 3. Her high factor score of 0.7466 for factor 1 compared to her much lower statistically insignificant loadings (<.40) for factors two and three indicates that she is a high and pure loader for factor 1. The viewpoints from those participants that load high and pure tend to define particular factors more than those who load lower.

Table 3

Factor matrix with an X indicating a defining sort

<u>sort #/ gender</u>	<u>age range</u>	<u>yrs exp.</u>	<u>professional area</u>	Loadings		
				1	2	3
1-female	41-50	32	youth development	0.1111	0.5897X	0.3700
2-male	41-50	16	outdoor education	-0.3307	0.2806	0.0522
3-female	18-30	7	youth development	0.1773	0.6988X	-0.2103
4-male	51-60	12	outdoor leadership	-0.2653	0.1511	0.4819X
5-female	31-40	11	outdoor education	0.7466X	0.0834	0.1317
6-female	51-60	25	outdoor leadership	0.3923	0.1874	-0.0307
7-male	18-30	10	adventure education	0.2366	0.0552	0.5315X
8-male	51-60	35	outdoor education	0.5758X	0.0837	0.0936
9-female	18-30	4	outdoor leadership	0.0211	0.3157	0.3011
10-male	18-30	4	outdoor education	-0.0945	0.1997	0.7036X
11-male	18-30	5	outdoor leadership	-0.0224	0.0805	0.6583X
12-male	41-50	26	resource management	0.1648	0.7067X	0.2935
13-female	41-50	7	environmental education	0.2538	0.3949	0.5421X
14-female	51-60	17	outdoor education	0.1744	0.6123X	0.3765
15-female	51-60	3	outdoor leadership	-0.4650	0.4614	0.2918
16-female	41-50	18	resource management	0.5133	0.0231	0.5739
17-male	51-60	33	other	0.2713	0.6135X	0.3904
18-female	31-40	18	resource management	0.3334	0.6208X	-0.0849
19-male	31-40	5	resource management	0.1762	0.5383X	0.0915
20-male	51-60	9	other	0.2458	-0.1930	0.7125X
21-female	18-30	1	other	-0.4523	0.6021	0.2584
22-female	18-30	8	environmental education	0.4302	0.1515	0.6746
23-female	18-30	1	youth development	0.4356	0.6288	0.2561
24-male	18-30	5	environmental education	0.4574X	0.3399	0.2036
25-female	18-30	6	youth development	0.3673	0.1535	0.1920
26-male	18-30	2	adventure education	0.3231	0.5052X	0.0676
27-female	51-60	32	resource management	0.5370	0.3601	0.5023
28-male	41-50	25	resource management	-0.1482	0.7709X	0.1172
29-male	18-30	10	resource management	0.0092	0.2872	0.6033X
30-male	51-60	43	other	0.4114X	0.1857	0.0486
Number of sorts defining a factor				4	9	7
Explained variance				12%	18%	16%

Participants may load on more than one factor (confounded loadings) or they may not load on any of the factors (non-significant loadings). Four participants' loadings were non-significant and six of the participants' loadings were confounded. Data from these ten sorts were not included in the analysis. However, it's important to note that confounded loadings do share the points of view illuminated in the study. Table 3 contains the factor matrix with each of the loadings for each participant in the study. Four sorts define factor one, nine sorts define factor two, and seven sorts define factor three. Each of the three factors was characterized through calculation of z-scores for each statement for each factor and arranging them according to their array positions accomplished through converting z-scores to whole numbers in a 1 to 11 scale (see Figures 2-4).

Table 3 shows the 3-factor solution accounted for 46% of the total variance (factor 1, 12%, factor 2, 18%, and factor 3, 16%). The given variance of a particular factor is related to its strength or significance within the Q-set (Brown, 1980). The ranked statements for all three factors were organized onto separate Q-sort array forms as shown on figures 2-4. Highly ranked statements carry a larger z-score and are positioned closer to the extreme ends of the factor array. Distinguishing statements for each factor are those statements that appear in different cells from factor to factor. Distinguishing statements are unique to one of the views generated and are analyzed as part of the interpretive process. Distinguishing statements are bold on each of the array forms on figures 2-4. Consensus statements are those statements with shared positioning from factor to factor. Consensus statements are underlined on each of the array forms on figures 2-4. It's important to note that statements can be highly ranked and not be a

distinguishing item (see Tables 4-6). The factors illuminate three distinct subjective viewpoints that operate within a group of outdoor recreation professionals and were named; (1) *Relational*, (2) *Natural*, and (3) *Spiritual*.

Interpretation of Factors

Research question one: What are the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments?

In order to answer this research question an in-depth description of each factor is provided. Through examination of each of the theoretical factor arrays, distinguishing statements, demographic information, and exit question, three factors were interpreted. The three views toward place meanings were named, 1) *Relational*, 2) *Natural*, and 3) *Spiritual*.

Factor 1: Relational

Relational is the name given to the four Q sorts that define this view. Table 3 lists the 9 highest ranked (most-like) statements, the nine lowest ranked (most unlike) statements and the five highest ranked (most like) distinguishing statements. Two men in the age range of 51-60 each with over 35 years of experience in the outdoor recreation profession, one man in the age range of 18-30 with 5 years of experience, and one woman in the age range of 51-60 with 43 years of experience defined this factor. Participants who define this view work or worked in environmental education, outdoor education, and outdoor recreation resource management. Of the four participants who helped to define this factor, three described their ethnicity as Caucasian and one as Asian.

Those who subscribe to the *Relational* view value family and social relationships.

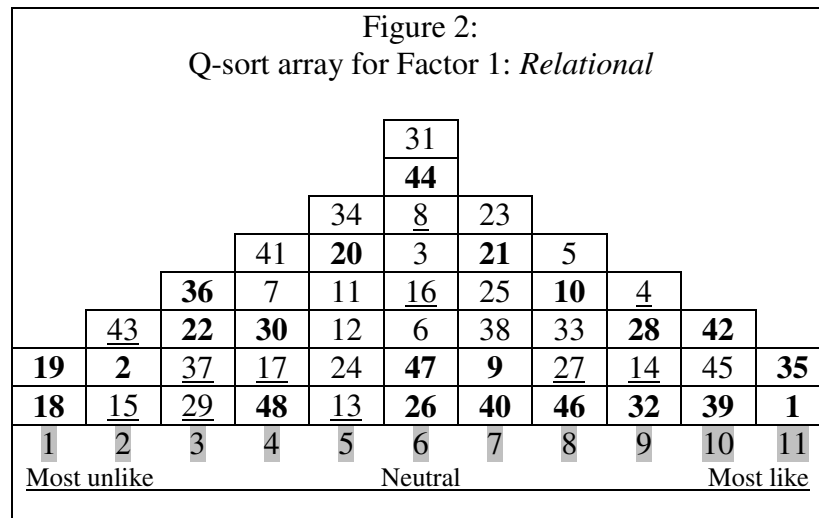
Figure 2 and Table 3 shows that the strongest agreement among those who subscribe to this view is with distinguishing statement 35:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
35	Experiencing time with my family.	2.026	11

These people find meaning in outdoor places through relationships that unfold with family and others during time spent in outdoor places. These relationships seem to become embedded into the memories of those with this view through a ritual of participation. Statement 42 punctuates the importance of ritual to those who subscribe to this viewpoint.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
42	Being part of rituals and celebrations of a place.	1.147	10

As evidenced by distinguishing statements 35 and 42, social and familial engagement ritualizes the meaning of place over time for those who subscribe to this view.



For these outdoor recreation professionals, place meanings emerge from personal and social rituals that depend on interpersonal fulfillment. Male-8 (see Table 2) who helped to define the *Relational* viewpoint illuminates the importance of ritual to those who hold this perspective. He performed the Q-sort while reflecting on personal experiences on the Appalachian Trail in the southeastern United States. He referred to his involvement with the Boy Scouts and his sons during those experiences in the out-of-doors in this way:

Working with my sons has been a great joy during their scouting years. Once done with their eagle rank we branched out to one of my goals of hiking the Appalachian Trail. I have been at this for nine years. During my trips I have had one or both boys with me. The experiences with them have been great. At the same time, we have met many new friends on the AT [Appalachian Trail] and we value that relationship. Returning each year has been something to look forward to.

His sentiment illuminates this view's emphasis on family, relationships, and ritual that characterizes his attachment to the trail. Additionally, male-8 offers insight into the meaning of relationships within this view as evidenced by statement 3 (Experiencing new people) and statement 29 (Experiencing a place collectively) on the left-hand (most unlike) side of the array (see Figure 2). Meeting new people and experiencing a place with others is not a priority for those with this viewpoint. It's the more mature relationships that have evolved over time that are of greater importance. The ritual over

Table 4

Factor 1: *Relational*

Nine highest ranked statements, nine lowest ranked statements, and five highest ranked distinguishing statements with z-scores and array positions

No.	Statement	Z-scores	Array pos.
<u>Nine highest ranked statements (most-like)</u>			
35	Experiencing time with my family.	2.026	11
1	Feeling positive memories come forth.	1.821	11
39	Being in a place I have history with.	1.283	10
45	Encountering the personality and/or spirit of a place.	1.197	10
42	Being part of rituals and celebrations of a place.	1.147	10
32	Experiencing memories of someone significant.	1.057	9
14	Knowing my sense of self is connected to a place.	1.015	9
28	Feeling attached to nature.	0.928	9
4	Feeling psychologically rejuvenated.	0.852	9
<u>Nine lowest ranked statements (most unlike)</u>			
19	Practicing activities that allow me to test my endurance.	-2.535	1
18	Practicing activities that make me feel physically exhausted.	-2.410	1
43	Encountering negative memories I associate with a place.	-2.191	2
2	Feeling my needs are satiated.	-1.591	2
15	Practicing activities that involve risk.	-1.477	2
36	Experiencing intensity.	-1.200	3
22	Feeling attached to a place I have never been.	-0.831	3
37	Being in a place for a long amount of time.	-0.831	3
29	Experiencing a place collectively.	-0.648	3
<u>Five highest ranked distinguishing statements</u>			
35	Experiencing time with my family.	2.03*	11
1	Feeling positive memories come forth.	1.82*	11
39	Being in a place I have history with.	1.28*	10
42	Being a part of rituals and celebrations of a place.	1.15*	10
32	Experiencing memories of someone significant.	1.06*	9
p< .05; asterisk * indicates significance at p< .01			

time in places of personal significance with people of personal significance seems to define the meaning of place for those who align with this viewpoint.

The salience of established relationships is supported through the positioning of distinguishing statement 32 and statement 33.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
32	Experiencing memories of someone significant.	1.057	9
33	Experiencing relationships I have with other people I interact with in a place.	0.779	8

These statements explicate the meaning that is attached to interpersonal engagement within this view. Merely experiencing a place collectively is not of interest for those with this viewpoint. As evidenced by statements 32 and 33, experiencing and remembering relationships of personal significance and the refinement of those relationships is what appears integral to makeup of this perspective.

