NGO perspectives on stakeholder involvement in forest management

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Danish Outdoor Council
What is the Danish Outdoor Council?

• The Danish Outdoor Council is a non-governmental organization founded in 1942.

• An umbrella organization with 83 member organizations.

• Member organizations are mostly national organizations that cover many types of outdoor activities and nature conservation interests.

• The aim is to promote outdoor activities under consideration of environmental needs and needs for nature conservation.
Introduction to NGO stakeholders

Who are we?

What do we do?

Why do we do it?
Main stakeholders in Danish forest management

Farmers and Forest Owners Association

Nature Conservation NGOs

Outdoor Recreational NGOs
What NGOs bring to the table

- Knowledge of needs and wishes for recreational use of nature
- Local interests and knowledge of everyday use of the areas
- Will to participate in development of solutions
- Monitoring and information on e.g. endangered species
- We are easy entry points for dialogue with the “public”
- Volunteer work
Involvement at national level

**The Forest Council**
- Formal
- Advising Minister
- Multiple stakeholders

Important platform for dialogue across the interest of multiple stakeholders.

**The Green Contact Group**
- Less formal
- Nature Conservation NGOs
- NGOs set the agenda

Platform for coordination of advocacy and awareness initiatives.
Local level

User Councils at local forest district level

- Very important fora for NGO representatives (volunteers)
- Management plan: Dialogue and hearing processes
- Supports coherence between national level policy and local level management practice
- Sometimes also inconsistency...
- Personal relationships between actors
Involvement in projects

• Not all citizens are organized
• Increasing interest in using the forest
• Need to involve the wider public in specific initiatives.
How does the practice effect us?

What do we put in?
- Capacity building of our local representatives
- Preparation time and keeping up to date
- We adjust our organization model according to how we are involved

What do we get out?
- It makes us relevant to our members and the public
- It gives us meaning as individuals and as organization
- It strengthens the civil society and civic engagement
Involving us is more important than you may think...

“Organizations keep people busy, occasionally entertain them, give them a variety of experiences, keep them off the streets, provide pretexts for storytelling, and allow socializing. They haven’t anything else to give.”

Karl Weick, American organizational theorist
Impact on nature and forest management

- Awareness and understanding across stakeholders
- Conflict mitigation
- Inform decision-making e.g. based on specific data
- Relationship building (socializing)
- Stronger ownership
Why stakeholder involvement is important

- **To forest management**: Better solutions and engaged users.
- **To the NGO’s**: Relevans (identity) and promotion of interests
- **To the citizens**: Consideration of local needs and wishes.
- **To the society**: Strong communities with ownership to local nature areas.

**Hope and aspiration**
Stakeholder involvement in the state forest management could potentially inspire similar processes in privately owned forests.