Summerschool

Interdisciplinary PhD summer school

Methods and strategies to monitor and manage human impact on urbanized protected areas (UPAs)

Maasmechelen, Belgium
Sept 11-16, 2017

Hasselt University is organizing the first PhD course on the management of urbanized protected areas (UPAs) integrating expertise from different disciplines.

Background

Monitoring and management of UPA - During the last decades, outdoor recreation has become progressively more important, especially in UPAs, while biodiversity continues to decline by human-induced stress such as tourism, road infrastructure and urbanisation. In this arena of conflicting demands, careful planning of the area, its infrastructure and activities is needed to sustain the value of UPAs. In this process, stakeholder participation and visitor management are very important, in order to
develop effective management strategies.

Interdisciplinary approach – The development and implementation of effective UPA conservation management strategies requires an interdisciplinary approach. Therefore, the summer school uses building blocks from different disciplines: environmental biology, tourism, transportation sciences, urban and landscape design, architecture, environmental law and environmental economics. National and international experts offer methodological approaches which are applied by interdisciplinary teams of students who jointly work on addressing conservation management challenges.

National Park Hoge Kempen as a research case - The summer school will take place in the Field Research Centre (FRC) of Hasselt University located at the main entrance of the Hoge Kempen National Park (NPHK), Connecterra, Terhills. The NPHK is a protected area in a highly urbanized area, and is of great value to the region as a natural environment and as a tourism destination. Although the methodological approach will be framed in a broader context of UPA, the NPHK will serve as the case study on which the theories will be applied.

Target Audience
The group of participants consists of 15 PhD students at the beginning or middle of their career in the area of biology, environmental economics, environmental law, architecture, urban and landscape design, and transportation sciences, or with a profound interdisciplinary interest in the above areas. Interested students are invited to apply to participate to the school by filling out the registration form on www.uhasselt.be/UPA_summerschool, including a motivation of 300 words by May 15, 2017.

Format and building blocks
The PhD summer school is a five-day event during which students work in interdisciplinary teams on one NPHK case related to management problems. They are supported by keynote speakers, followed by methodological introduction sessions, and fieldwork and analysis sessions. Senior researchers provide feedback to ensure active participation and learning. The summer school ends with an additional one-day event where students present their project to an international audience of relevant stakeholders.

Cases
1. The recreational value of the NPHK
2. Conflicts between new road infrastructure and nature protection
3. The effect of stress on wild life in a UPA
4. Impact of low density dwelling on UPA
5. Impact of visitor flows within a UPA

VENUE:
Field Research Centre Hasselt University
Terhills-Connecterra (National Park Hoge Kempen)
Maasmechelen, Belgium

Accommodation:
To stimulate an intensive scientific and intercultural collaboration between participants, joint accommodation and catering will be provided at Home Fabiola
**IMPORTANT DATES AND REMARKS**

Date of summer school: Sept 11-16, 2017
Application deadline: May 15, 2017 (www.uhasselt.be/UPA_summerschool)
Notification of acceptance: June 1, 2017

Participation is free of charge and includes accommodation, material, coffee breaks, lunches, dinners, a welcome reception, and a social dinner!

Selected students receive a travel scholarship, based on proof of travel expenses with a maximum for Europe of 125 Euro and outside Europe of 250 Euro.