The meaning that is attached to personal history within places of personal significance is another important aspect of the *Relational* viewpoint as evidenced by the rankings of statements 39 and 9:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
39	Being in a place I have history with.	1.283	10
9	Knowing my history/past experiences with a place.	0.472	7

It's clear from the positioning of these statements that these people find meaning in places that they have felt personally a part of over time. Having and knowing one's personal history in a place illuminates the importance of personal experiences to those who align with this view.

Female 5 (see Table 2) who helped to define this view as a high and pure loader expresses her bias toward the importance of the experience in places of personal significance. She reflected on experiences at a state park in hill country in the southern United States and on property on a lake in the Midwestern United States as she performed the Q sort. She expressed, “the experience I have generally dictates the meaning as opposed to a specific place.” This sensitivity to experiential involvement highlights the desires of these people to not only have meaningful experiences in the out-of-doors, but to be in settings where personal experiences become synthesized over time that connect with one’s own personal history.

Statement 38 further accentuates the emphasis on personal historical connection:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
38	Being in a place that feels familiar when I return to it.	0.779	9

It seems a history of ritualized involvement is enhanced through feelings of familiarity. Sensing the familiar allows those with the *Relational* view to fuse their own story and ritual within the story of the setting. They not only seek to nurture relationships with other people, but they want to know they have established relationships with particular environments. This notion is further supported by statement 14:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
14	Feeling my sense of self is connected to a place.	1.1057	9

The ranking of this statement suggests that these people want to have history with a particular setting that is connected to knowing how one’s identity emerges within the story of the place.

This view appears to operate in multiple ways with regard to its emphasis on relationships. While some who define this view clearly emphasize the importance of people within a setting, one participant (male-30, see Table 3) suggests the meaning he attaches to places relies more on his relationship to the setting. He performed the Q sort while reflecting on a river of personal significance, specifically “a bend in the canyon” in a park in the northern United States. He expressed:

I have many places that have special meaning usually because I have been there. I read about places before visiting them and love to return to certain places. Often these visits are with family, but it is the place that I remember.

His feelings toward this environment illuminate the importance of ongoing relationships to settings that operates within this viewpoint. People certainly play a role, but it appears that the ‘love of returning’ to specific environments is how this participant attaches meaning to places of personal significance.

Another important aspect of this view is the need to feel close to the subtle variations and intricacies of a place as evidenced by statement 45:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
45	Encountering the personality and/or spirit of a place.	1.197	10

The positioning of this statement shows strong agreement in the attitudes of those with this view toward wanting to feel comfortably situated within the various layers and characteristics of a place. Further understanding of what is meant by ‘personality’ and ‘spirit’ of a place is presented through in the positions of statements 40, 31, 13, and 12.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
40	Being in a place that has significant cultural and natural history.	0.501	7
31	Experiencing culturally based meaning.	-0.011	6
13	Knowing the names of flora, fauna and landscape features.	-0.264	5
12	Knowing the symbols that are assigned to a place by other people/cultures.	-0.300	5

The positioning of statement 40 in column 7 demonstrates this view's sentiment toward cultural and natural history. However, statement 31 is positioned in the neutral column and statements 13 and 12 in column 5 on the most unlike side of the array. The ranking of these statements suggests while there does exist sentiment toward cultural and natural history (Statement 40), there are stronger attitudes toward personal history significance than toward culturally based meaning, particularities, or cultural symbolism.

Finally, the ranking of statement 1 indicates that people who hold this view want to access positive memories through place engagement:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
1	Feeling positive memories come forth.	1.821	11

These memories appear to be a result of the social ritual that those with this view attach to place meanings. Additionally, those who subscribe to the *Relational* view experience spiritual attunement (Statement 46), attachment to nature (Statement 28), and psychological rejuvenation (Statement 4) through their activities in places of personal significance:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
46	Feeling psychologically rejuvenated.	0.852	9
28	Feeling attached to nature.	0.928	9
4	Encountering my spirituality.	0.825	9

The rankings of these statements on the array suggests that although spiritual attunement, psychological rejuvenation, and attachment to nature may not be a priority within the meaning that these people attach to places, they are nonetheless results of the positive memories that accompany them during place engagement.

In summary, those who subscribe to the *Relational* view find meaning in outdoor places through personal relationships with people and settings. These social relationships emerge through being involved with ritualistic activities in a place or places of personal significance. Those who subscribe to this view emphasize a need for feeling close to others as well as knowing and situating one's personal history within the history of a setting. Group engagement in the context of family, friends, and other social ties appears to be most important to people who hold this viewpoint. The place meanings that define this view emerge for these outdoor recreation professionals through experiences and activities that support the ritual of place and relationship engagement over time.

Factor 2: Natural

Natural is the name given to the nine Q sorts that define this view. Table 4 lists the 9 highest ranked (most like) statements, the nine lowest ranked (most unlike) statements and the five highest ranked (most like) distinguishing statements. One man in the age range of 51-60 with 33 years of experience as an outdoor recreation professional, two men in the age range of 41-50 each with over 25 years of experience, one man in the age range of 31-40 with 5 years of experience, and one man in the age range of 18-30 with 5 years of experience helped to define this factor. One woman in the age range of 51-60 with 17 years of experience as an outdoor recreation professional, one woman in

the age range of 41-50 with 32 years of experience, one woman in the age range of 31-40 with 18 years of experience, and one woman in the age range of 18-30 with 7 years of experience helped to define this factor. These participants work or worked in youth development, resource management, outdoor education, and adventure education. Eight Caucasian participants and one Native American helped to define this view.

Those who subscribe to the *Natural* view actively seek sensory involvement in outdoor places. Figure 3 and Table 4 shows that the strongest agreement is with distinguishing statement 20 for those who define this viewpoint:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
20	Practicing activities that allow me to see the sights, hear the sounds, experience the smells, and touch my surroundings.	2.134	11

These people feel fully engaged by coming into close contact with outdoor settings of personal significance. They are intentional about their pursuit of place engagement through activities that enliven the senses.

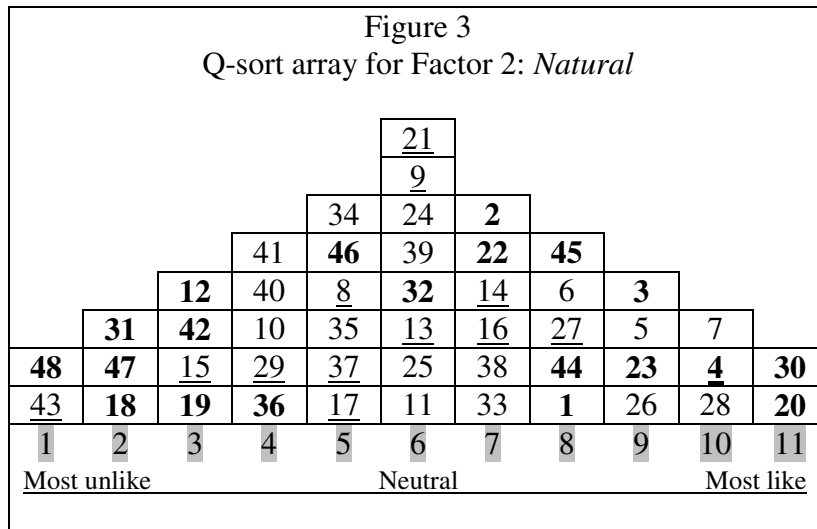


Table 5

Factor 2: *Natural*Nine highest ranked statements, nine lowest ranked statements, and the five highest ranked distinguishing statements with z-scores and array positions

No.	Statements	Z-scores	Array pos.
<u>Nine highest ranked statements (most-like)</u>			
20	Practicing activities that allow me to see the sights, hear the sounds, experience the smells and touch my surroundings.	2.134	11
30	Experiencing solitude.	2.101	11
28	Feeling attached to nature.	1.691	10
4	Feeling psychologically rejuvenated.	1.464	10
7	Feeling independent.	1.344	10
26	Feeling attached to the land.	1.318	9
23	Feeling attached to the particularities of the wildlife, plants and/or the landscape.	1.089	9
5	Feeling like I can escape from other responsibilities.	1.062	9
3	Feeling confident, comfortable, and safe.	0.954	9
<u>Nine lowest ranked statements (most unlike)</u>			
43	Encountering memories I associate with a place.	-2.282	1
48	Encountering my religious beliefs.	-1.494	1
47	Encountering God.	-1.452	2
18	Practicing activities that make me feel physically exhausted.	-1.395	2
31	Experiencing culturally based meaning.	-1.279	2
12	Knowing the symbols that are assigned to a place by others.	-1.277	3
42	Being a part of rituals and celebrations of a place.	-1.255	3
15	Practicing activities that involve risk.	-1.181	3
19	Practicing activities that allow me to test my endurance.	-1.104	3
<u>Five highest ranked distinguishing statements</u>			
20	Practicing activities that allow me to see the sights, hear the sounds, experience the smells and touch my surroundings.	2.13*	11
30	Experiencing solitude.	2.10*	11
4	Feeling psychologically rejuvenated.	1.46	10
7	Feeling independent.	1.34*	10
23	Feeling attached to the particularities of the wildlife, plants and/or the landscape.	1.09	9
p < .05; asterisk * indicates significance at p < .01			

Their need to feel close and to find an emotional connection to nature is reinforced through the positioning of statement 28:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
28	Feeling attached to nature.	1.691	10

The ranking of these statements suggests that those with this view position themselves to emotionally and intentionally experience the world of nature through direct sensory contact.

Those who hold the *Natural* view seek to be close to the particularities of places encountered. The positioning of statement 26 and distinguishing statement 23 supports this notion:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
26	Feeling attached to the land.	1.318	9
23	Feeling attached to the particularities of the wildlife, plants and/or the landscape.	1.089	9

The feelings of those with this viewpoint toward particularities suggest a finely tuned attachment to the distinct elements found in natural environments. Their connection to places in the out-of-doors is not universalized, but is more distinct and particular to individual places encountered

Feeling close to the particularities of a setting does not necessarily appear to have a cognitive emphasis within this perspective as evidenced by statement 13 in the neutral column of the array:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
13	Knowing the names of flora, fauna, and landscape features.	0.103	6

The ranking of this statement suggests that the emphasis for those who define this view is with sensory engagement and experiential involvement within settings of preference.

The *Natural* view is further defined through sentiment toward solitude. The positioning of distinguishing statement 30 shows strong agreement with the importance of this concept for people with this viewpoint.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
3	Experiencing solitude.	2.101	11

Solitude was a common thread expressed by participants who hold this view. Male-12 (see Table 2) reflected on a lake trail near a nature center where he works as he sorted the statements. He described the setting as a “more secluded area.” He expressed, “I enjoy experiencing nature alone or with a small group of people. I like to move quietly.” His statements illuminate this view’s emphasis on solitude and intimate person-place interaction.

Female-1 (see Table 2) illuminates the importance of solitude through reflecting on a collection of places that hold special significance to her such as the Grand Canyon and mountain ranges in Colorado, New York, and Kentucky. Her particular settings of interest included “high mountain aspen groves, Utah canyons and slot canyons, sitting on a rock high in the mountains looking out over the world...pine forests.” She expressed:

I've taken tests/surveys that tell me I'm an introvert. While I love taking people outdoors - teaching them, leading them, seeing them grow in the outdoors - I find meaning in a place when I can be alone - to hear nature - to feel the seasons - to live in the harshness of winter or softness of spring. To sit and veg - just be.

Her exemplar helps to further illuminate solitude and attachment to the particularities of settings as defining characteristics of *Natural* view.

That is not to say that relating to others is not on the minds of those who subscribe to this perspective. The ranking of statement 33 suggests interpersonal engagement does hold importance for these outdoor recreation professionals:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
33	Experiencing relationships I have with other people I interact with in a place.	0.443	7

This statement is positioned on the most like side of the array ranked lower than solitude. Female 1’s comments help explicate these apparent dual emotions: “While I love taking people outdoors - teaching them, leading them, seeing them grow in the outdoors, I find meaning in a place when I can be alone...” Her sentiment toward personal meaning demonstrates how solitude is more pronounced within this view compared to interpersonal engagement.

These people emphasize psychological rejuvenation, independence, and escape in outdoor places. Distinguishing statements 4 and 7 and statement 5 support this notion:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
4	Feeling psychologically rejuvenated.	1.464	10
7	Feeling independent.	1.344	10
5	Feeling like I can escape from other responsibilities.	1.062	9

The high ranking of these statements seems to suggest that personal rejuvenation in an outdoor place is an expected outcome achieved through experiencing places closely and intimately.

The importance of emotional contentment within this view is further demonstrated through the ranking of statement 3:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
3	Feeling confident, comfortable, and safe.	0.954	9

An intimate connection to places of personal significance seems to center those who hold this view within feelings of contentment. Further, the ranking of this statement suggests that specific needs must be met in order for those with the *Natural* view to find personal meaning in outdoor places.

Oneness and spirituality are other important aspects of this view warranting exploration. The ranking of statement 44 suggests that those with this view do have a sentiment toward feelings of oneness in the out-of-doors. However, these feelings are not linked to the spiritual (distinguishing statement 46), which appears on left-hand or most unlike side of the array. Further, the lower rankings of distinguishing statements 47 and 48 suggest that sentiments toward God and religious beliefs are not part of the place meanings that those with this view attach to outdoor settings or to the oneness they experience.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
44	Encountering oneness in a place.	0.794	8
46	Encountering my spirituality.	-0.429	5
47	Encountering God.	-1.452	2

Instead, those who hold the *Natural* viewpoint find meaning in their surroundings more through introspection (Statement 6) in a place, in which the spirit or personality of it (distinguishing statement 45) may be encountered through the senses:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
6	Feeling introspective.	0.562	8
45	Encountering the personality and/or spirit of a place.	0.546	8

The ranking of these statements suggests that feelings of oneness may be sought out among those who subscribe to this view. Yet, the ranking of distinguishing statement 45 suggests that oneness is conceptualized more through the spirit or personality of the place rather than through spiritual beliefs that individuals bring to the setting. This group of people seems to feel that they encounter the spirit of a place through direct sensory involvement that may be considered sacred and meaningful, but not necessarily spiritual or Godly.

In summary, the *Natural* view is defined by a need to seek out sensory interaction with landscapes in order to find meaning in natural environments. Those who subscribe to this view value attachment to nature through coming into close and intimate contact with the distinct and unique characteristics of places encountered. Solitude is another defining characteristic of this viewpoint. Through being alone in places of personal significance, those who align with this perspective aim to find oneness and connect with the spirit or personality of a setting through emotional attachment to places of personal preference.

Factor 3: Spiritual

Spiritual is the name given to the seven Q sorts who define this view. Table 5 lists the 9 highest ranked (most like) statements, the nine lowest ranked (most unlike) statements and the five highest ranked (most like) distinguishing statements with z-scores and array positions. Four men in the age range of 31-40, two men in the age range of 51-

60, and one woman in the age range in the age range of 41-50 define this factor.

Participants had between 4 and 12 years of experience as outdoor recreation professionals. Six Caucasian participants and one Native American participant defined this view.

These people find their spirituality within natural environments. Figure 4 and Table 5 shows that the strongest agreement is with distinguishing statement 46 for those who define this viewpoint:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
46	Encountering my spirituality.	2.067	11

It seems important to those with this view to feel that their spiritual beliefs are grounded in nature. Additionally, the ranking of distinguishing statement 44 highlights the role of oneness within this perspective.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
44	Encountering oneness in a place.	1.433	10

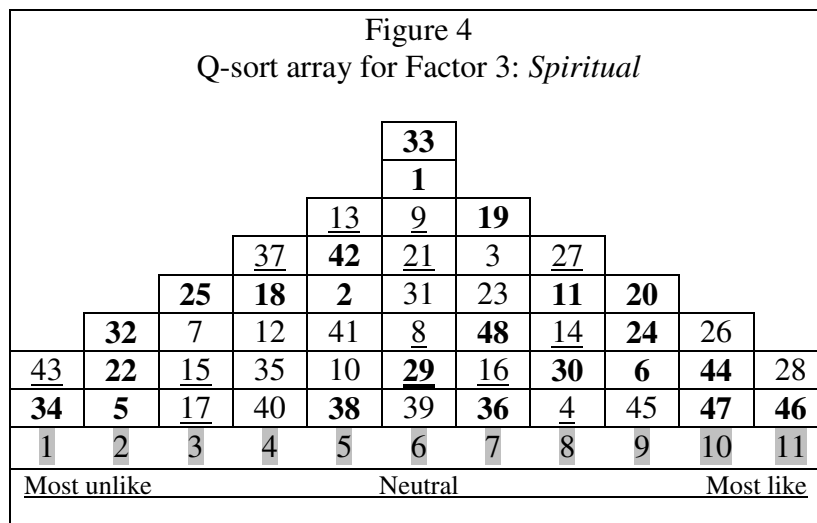


Table 6

Factor 3: *Spiritual*

Nine highest ranked statements, nine lowest ranked statements, and the five highest ranked distinguishing statements with z-scores and array positions

No.	Statements	Z-scores	Array pos.
<u>Nine highest ranked statements (most-like)</u>			
46	Encountering my spirituality.	2.067	11
28	Feeling attached to nature.	1.999	11
47	Encountering God.	1.885	10
44	Encountering oneness in a place.	1.433	10
26	Feeling attached to the land.	1.385	10
45	Encountering the personality and/or spirit of a place.	1.303	9
6	Feeling introspective.	1.264	9
24	Feeling attached to the whole earth.	1.150	9
20	Practicing activities that allow me to see the sights, hear the sounds, experience the smells, and touch my surroundings.	1.008	9
<u>Nine lowest ranked statements (most unlike)</u>			
43	Encountering negative memories I associate with a place.	-2.399	1
34	Experiencing new people.	-1.623	1
32	Experiencing memories of someone significant.	-1.578	2
22	Feeling attached to a place I have never been.	-1.452	2
5	Feeling like I can escape from other responsibilities.	-1.245	2
25	Feeling attached to a body of water.	-1.202	3
7	Feeling independent.	-0.906	3
15	Practicing activities that involve risk.	-0.906	3
17	Practicing activities that make me feel physically rested.	-0.808	3
<u>Five most distinguishing statements</u>			
46	Encountering my spirituality.	2.07*	11
47	Encountering God.	1.89*	10
44	Encountering oneness in a place.	1.43	10
6	Feeling introspective.	1.26*	9
24	Feeling attached to the whole earth.	1.15*	9
P< .05; asterisk * indicates significance at P< .01			

The rankings of distinguishing statements 46 and 44 suggest that feelings of oneness strongly permeate the spiritual meanings that these outdoor recreation professionals attach to places in the natural world.

Individuals who hold this view seek spiritual unity and integration in nature's places. The second highest ranked statement 28 suggests that place meanings are encountered for those who subscribe to the *Spiritual* view through feelings of attachment to nature.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
28	Feeling attached to nature.	1.999	11

The ranking of statement 28 offers insight into the spiritual context of this view. Attachment to nature within this perspective connects participants' spiritual beliefs to their surroundings. Further, attachment to nature is universalized as shown by the ranking of distinguishing statement 24.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
24	Feeling attached to the whole earth.	1.150	9

The position of statement 24 on the factor array suggests the *Spiritual* view emerges in a universal connotation.

Universal connectedness was expressed by male-20 (see Table 2) who is a high and pure loader who helped to define this viewpoint. He reflected on a special use area within a national wildlife refuge in the Midwestern United States as he performed the Q-sort. He explained:

It's a great place to go into to be one with the earth. I also take groups back there on occasion to help them find a connection with all [that is] around them. Being Native American I feel a great connection to the Earth. I know that it is sacred and that it contains great spiritual medicine.

His sentiment toward this setting illuminates the emphasis of this view toward universal and spiritual connection to the earth. Additionally, his comments show the desire of those with this view to share with others an attachment to nature as supported by the ranking of distinguishing statement 11.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
11	Knowing how to teach and lead others in a place.	11	0.714

Male-7 (see Table 2) who helped to define the *Spiritual* view further explicates feelings of universal connectedness. During the sorting process, he reflected on a collection of places from his past including designated Wilderness in the Midwestern United States, a rock quarry, a desert setting in southern Utah, a municipal park, and his own personal backyard. He elaborates on the meanings he attaches to the collection in this way:

I picture myself just sitting somewhere at any of the places mentioned above and this is what comes to me - not just as conscious thoughts, but also as something I feel -and can get somewhat short of breath sitting at this desk remembering - silence...that everything is slowly moving and evolving and here I am actually listening, feeling it - I am there, a part of it all, oh but what a small part - whatever it is, it continues whether I'm there or not, paying attention or not.

This exemplar further illuminates the emphasis that these people place on a universal attachment to outdoor settings. The collection of places mentioned seems to signify experiences that this participant has synthesized into holistic feelings of place affinity.

The universal design of the *Spiritual* view is accentuated further through its emphasis on God. The high ranking of distinguishing statement 47 suggests that conceptualizing God is important to the ways individuals who hold this view find meaning in outdoor settings.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
47	Encountering God.	1.885	10

The ranking of statement 48 suggests sentiment toward religion among those who hold this view, but it does not appear to be strongly emphasized demonstrated by its position on the factor array.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
48	Encountering my religious beliefs.	0.341	7

Rather, the overall ranking of the statements (see Figure 4) shows higher levels of agreement with statements that connote connectedness to nature, spirituality, and God.

That is not to say that faith does not play a major role in the attitudes of those who helped to define this perspective. Male-10 (see Table 3) who was a high and pure loader who helped shape the *Spiritual* view explained his thoughts on ranking statement 47 (Encountering God):

I don't think that this is a very clarifying answer. How do you experience God?

Personally, it is rejuvenation and deepening of my faith. Maybe the business of

the city has made me grow distant [to] have a more worldly view, but nature, to me shows the awesome creation we were given to enjoy.

His sentiment toward faith and his feelings toward the whole of creation provide additional insight into the emphasis of universality within this viewpoint.

Feelings toward nature-sensory engagement and the particulars of places encountered are important to those who subscribe to the *Spiritual* view as noted by the ranking of statement 20 and statement 23.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
20	Practicing activities that allow me to see the sights, hear the sounds, experience the smells, and touch my surroundings.	1.008	9
23	Feeling attached to the particularities of a place.	0.138	7

Yet, the ranking of these statements suggests this engagement supports more universal and spiritual meaning shown by the higher ranking of statements 46 (spirituality), 47 (God) and 24 (Feeling attached to the whole earth).

These outdoor recreation professionals do not necessarily seek to be with others in places of personal significance as suggested by the rankings of distinguishing statements 33 and 34.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
33	Experiencing relationships I have with other people I interact with in a place.	-0.283	6
34	Experiencing new people.	-1.623	1

Instead, the high ranking of distinguishing statement 30 suggests that people with this view seek solitude in their surroundings of choice.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
30	Experiencing solitude.	1.008	9

Statements 33, 34, and 30 demonstrate the emphasis of the solitary experience within this viewpoint. The benefits associated with the experience of spiritual solitude within this view are illuminated through the ranking of statement 4.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
4	Feeling psychologically rejuvenated.	0.951	8

The ranking of this statement suggests those with this view become spiritually and psychologically in tune through time alone in places of personal significance.

Additionally, those who subscribe to the *Spiritual* view seek introspection as suggested by the high ranking of statement 6:

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
6	Feeling introspective.	1.264	9

The ranking of this statement on the most-like side of the array shows the need of those with this viewpoint for contemplation in outdoor places. This notion of contemplative and spiritual attunement does not appear to be related to having in-depth knowledge about personal or natural history or the rituals that are connected to a setting as suggested by the ranking of statements 9, 10, and distinguishing statement 42.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
9	Knowing my history past experiences with a place.	-0.269	6
10	Knowing the history of a place.	-0.352	5
42	Being a part of rituals and celebrations of a place.	-0.452	5

Rather, these people feel connected to a setting through aligning personal beliefs with conceptualizations of the spirit of the setting as suggested by statement 45.

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
45	Encountering the personality and/or spirit of a place.	1.303	9

The ranking of this statement suggests that those who hold the *Spiritual* view acknowledge the possibility of a place having a spirit apart from human influence or beliefs.

In summary, people with this view feel spiritually anchored to outdoor places of personal significance. These outdoor recreation professionals find place meaning through encountering spiritual attachment to nature and God. Religion does not appear to be of great importance in defining place meanings for those who subscribe to this perspective. Greater emphasis is on feeling connected to natural environments through one's spirituality and through feelings of universal oneness within a setting. Those who subscribe to this viewpoint experience spiritual rejuvenation and refinement through solitary person to place interaction.

Interpretation of Demographic Information

Research question two: Do the data reveal patterns related to demographic characteristics?

Attitudes toward place meanings were not shaped by demographic characteristics within this sample of outdoor recreation professionals. However, the particular characteristics of each participant for each factor are useful in understanding each of the people who helped to define each of the views explicated in this study. Yet, demographic

characteristics were not interpreted as conclusive in offering insight into the views of these participants toward place meanings.

This study offers a snapshot into a variety of individual contexts within the outdoor recreation profession. The people who participated in this study provided a range of experiences and responsibilities from apprentice-type positions to experts who have helped to define the field of outdoor recreation. The seven resource managers represent the dominant professional area in this sample while environmental educators are in the minority. Management was the dominant work function while programming was the minority (see Table 6).

<u>Demographic characteristics by factor</u>						
<u>sort #/ gender/ethnicity</u>	<u>age range</u>	<u>yrs exp.</u>	<u>professional area</u>	<u>professional function</u>	<u># of children</u>	<u>loading score</u>
<i>Relational</i>						
5-female-C	31-40	11	outdoor education	coordination	0	0.7466
8-male-C	51-60	35	outdoor education	education	2	0.5758
24-male-A	18-30	5	environmental education	management	0	0.4574
30-male-C	51-60	43	other	education	2	0.4114
<i>Natural</i>						
28-male-C	41-50	25	resource management	management	0	0.7709
12-male-C	41-50	26	resource management	facilitation	3	0.7067
3-female-C	18-30	7	youth development	programming	0	0.6988
18-female-C	31-40	18	resource management	management	2	0.6208
17-male-C	51-60	33	other	other	9	0.6135
14-female	51-60	17	outdoor education	interpretation	2	0.6123
1-female-C	41-50	32	youth development	management	0	0.5897
19-male-C	31-40	5	resource management	management	2	0.5383
26-male-NA	18-30	2	adventure education	leadership	0	0.5052
<i>Spiritual</i>						
20-male-NA	51-60	9	other	education	1	0.7125
10-male-C	18-30	4	outdoor education	education	0	0.7036
11-male-NA	18-30	5	outdoor leadership	programming	1	0.6583
29-male-C	18-30	10	resource management	management	0	0.6033
13-female-C	41-50	7	environmental education	interpretation	1	0.5421
7-male-C	18-30	10	adventure education	leadership	0	0.5315
4-male-C	51-60	12	outdoor leadership	management	5	0.4819
*NA=Native American		*A=Asian		*C=Caucasian		

One potential pattern may exist in that two out of the three participants who loaded highest on the *Spiritual* view are Native Americans. However, one other Native American participant helped to define the *Natural* viewpoint and another participant who was Native American did not significantly load on any of the factors. Yet, the highest and purest loader on the *Spiritual* view did explicitly make reference to his Native American heritage in the meaning he attaches to an outdoor place of personal significance. This possible pattern warrants further exploration in future research.

This sample does not cover all of the possibilities of people represented within the profession. However, it does provide a sample of people with rich and variable life experiences who work or worked in different parts of the outdoor recreation profession. It is noteworthy that it appears a greater diversity of people contributed to greater diversity in perceptions among outdoor professionals in comparison to a prior study on place meanings (see Hutson & Montgomery, 2006).

Summary

This chapter focused on the interpretation of three factors using Q methodology as a research strategy to answer two research questions. Research question one asked: What are the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments? The three factors that emerged through factor analysis were named: 1) *Relational*, 2) *Natural*, and 3) *Spiritual*.

These three factors represent groupings of viewpoints generated from a diverse group of outdoor recreation professionals. Four people helped to define the *Relational* view, which emerged from meanings that are attached to relationships with people and environments that hold special significance. Nine people helped to define the *Natural*

view, which emerged from meanings that are attached to direct sensory interaction with the particularities of settings that promote an experience of solitude. Seven people helped to define the *Spiritual* view, which emerged from meanings that are attached to realizing spirituality within the natural world.

The second research question presented in this study was: Do the data reveal patterns related to demographic characteristics? Demographic information was found to be inconclusive in the different perceptions of place meanings that emerged in this study. Demographic information has been included to provide additional understanding of the characteristics of the outdoor recreation professionals who participated in the study and who helped to define each of the three views toward place meanings. The only exception was that two out of the three participants who loaded highest on the *Spiritual* view are Native Americans. This potential pattern warrants further exploration in future research. Additionally, it appears that the greater differences between people who participated in this study contributed to wider variety of views as compared to a previous study utilizing the same research strategy and similar conceptual framework (see Hutson & Montgomery, 2006).

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

The focus of this study was on the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments. This chapter summarizes the study and elaborates on implications for theory and practice and makes suggestions for future research.

Summary of the Study

This study involved participants (N=30) rank ordering 48 statements, which reflected place meanings found in the out-of-doors extracted from place-based literature using Low and Altman's (1992) description of place attachment as a theoretical framework. Instruments used in the study included the Q-sort and demographic information. Data from the Q-sorts were entered into PQmethod 2.11 software and statistical treatment elicited three interrelated groupings of statements, reflecting different factors or views within the sample. Through analysis of distinguishing statements, theoretical factors arrays, and responses to open-ended questions on the demographics questionnaire, the views were indicated as 1) *Relational*, 2) *Natural*, and 3) *Spiritual*. These unique perspectives operate as shared attitudes toward the ways a group of outdoor recreation professionals finds meaning in outdoor settings.

Discussion of Findings

The first research question for this study asked, “What are the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments?” The sample of outdoor recreation professionals who participated in the study explicated three different ways of finding meaning in outdoor places and were named; 1) *Relational*, 2) *Natural*, and 3) *Spiritual*.

Those who subscribe to the *Relational* view find meaning in outdoor places through nurturing relationships with people and environments that hold special significance. Rituals of participation deepen these ties. These people like to feel close to people and settings. They want their personal history to connect to the history of a place. Group engagement is important to people who hold this viewpoint. The place meanings that define this view emerge through a ritual of relationships that unfold over time.

Those who subscribe to the *Natural* view find meaning in outdoor places through direct sensory interaction with environs that promote an experience of solitude. These people value an emotional attachment to nature through coming into close and intimate contact with the distinct and unique characteristics of natural settings. Through being alone in places of personal significance, those who align with this view seem to find oneness and personal connectivity with the personality of a setting.

Those who subscribe to the *Spiritual* view find meaning in outdoor places through conceptualizing their spiritual beliefs within the natural world. These people encounter attachment to nature and God in the out-of-doors. Religion is not a defining characteristic for these people, yet may add depth to the spiritual place meanings encountered. The experience of solitude elicits spiritual meaning for these outdoor recreation professionals.

Connectedness to natural environments through one's spirituality and feelings of universal oneness permeate the meanings that these people attach to natural settings.

Conclusions

The findings from this study show that there are three views of place meanings within a group of outdoor recreation professionals. Each one of the views explicated in this work has distinct characteristics that make it unique in comparison to the others. Regarding place attachment, Low and Altman (1992) suggest "the interweaving of self, group, and cultural identities yields a complex set of processes..." (p. 11). The relevance of place meanings as complex and multidimensional constructs dependent on people and context is clearly supported by the findings in this work.

Additionally, the results of this study show that attachment to nature plays a prominent role in the meanings this group of outdoor recreation professionals attaches to places in the out-of-doors. The affective domain of psychological place attachment (Low & Altman, 1992) to nature was a defining phenomenon within each perspective. Attachment to nature was conceptualized in different ways for this sample, yet was highly ranked in all three views. Those who subscribe to the *Relational* view emphasize attachment to nature as a result of embedded relational place memories. Those who subscribe to the *Natural* view emphasize attachment to nature through feeling close to the particularities of places encountered. Those who subscribe to the *Spiritual* view emphasize attachment to nature through finding their spirituality in particular outdoor places.

Furthermore, this research shows that there are tangible and intangible phenomena that are defining characteristics within views toward outdoor place meanings.

The *Relational* and *Natural* views stress tangible place meanings such as the relationships and practices that bring one closer to places in natural settings. The *Spiritual* view emphasizes intangible phenomena such as feelings of oneness and encountering the spirit in outdoor settings. That is not to say that the three views are dominated by only the tangible or intangible meanings that help to define them, but they are recognizable as distinctions within each view. This study demonstrates that tangible and intangible meanings played important roles in defining the sentiments this group of professionals has toward settings in the out-of-doors. These findings are generally consistent with research conducted on tangible and intangible environmental values attached to special and protected environments (Putney & Harmon, 2003).

However, these findings deviate slightly from Putney and Harmon's assertions toward environmental values in the arrangements of tangible and intangible meanings that are presented in this work. Putney and Harmon suggest that the experience of the intangible and more specifically, the experience of 'oneness' are necessary precursors for one's sentiment toward a particular environment to be transformed into actions of care and deeply felt meaning. The *Spiritual* view in this work certainly aligns with feelings of oneness in the out-of-doors; however, this construct was not a defining characteristic in the *Natural* or *Relational* viewpoints. Therefore, this study demonstrates the characteristics of tangible and intangible phenomena within place meanings, but shows how intangible phenomena, such as oneness, can operate in one view and not in others for a group of people who all described deeply felt place meanings.

Finally, another conclusion relates to the methodology of the study. The design of this study showed how expansion of those who sorted (the P-set) and the range of

statements to sort (the Q-set) illuminated a greater diversity of perspectives by revealing a third view in comparison to a prior Q study (see Hutson & Montgomery, 2006). In Hutson and Montgomery's work two similar views to those in this study emerged. The participants for the first study were 20 outdoor leaders with a specific condition of instruction for attitudes of connectedness to places in outdoor settings. The participants were associated with a land-grant university in the United States; whereas, in this study participants were chosen from the broader outdoor recreation profession from a variety of agencies and organizations in the Midwestern United States. The statements used for the Hutson and Montgomery study were extracted from broad themes in literature related to person-place connectedness (see McAvoy, McDonald, & Carlson, 2003, Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999, Wilson, 2005). Results were described as a highly related two factor solution, one of Nature-emotion and one of Deep-spirit (Hutson & Montgomery). By adding diversity to the participants and expanding the statements to include Low and Altman's (1992) theoretical framework, a third view of connectedness related to the people involved emerged. However, subtle variations exist between these perspectives.

The spiritually oriented perspective in Hutson and Montgomery's work showed a need for experiencing places with others. In this study, those who defined the *Spiritual* view show the experience of solitude as playing a larger role. Further, those who subscribed to the nature oriented view in the prior study place greater emphasis on the cognitive elements associated with specific knowledge attached to a setting. The *Natural* view in this work showed similar bias toward experiencing and coming into close contact with the particularities of settings, but not necessarily with knowing the names, processes, and histories of those features. Therefore, this study shows that variations exist

within similar place meaning views. Additionally, this study shows that it is possible to delineate variations in spiritual and natural outdoor place meanings.

Implications for Theory

The theoretical framework that informed this study was Low and Altman's (1992) description of place attachment through elements of affect, cognition, and practice. Further, these elements extend to include places of varying scale, specificity and tangibility; places that encompass different social actors and their relationships; and varying temporal elements (Low & Altman). This model suggests that place attachment is a dynamic and multidimensional construct. Each of the three views revealed in this study will be explicated through this theoretical lens and situated in relevant literature. Arrangements of affective, cognitive, and practice elements are presented as they relate to each of the viewpoints.

Relational

Humanist geographer, Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), suggests emotions are connectors of all human experiences. Those who subscribed to the *Relational* view value meanings in outdoor places in the context of the emotions they attach to social relations. This sentiment is echoed in the words of Jackson (1980):

A landscape should establish bonds between people, the bond of language, of manners of the same kind of work and leisure, and above all a landscape should contain the kind of spatial organization which fosters such experiences and relationships; spaces for coming together, to celebrate, spaces for solitude, spaces that never change and are always as memory depicted them. These are some of

the characteristics that give landscape its uniqueness, that give it style. These are what make us recall it with emotion (pp.16-17).

The characteristics of the *Relational* view within Low and Altman's (1992) theoretical framework suggest attachments to relationships are defining characteristics of place meanings. This conviction aligns with those who subscribe to the *Relational* view in the affective emphasis of their ritual of participation with both people and places.

Low and Altman (1992) stress places are given meaning through group, personal, and cultural engagement. The *Relational* view exudes this combination of elements in a variety of ways. Group engagement is important within this perspective through the meaning attached to mature relationships with people and places over time. Personal engagement emerges within this view in the need to return to settings to re-experience positive cognitions encountered. Finally, cultural engagement is reflected within this view through emphasis on ritual and the attachment of one's personal history to the history of the setting.

This desire to situate one's history within the history of an environment is consistent with Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff's (1983) stance that people construct their identities in settings through positive cognitions. However, this view is inconsistent with Proshansky et al's emphasis on learning about a setting to ultimately determine self identification with it. Alternatively, the *Relational* view appears more dependent on the quality of relationships (to both people and places) over time that determines the "cognitive connection between the self and the setting where components of the self are reflected in the setting" (Kyle, Mowan, & Tarrant, 2004, p. 451). That is not to say that

learning the details of an environment won't increase self identification, yet it does not determine place meanings for those who subscribe to this viewpoint.

The importance of place cognition within this perspective can be further connected to the work of Rowles (1980, 1983). This author suggests place identities are highest among those who have the most established history with a setting; typically older persons. The *Relational* view reflects this sensitivity toward maintaining and building a personal history with a setting through relations to it, others, and experiences that take place in particular environments. The ritual of place engagement forms the foundation for these histories to become richer over time from the *Relational* point of view.

The practice or behavioral component of Low and Altman's (1992) theoretical lens emerged within the *Relational* view through emphasis on actively and intentionally nurturing social relationships. Low and Altman (1992) suggest meanings connected to relationships extend to specific environments in which those relationships unfold. Thus the practice of maintaining relationships within a setting are thought to contribute to stronger place attachment (Mesch & Manor, 1998) as reflected in the *Relational* viewpoint.

Finally, characteristics of the *Relational* view are consistent with the connections in the literature between place, time, and memories. Proust's (1934) work emphasizes the importance of remembrance as defining ongoing affection to landscapes. From this perspective, "essential attachment is not to the landscape itself, but to its memories and to the relived experience" (Riley, 1992, p. 20). The 'relived' experience within the *Relational* view is demonstrated through emphasis on the ritual of place engagement.

Herein lays the possibility of emotional memories defining the efficacy of place meanings within the *Relational* view.

Natural

The findings in this study suggest the *Natural* view of place meanings is contingent on feelings of closeness to particularities of landscapes encountered. Riley (1992) suggests “to some, there is no surrogate for nature. Human well-being - physical, mental, emotional - is a function of contact with nature, the non-human world of plants and animals” (p. 25). Riley’s words resonate within the *Natural* viewpoint’s bias toward intimate contact with nature. Within Low and Altman’s (1992) framework, the *Natural* view emanates affective characteristics of place bonding with nature, cognitions of independence, confidence, comfort, and behaviors that bring those who hold this view close to the intricacies of environments encountered. Within this arrangement of meanings two themes central to the *Natural* view warrant further explanation: the experience of solitude and a ‘particular’ connectedness to nature.

Solitude and the solo experience have been written about extensively in outdoor-related literature (see Bobilya, McAvoy, & Kalisch, 2005; Bobilya, Kalisch, McAvoy, & Jacobs, 2005; Knapp & Smith, 2005; McIntosh, 1989). Theorists suggest that experiencing solitude in outdoor environments has multiple meanings. Research literature notes that solitude goes beyond being alone to include social experiences (Hammit, 1982) and freedom of choice (Altman, 1975). As demonstrated within the *Relational* view, the choice to engage in certain activities or to be or not be with others appears consistent with the makeup of the *Natural* perspective in its sensitivity toward choosing experiences that elicit closeness and intimacy in outdoor settings.

Another way to understand the characteristics of solitude within the *Natural* view is illuminated by the work of Hammit (1982). He suggests (in a wilderness setting) that solitude is a “form of privacy in a specific environmental setting where individuals experience an acceptable degree of control and choice over the type and amount of information they must process” (Hammit, 1982, p. 492). Within Low and Altman’s (1992) framework this sentiment is a cognitive occurrence coupled with emotional contentment that those who hold the *Natural* view intentionally seek out as a way to find meaning in surroundings of preference.

A particular connectedness to natural settings is another defining characteristic of the *Natural* view. A call for greater sentiment toward the particularities of places has been expressed in research on place meanings. Seamon (1979) conceptualized an ‘insiderness-outsiderness’ dynamic of experiencing places. He contends that as people become more knowledgeable, comfortable, and involved with the particulars of a setting, they move from an outside position to an inside perspective through becoming a part of the setting over time.

Moreover, Stewart (2004) suggests that “connecting with nature needs to be connecting with the specifics of a place, coming to terms with the issues that contribute to shaping life in a place” (p. 48). This sentiment is echoed by Relph (1976) who postulates that a person can only identify with a place by having a very detailed understanding of it. Further, Stewart reports that encouraging an understanding of the differences between places through understanding their individual complexities helps to communicate the multiple meanings of nature. This attitude toward particular ‘natures’ is underscored within the findings that illuminate *Natural* conceptualizations of place meanings.

Spiritual

Research literature describes a spiritual connection to outdoor places as deep and transcendent (see Fox, 1999; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992; Williams & Harvey, 2001). The findings in this study suggest those who subscribe to the *Spiritual* view seek to find oneness and spiritual beliefs in outdoor settings of preference. Within Low and Altman's (1992) framework the affective bonds illuminated within this view are infused with personal spiritual meaning consistent with findings from other research studies on human-environment spiritual relations.

Stringer and McAvoy (1992) indicate that wilderness environments and activities within those settings can elicit spiritual clarity for outdoor recreation participants. Specifically, they suggest spiritual experiences emerge through: 1) sharing personal beliefs with others; and 2) being in a wilderness environment. Additionally, Graber (1976) suggests wilderness settings bring forth a space for 'sacred power' that can be experienced by others. Further, Fredrickson and Anderson (1999) suggest wilderness settings put people in a state of mind that evoke spiritual contemplation. The *Spiritual* view supports these findings with its emphasis on encountering conceptualizations of the spirit through intentional awareness of the sublime brought to outdoor settings by those who hold this view. Moreover, the *Spiritual* perspective in comparison to Hutson and Montgomery's (2006) work adds an additional layer to place theory by accentuating two possibilities of spiritual viewpoints toward outdoor settings of personal significance. In other words, a spiritual connection to an outdoor setting can happen in multiple ways.

The *Spiritual* view further connects to the work of Rockefeller and Elder (1992) and Roberts (1996). These authors emphasize that outdoor experiences have the potential

for eliciting feelings of oneness and unity. Oneness was a prevailing theme within the *Spiritual* viewpoint, which supports the notion of an “expanded sense of identification with nature” (Roberts, p. 72). Interconnectivity among all things pervades the *Spiritual* view explicated in this study. From this perspective, particular conceptualizations of nature coalesce into oneness elaborated on by Roberts:

A tree is a tree, but it also is the “Axis” of the world; a mountain is a mountain, but it also is the Mountain at the center of all worlds; a ridge is only a ridge, but it also is a serpentine power of the Earth spirit made physical before us.....The landscape through which we make our pilgrimage and the spiritual reality it symbolizes are one and the same (p. 72).

The *Spiritual* view found in this study aligns with this approach to oneness and delineates the perceptions of a small group of outdoor recreation professionals toward the integration of spirituality and outdoor places.

Low and Altman’s (1992) framework helps to illuminate the spiritual depth of emotional attachment that can arise from experiences in particular settings as demonstrated within the *Spiritual* perspective. Cognitive and practice elements emerge within the *Spiritual* view in support of closeness to particular environments to gain felt spiritual understandings. This view demonstrates that for some people, landscapes represent much more than lifeless entities detached from the human experience. Rather, the *Spiritual* view reinforces prior research that suggests places can be infused with conceptualizations of the spirit that give the lived experience meaning and value.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments. Theoretical implications for the study of place meanings have been the main focus of this chapter. However, there are important implications for the outdoor recreation profession that should be considered as a result of these findings. Additionally, these implications may serve as a framework for future research involving place meanings and outdoor recreation.

The outdoor recreation profession encompasses a variety of organizational structures and functions that serve public and private sectors. Of all the recreational activities available to the general public, outdoor recreation puts people into direct contact with natural environments more so than any other recreational activity (Ewert, 1999). Therefore, it seems likely that many people come to an understanding of their own views, beliefs, and attitudes toward outdoor places through the practice of recreation (Hanna, 1995; Prudoe & Warder, 1981; Yoshino, 2005).

Outdoor recreation professionals are in a unique position to have a direct affect on these unfolding relationships and place meanings may be helpful to the profession by continuing to illuminate the characteristics of environmental values and beliefs (Williams & Stewart, 1998). Cole (n.d.) suggests that outdoor recreation professionals are often faced with making value-laden decisions on how things ‘should’ be as opposed to how things are regarding outdoor recreation and the use of outdoor recreation resources. Similarly, organizations tied to outdoor recreation commonly utilize value-based language to promote and communicate ethics as rules that are to be followed during outdoor recreational activities. Some of this language includes notions of ‘stewardship’,

‘environmental ethics’, ‘minimizing impacts’, as well as meanings associated with conservation and preservation philosophies related to outdoor resources.

The findings from this study may be able to offer further clarification of the meanings attached to these espoused values within the profession. As Aldo Leopold (1949) reminds us, ethics that are attached to lands mature intellectually as well as emotionally. In this light, it appears that environmental ethics and beliefs are not one thing and should not be treated as such. Rather, the results of this study indicate that perceptions of natural environments should be viewed as dynamic phenomena contingent on the meanings that are attached to them. The results of this work should be viewed as encouragement for those who define the outdoor recreation profession to continue exploring the multiple meanings that are attached to outdoor places both within and outside of the profession. Then, ideas like environmental ethics may begin to have a more particular context within the meanings they arise out of and become more potent within the minds of those people who spend time in the out-of-doors.

Similarly, if those within the outdoor recreation profession wish to utilize place meanings as part of educative processes, then they need to give credence to the multiple meanings a setting may have for those who experience it. Stewart (2004) echoes this assertion in promoting ‘outdoor educations’ alluding to the notion that just as there is not a single way to learn, there certainly is not a single way to experience the out-of-doors. Stewart goes on to suggest that outdoor educations should be based on one’s place responsiveness within particular contexts. The findings from this study support this notion and illuminate the nature of *Relational*, *Natural*, and *Spiritual* place meaning

responsiveness that may be helpful in outdoor recreation design, facilitation, and management.

Practical suggestions have been made to make outdoor experiences more place responsive through outdoor recreation. Some of these include promoting feelings of comfort and safety in the out-of-doors so participants don't become distracted from their surroundings. Additionally, outdoor recreation professionals who model place responsive behaviors demonstrate curiosity and wonder connected to a setting that others can emulate and consider. Further, facilitating and promoting activities such as drawing outdoor 'sound maps', journaling, place-based group discussions, solo experiences, and meditation in the out-of-doors may all increase one's understanding and sensitivity toward personal place meanings (MacLean, 2002). These are only some of the possibilities and further research needs to be conducted to make connections between these types of activities to the specific place meanings they may elicit.

Overall, place meanings should be more carefully considered from within the profession. Ultimately, suggestions for facilitating and managing outdoor recreation experiences and resources in a way that is sensitive to place meanings will all fall short if those within the profession are unaware of how those meanings operate within themselves. By continuing to turn inward, it seems that outdoor recreation professionals may find greater clarity in their work objectives by understanding the meanings they attach to places in the out-of-doors. If place perceptions and meanings are going to continue to be important to the outdoor recreation profession, further attention needs to be given to how and why they operate in ways that they do.

“The outstanding characteristic of perception is that it entails no consumption and no dilution of any resource.....To promote perception is the only truly creative part of recreational engineering” (Leopold, 1949, p. 265).

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings from this study give rise to other research questions with regard to place meanings in natural environments, outdoor recreation professionals, and the characteristics of person-place relationships. Recommendations include:

1. Replication of this study with an even greater diversity of outdoor recreation professionals to explore additional views of place meanings as well as those views that may be replicated.
2. Exploration of how outdoor recreation professionals with any of the three views or a combination of the three may attempt to foster environmental attitudes, beliefs, and ethics for others to determine if personal place meanings shape professional functions within outdoor recreation regarding environmental perceptions.
3. Examination of activities in the out-of-doors that may elicit place meanings for those who share the same or similar views to those in this study to help outdoor recreation professionals to understand the activities that promote place meanings for others.
4. Replication of this study with particular groups of outdoor recreation professionals who work for specific agencies and organizations to determine if views of place meanings elicited in this study or additional views dominate particular organizational structures.

5. Replication of this study with minority groups involved with outdoor recreation to determine place meaning views of underrepresented outdoor recreation resource user groups.
6. Replication of this study with local, state, and federal government leaders involved with managing outdoor recreation to gain insight into the place meaning views of professionals who directly affect outdoor recreation resource policy.

Concluding Comments

As demonstrated by the findings in this study, place meanings are not stable phenomena capable of perfect dissection and understanding. The results of this study and others indicate that they are dynamic, fluid, and forever changing. Even our conceptualizations of places that are apparently 'fixed' in our minds tend wear different shades of grey as our memories become layered and more refined. I think it's necessary for the outdoor recreation profession to take a closer look at the meanings people attach to natural places for a variety of reasons, but perhaps most importantly, I think professionals need to do so to stay closer to the many values and meanings that perhaps drew them to outdoor recreation to begin with.

Using this study as an example, it seems clear that place meanings hold importance for many within the outdoor recreation profession. In this study, groups who performed the Q sorting procedure were often interested to know how others in their group were sorting their statements, and in more than one instance, the procedure spurred meaningful and insightful conversation among co-workers. It's noteworthy that many of older and more experienced professionals who took part in this study reported that they

had never thought about these meanings with this amount of detail, and for the most part the sorting process was described as enjoyable and for some even therapeutic.

One woman in particular became so excited that she photographed her Q sort array with the arranged statements to keep for her own personal records. The image of this woman smiling at the point of view she constructed certainly remains etched in my own mind. It was an almost spring day when she performed the sorting procedure at a nature center where she works. The grass was slowly turning greener and flowers were beginning to bloom. I know the woman had worked in this environment for many years and I can't stop smiling to myself when I think about how her life and identity must have been shaped by the changing seasons within this setting so many times before.

She grinned as she took one last look at her statements and she asked me if I wouldn't mind waiting for a moment. She left the room and when she returned, she was animated and holding a small framed collage of photographs. Each photograph held different significance for her, one the people, one the place; but primarily she told me the photographs represented experiences she associated with solitude. The sorting procedure apparently helped her to make greater sense of the meanings she attached to the photos. While the meanings of the images she shared certainly seemed important, it occurred to me that her passion for and excitement about those meanings were just as significant if not more so.

My final recommendation is to reiterate the importance for outdoor recreation professionals to take more time to recognize and nurture the existence of their own place meanings and to hopefully be as excited about them as this participant was. Although place meanings seem important to those who work in and for the out-of-doors, they are

difficult to articulate. I think outdoor recreation professionals need to be more explicit and find comfort in engaging in ongoing discussions about place meaning views, biases, sensitivities, and beliefs that exist within themselves and within the profession. If they can have a better understanding of their own values and meanings toward particular outdoor settings, then they may gain greater clarity into wider contemporary and historical views that impact our physical and perceptual outdoor landscapes. It is my hope that greater attention to and utilization of past and present place meanings will build bridges across understandings of our connection to the world of nature.

POSTSCRIPT

“Most recent works on environment and society tend to stress the dark side of things: pollution, exploitation, greed, and the like. By contrast, the outlook presented here is predominantly sunny. Yet an undertone of unease threads the book, if only because every road followed implies other roads not taken, every new stage of creation implies a prior stage of destruction, and every new perception dims, if it does not wipe out altogether, the old, which has its own - perhaps irreplaceable value” (Tuan, 1993, p. 2).

“Many people feel that although beauty does matter, it is an “extra”, something we like to have in our surroundings when more basic needs are met. Yet the pervasive role of the aesthetic is suggested by its root meaning of “feeling” – not just any kind of feeling, but “shaped” feeling and sensitive perception. And it is suggested even more by its opposite, anesthetic, “lack of feeling” – the condition of living death. The more attuned we are to the beauties of the world, the more we come to life and take joy in it” (Tuan, 1993, p. 1).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Thursday, March 08, 2007
IRB Application No ED0717
Proposal Title: Perceptions of Outdoor Recreation Professionals Toward Place Meaning in Natural Environments: A Q-Method Inquiry

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): **Approved** Protocol Expires: **3/7/2008**

Principal Investigator(s)

Garrett Hutson 1115 1/2 S. Lewis Stillwater, OK 74074	Lowell Caneday 184 Colvin Center Stillwater, OK 74075
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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

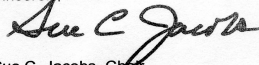
The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Appendix B

Letter to Participants

Hello,

My name is Garrett Hutson and I'm a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University. You are being invited to participate in a study I'm conducting for my dissertation research. The study is about the ways outdoor recreation professionals find meaning in places in the out-of-doors. The study consists of sorting statements. The procedure will last 30-45 minutes. The findings from this study will be used professionally and may be published in scholarly journal. Confidentiality will be protected by not requiring names in the study. Please take some time to look over the consent form. If you have any questions, please contact the researcher. If you decide to participate, please sign the consent form and return to the researcher. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Garrett Hutson
Doctoral Student
Oklahoma State University
1115 ½ S. Lewis
Stillwater, OK 74074
636-575-7194
garrett.hutson@okstate.ed

Appendix C

Consent Form

Title: Perceptions of Outdoor Recreation Professionals Toward Place Meaning

Principal Investigator: Garrett Hutson, Graduate Student, Oklahoma State University

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meaning.

Procedures: Data collection will consist of subjects sorting statements, which describe how people attach meaning to a place in the out-of-doors, and will last between 30 and 45 minutes. Subjects will be asked to fill out a demographics questionnaire and will be asked if they are willing to volunteer to be contacted by phone for a follow-up interview. For this procedure, subjects who wish to participate will be asked for a first name or a code name they can remember and a phone number. Phone interviews will be scheduled at the convenience of subjects. This procedure will consist of a personal tape recorded interview by phone and will last between 30 and 45 minutes. Subjects will be asked about the sorting procedure and their perceptions toward place meanings.

Risks/Discomforts: There are no known risks associated with this project, which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: It is hoped that this research study will illuminate individual and collective perceptions of place meaning to benefit the outdoor recreation profession.

Confidentiality: Data recorded from this research will be used for the purposes of a doctoral dissertation and may be published in a scholarly journal. Anonymity will be retained with regard to the participants' identities by not requiring names in the study. The Oklahoma State University (OSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) has the authority to inspect consent records and data files. Consent forms will be stored separately from the data. Data will be stored in a secure location by the researcher. The researcher is the only person who will have access to the data. Data will be destroyed no later than February 2008.

Voluntary: Your participation in this research project is voluntary. You may withdraw from the research project at any time.

Contacts: If you wish to contact anyone about this research study after it is finished, please contact the principal investigator or the dissertation adviser.

Principal investigator: Garrett Hutson, Graduate Student, 117 Colvin Recreation Center, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, 636-575-7194, garrett.hutson@okstate.edu

Dissertation adviser: Dr. Lowell Caneday, 184 Colvin Center, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-5503, lowell.caneday@okstate.edu.

For information on subjects' rights, contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078-1038, 405-744-1676.

If you have read and fully understand this document and you have been given the chance to ask any questions, please sign below. A copy of this form will be provided for you.

Print name of the subject: _____ date

Signature of the subject: _____ date

Signature of person obtaining consent: _____ date

Appendix D

Concourse Sample With Category Labels

Affect

1. Feeling positive memories come forth.
2. Feeling my needs are satiated.
3. Feeling confident, comfortable, and safe.
4. Feeling psychologically rejuvenated.
5. Feeling like I can escape from other responsibilities.
6. Feeling introspective.
7. Feeling independent.

Cognition

8. Knowing how my identity is attached to a place.
9. Knowing my history/past experiences with a place.
10. Knowing the history of a place.
11. Knowing how to teach and lead others in a place.
12. Knowing the symbols that are assigned to a place by other people/cultures.
13. Knowing the names of flora, fauna, and landscape features.
14. Knowing my sense of self is connected to a place.

Practice

15. Practicing activities that involve risk.
16. Practicing activities that result in positive outcomes for myself and/or others.
17. Practicing activities that make me feel physically rested.
18. Practicing activities that make me feel physically exhausted.
19. Practicing activities that allow me to test my endurance.
20. Practicing activities that allow me to see the sights, hear the sounds, experience the smells, and touch my surroundings.
21. Practicing activities that allow for creative expression.

Scale

22. Feeling attached to a place that I have never been.
23. Feeling attached to the particularities of wildlife, plants, and/or the landscape.
24. Feeling attached to the whole earth.
25. Feeling attached to a body of water.
26. Feeling attached to the land.
27. Feeling attached to the open space or air.
28. Feeling attached to nature.

Different Social Actors/Relationships

29. Experiencing a place collectively.
30. Experiencing solitude.
31. Experiencing culturally based meaning.

32. Experiencing memories of someone significant.
33. Experiencing relationships I have with other people I interact with in a place.
34. Experiencing new people.
35. Experiencing time with my family.

Temporal

36. Experiencing intensity.
37. Being in a place for a long amount of time.
38. Being in a place that feels familiar when I return to it.
39. Being in a place I have history with.
40. Being in a place that has significant cultural and natural history.
41. Being a witness to changes in a place.
42. Being a part of rituals and celebrations of a place.

Transpersonal

43. Encountering negative memories I associate with a place.
44. Encountering oneness in a place.
45. Encountering the personality and/or spirit of a place.
46. Encountering my spirituality.
47. Encountering God.
48. Encountering my religious beliefs.

Appendix E

Researcher's Script

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Please make sure you have the materials in front of you. You should have a Form Board and an envelope containing 48 cards, each with a statement printed on it describing ways of finding meaning in an outdoor place. You will need a pencil later. Take a moment to think about a place or places in the out-of-doors that are personally meaningful to you.

Step 1: Please read through the statements and sort them into three (3) piles according to the question:

“How do you find meaning in a place in the out-of-doors?”

The pile on your right are those statements that are **most like** what you think about the question and the pile on your left are those statements that are **most unlike** what you think about the question. Put any cards that you don't have strong feelings about in a middle pile.

Step 2: Now that you have three piles of cards, start with the pile to your right, the “most like” pile, and select the two (2) cards from this pile that are **most like** your response to the question and place them in the two (2) spaces at the far right of the Form Board in front of you in column 11. The order of the cards within the column-that is, the vertical positioning of the cards-does not matter.

Step 3: Next, from the pile to your left, the “most unlike” pile, select the two (2) cards that are **most unlike** your response to the question and place them in the two (2) spaces at the far left of the Form Board in front of you in column 1.

Step 4: Now, go back to the “most like” pile on your right and select the (3) cards from those remaining that are in your **most like** pile place them into the three (3) open spaces in column 10.

Step 5: Next, return to the “most unlike” pile on your left and select the three (3) cards from those remaining in your **most unlike** pile and place them into the three (3) open spaces in column 2.

Step 6: Working back and forth, continue placing cards onto the Form Board until all of the cards have been placed into all of the spaces.

Step 7: Once you have placed all the cards on the Form Board, feel free to rearrange the cards until the arrangement best represents your opinions. Then, leave the cards as they are situated on the Form Board.

Finally, please fill in the demographic survey provided and add any comments that might help us understand your ideas about place meaning. Thank you!

Appendix F

Report Form

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

Most unlike

Most like

Appendix G

Demographics Questionnaire

Please complete the following items

1. What is your age? Please check one:

_____ 18-30

_____ 31-40

_____ 41-50

_____ 51-60

_____ 61-70

_____ 71-80

2. What is your gender? Please check one: ___ Female ___ Male

3. Please check the item that best describes your ethnicity:

_____ African American

_____ Asian

_____ Caucasian

_____ Hispanic/Latino(a)

_____ Native American

_____ Other

4. How many years have you worked as an outdoor recreation professional? Please write the number of years in the space provided: _____

5. What are the ages of your children? Please place the number of children in each age range on the line next to that range.

_____ no children

_____ under 5

_____ 6-11

_____ 12-17

_____ 18+

6. What are the ages of your grandchildren? Please place the number of grandchildren in each age range on the line next to that range.

_____ no grandchildren

_____ under 5

_____ 6-11

_____ 12-17

_____ 18+

7. Are you or have you been employed by one of the following? Please check all that apply.

_____ summer camps

_____ local outdoor recreation agencies

_____ state outdoor recreation agencies

_____ federal outdoor recreation agencies

_____ commercial outdoor recreation agencies

_____ non-profit agencies

_____ other (please write in response)

8. What part of the outdoor recreation profession are you **most** experienced in? Please check 1 most appropriate response:

_____ outdoor leadership

_____ outdoor recreation resource management

_____ youth development

_____ outdoor education

_____ adventure education

_____ environmental education

_____ therapeutic recreation

_____ other (please write in response)

9. What best describes or described your function in your professional position within outdoor recreation? Please check 1 most appropriate response:

_____ management/administration

_____ programming

_____ education

_____ leadership

- _____ interpretation
- _____ facilitation
- _____ risk management
- _____ coordination
- _____ other (please write in response)

10. What specific place or places came to mind as you sorted the statements? Please write your answer in the space provided. Feel free to write on an additional piece of paper if you run out of room.

11. What else would you like to tell me about your opinions toward the ways you find meaning in outdoor places that might give me insight into the responses that you provided today? Please write your answer in the space provided. Feel free to write on an additional piece of paper if you run out of room.

Some participants may be asked to be contacted for a follow-up interview to discuss the responses to their Q-Sort. This procedure will consist of a personal tape recorded interview by phone and will last between 30 and 45 minutes. You will be asked about the sorting procedure and your perceptions toward place meanings. If you are interested in taking part in a voluntary follow-up phone interview please provide a first name or code name you will remember and a phone number where you may be reached in the space provided. If you are not interested, please leave the spaces blank.

First Name or Code Name

Phone Number

Appendix H

Phone Interview Researcher's Script

Hello,

My name is Garrett Hutson and I'm a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University. Thank you for agreeing to participate in a study I'm conducting for my dissertation research. You indicated on the demographics questionnaire that it would be okay for me to contact you for a follow-up interview.

Protocol

1. Do I have your permission to audio-record this phone call?
2. What was the sorting experience like for you?
3. I have some initial impressions about the way you sorted the statements; do you have a few minutes to tell me more about your perceptions toward place meaning?
4. For example, I noticed one statement is in (X) position on the report form. Why did you place that statement where you did?

Appendix I

Normalized Factor Scores for Factor 1: *Relational*

No.	Statement	Z- scores	Array pos.
35	Experiencing time with my family.	2.026	11
1	Feeling positive memories come forth.	1.821	11
39	Being in a place I have history with.	1.283	10
45	Encountering the personality and/or spirit of a place.	1.197	10
42	Being part of rituals and celebrations of a place.	1.147	10
32	Experiencing memories of someone significant.	1.057	9
14	Knowing my sense of self is connected to a place.	1.015	9
28	Feeling attached to nature.	0.928	9
4	Feeling psychologically rejuvenated.	0.852	9
46	Encountering my spirituality.	0.825	8
27	Feeling attached to the open space or air.	0.815	8
33	Experiencing relationships I have with other people I interact with in a place.	0.779	8
10	Knowing the history of a place	0.619	8
5	Feeling like I can escape from other responsibilities.	0.557	8
40	Being in a place that has significant cultural and natural history.	0.501	7
9	Knowing my history/past experiences with a place.	0.472	7
38	Being in a place that feels familiar when I return to it.	0.464	7
25	Feeling attached to a body of water.	0.454	7
21	Practicing activities that allow for creative expression.	0.389	7
23	Feeling attached to the particularities of wildlife, plants, and/or the landscape.	0.366	7
26	Feeling attached to the land.	0.339	6
47	Encountering God.	0.237	6
6	Feeling introspective.	0.219	6
16	Practicing activities that result in positive outcomes for myself and/or others.	0.131	6
3	Feeling confident, comfortable, and safe.	0.081	6
8	Knowing how my identity is attached to a place.	0.045	6
44	Encountering oneness in a place.	0.005	6
31	Experiencing culturally based meaning.	-0.011	6
13	Knowing the names of flora, fauna, and landscape features.	-0.264	5
24	Feeling attached to the whole earth.	-0.269	5
12	Knowing the symbols that are assigned to a place by other people/cultures.	-0.300	5
11	Knowing how to teach and lead others in a place	-0.325	5

No.	Statement	Z-scores	Array pos.
20	Practicing activities that allow me to see the sights, hear the sounds, experience the smells, and touch my surroundings.	-0.325	5
34	Experiencing new people.	-0.472	5
48	Encountering my religious beliefs.	-0.545	4
17	Practicing activities that make me feel physically rested.	-0.590	4
30	Experiencing solitude.	-0.596	4
7	Feeling independent.	-0.596	4
41	Being a witness to changes in a place.	-0.639	4
29	Experiencing a place collectively.	-0.648	3
37	Being in a place for a long amount of time.	-0.809	3
22	Feeling attached to a place I have never been.	-0.831	3
36	Experiencing intensity.	-1.200	3
15	Practicing activities that involve risk.	-1.477	2
2	Feeling my needs are satiated.	-1.591	2
43	Encountering negative memories I associate with a place.	-2.191	2
18	Practicing activities that make me feel physically exhausted.	-2.410	1
19	Practicing activities that test my endurance.	-2.535	1

Appendix J

Normalized Factor Scores for Factor 2: *Natural*

No.	Statement	Z-scores	Array pos.
20	Practicing activities that allow me to see the sights, hear the sounds, experience the smells and touch my surroundings.	2.134	11
30	Experiencing solitude.	2.101	11
28	Feeling attached to nature.	1.691	10
4	Feeling psychologically rejuvenated.	1.464	10
7	Feeling independent.	1.344	10
26	Feeling attached to the land.	1.318	9
23	Feeling attached to the particularities of the wildlife, plants and/or the landscape.	1.089	9
5	Feeling like I can escape from other responsibilities.	1.062	9
3	Feeling confident, comfortable, and safe.	0.954	9
1	Feeling positive memories come forth.	0.852	8
44	Encountering oneness in a place.	0.794	8
27	Feeling attached to open space or air.	0.685	8
6	Feeling introspective.	0.562	8
45	Encountering the personality and/or spirit of a place.	0.546	8
33	Experiencing relationships I have with other people I interact with in a place.	0.443	7
38	Being in a place that feels familiar when I return to it.	0.417	7
16	Practicing activities that result in positive outcomes for myself and/or others.	0.361	7
14	Knowing my sense of self is connected to a place.	0.358	7
22	Feeling attached to a place that I have never been.	0.323	7
2	Feeling my needs are satiated.	0.248	7
11	Knowing how to teach lead others in a place.	0.156	6
25	Feeling attached to a body of water.	0.121	6
13	Knowing the names of flora, fauna, and landscape features.	0.103	6
32	Experiencing memories of someone significant.	0.086	6
39	Being in a place I have history with.	-0.093	6
24	Feeling attached to the whole earth.	-0.162	6
9	Knowing my history/past experiences with a place.	-0.170	6
21	Practicing activities that allow for creative expression.	-0.216	6
17	Practicing activities that make me feel physically rested.	-0.223	5

No.	Statement	Z-scores	Array pos.
37	Being in a place for a long amount of time.	-0.272	5
35	Experiencing time with my family.	-0.282	5
8	Knowing how my identity is attached to a place.	-0.330	5
46	Encountering my spirituality.	-0.429	5
34	Experiencing new people.	-0.438	5
36	Experiencing intensity.	-0.537	4
29	Experiencing a place collectively.	-0.627	4
10	Knowing the history of a place.	-0.698	4
40	Being in a place that has significant cultural and natural history.	-0.935	4
41	Being a witness to changes in a place.	-1.083	4
19	Practicing activities that allow me to test my endurance.	-1.104	3
15	Practicing activities that involve risk.	-1.181	3
42	Being a part of rituals and celebrations of a place.	-1.255	3
12	Knowing the symbols that arte assigned to a place by other peoples/cultures.	-1.277	3
31	Experiencing culturally based meaning.	-1.279	2
18	Practicing activities that make me feel physically exhausted.	-1.395	2
47	Encountering God.	-1.452	2
48	Encountering my religious beliefs	-1.494	1
43	Encountering negative memories I associate with a place.	-2.282	1

Appendix K

Normalized Factor Scores for Factor 3: *Spiritual*

No.	Statement	Z- scores	Array pos.
46	Encountering my spirituality.	2.067	11
28	Feeling attached to nature.	1.999	11
47	Encountering God	1.885	10
44	Encountering oneness in a place.	1.433	10
26	Feeling attached to the land.	1.385	10
45	Encountering the personality and/or spirit of a place.	1.303	9
6	Feeling introspective.	1.264	9
24	Feeling attached to the whole earth.	1.150	9
20	Practicing activities that allow me to see the sights, hear the sounds, experience the smells, and touch my surroundings.	1.008	9
4	Feeling psychologically rejuvenated.	0.951	8
30	Experiencing solitude.	0.947	8
14	Knowing my sense of self is connected to a place.	0.803	8
11	Knowing how to teach and lead others in a place.	0.714	8
27	Feeling attached to the open space or air.	0.614	8
36	Experiencing intensity.	0.503	7
16	Practicing activities that result in positive outcomes for myself and/or others.	0.394	7
48	Encountering my religious beliefs.	0.341	7
23	Feeling attached to the particularities of wildlife, plants, and/or the landscape.	0.138	7
3	Feeling confident, comfortable, and safe.	0.083	7
19	Practicing activities that allow me to test my endurance	0.075	7
39	Being in a place I have history with.	0.016	6
29	Experiencing a place collectively.	-0.045	6
8	Knowing how my identity is attached to a place.	-0.087	6
31	Experiencing culturally based meaning.	-0.121	6
21	Practicing activities that allow for creative expression.	-0.219	6
9	Knowing my history/past experiences with a place.	-0.269	6
1	Feeling positive memories come forth.	-0.277	6
33	Experiencing relationships I have with other people I interact with in a place.	-0.283	6
38	Being in a place that feels familiar when I return to it.	-0.334	5
10	Knowing the history of a place.	-0.352	5
41	Being a witness to changes in a place.	-0.353	5
2	Feeling my needs are satiated.	-0.434	5

No.	Statement	Z-score	Array pos.
42	Being a part of rituals and celebrations of a place.	-0.452	5
13	Knowing the names of flora, fauna, and landscape features.	-0.479	5
40	Being in a place that has significant cultural and natural history.	-0.538	4
35	Experiencing time with my family.	-0.594	4
12	Knowing the symbols that are assigned to a place by other people/cultures.	-0.689	4
18	Practicing activities that make me feel physically exhausted.	-0.751	4
37	Being in a place for a long amount of time.	-0.776	4
17	Practicing activities that make me feel physically rested.	-0.808	3
15	Practicing activities that involve risk.	-0.810	3
7	Feeling independent.	-0.906	3
25	Feeling attached to a body of water.	-1.202	3
5	Feeling like I can escape from other responsibilities.	-1.245	2
22	Feeling attached to a place that I have never been.	-1.452	2
32	Experiencing memories of someone significant.	-1.578	2
34	Experiencing new people.	-1.623	1
43	Encountering negative memories I associate with a place.	-2.399	1

VITA

Garrett Alexander Hutson

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: PERCEPTIONS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION PROFESSIONALS TOWARD PLACE MEANINGS IN NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS: A Q-METHOD INQUIRY

Major Field: Health, Leisure, and Human Performance: Option in Leisure Studies

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Lafayette High School, Wildwood, Missouri in June 1997; received a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors in Communication from University of Missouri, Columbia in 2001; received a Master of Science Degree in Experiential Education from Minnesota State University, Mankato in December, 2004; completed requirements for the Doctorate of Philosophy with a major in Health, Leisure, and Human Performance in July 2007.

Experience: Ski Patroller, Georgetown and Silverton, CO, three years; Outdoor Leader, Wilderness Ventures, Jackson, WY, Timberline Mountain Guides, Bend, OR, Southwest Adventures, Durango, CO, National Outdoor Leadership School, Lander, WY, five years; Graduate Assistant, Oklahoma States University Outdoor Adventure, two years, Graduate Teaching Associate, Oklahoma State University Leisure Studies Program, 1 year.

Professional Memberships: National Recreation and Park Association, Association for Experiential Education, Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education, Oklahoma Recreation and Parks Society, National Ski Patrol.

Name: Garrett Hutson

Date of Degree: July 2007

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: PERCEPTIONS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION PROFESSIONALS
TOWARD PLACE MEANINGS IN NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS: A
Q-METHOD INQUIRY

Pages in Study: 124

Major Field: Health, Leisure, and Human Performance

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of outdoor recreation professionals toward place meanings in natural environments. The study describes the views of outdoor recreation professionals with varied backgrounds and professional experiences toward the ways they find meaning in outdoor settings of personal significance. Participants in the study included 15 men and 15 women who either work or worked in various areas of the outdoor recreation profession. Q methodology was utilized to illuminate the ways this group thinks about meanings in outdoor places. Each participant completed a sorting procedure (called a Q-sort) according to the following condition of instruction: "How do you find meaning in a place in the out-of-doors?"

Findings and Conclusions: Analysis consisted of statistical procedures including correlation of the sorts and factor analysis for computation of the factor scores. Varimax rotation was performed on a three-factor solution, which best represented statistical and theoretical significance. Z-scores were calculated for each item on each factor to interpret each of the theoretical factor arrays along with distinguishing statements, demographic information, and exit question. The three views toward place meanings were interpreted as: 1) *Relational*, 2) *Natural*, and 3) *Spiritual*. The findings from this study show three distinct views toward place meanings among a group of outdoor recreation professionals. Additionally, the affective domain of attachment to nature was a defining phenomenon within each perspective. These findings delineate some of the ways that place meanings in the out-of-doors operate. Further, these findings can help the outdoor recreation profession in clarifying perceptions of place meaning views, which may potentially be used to promote intentional use of environmental values and beliefs.

Advisor's Approval: Dr. Lowell Caneday
