

# Value creation and tourism products in Norwegian protected areas



Odd Inge Vistad,  
NINA, Dept. for Human Dimension,  
Lillehammer, Norway

# Background and premisses:

## Tourism "in" protected areas (PAs) means:

- Primarily tourism around/in national parks (NP) and protected landscapes(PL).
  - Mostly located in the mountains
- Also in World Heritage Sites
  - The fjords

## Tourism was a fact in these areas long before the parks were established:

- Norw. Trekking Association (DNT), established 1868
- Small scale family based enterprises (lodging/activity)
- Cruiseships in the fjords, etc.

# A Norwegian national park...

## What is a NP?

- “...distinctive or representative ecosystems or landscapes and **where there is no major infrastructure development** may be protected as *national parks*” (Nature Diversity Act 2009)

## The social aspect?

- “... ensure that people can enjoy an undisturbed natural environment. Pedestrian access or passage in accordance with the provisions of the *Outdoor Recreation Act* is permitted.”
- Commercial activity is OK
- Organized activity can be difficult

## Some figures (March 2011) and facts:

16.5 % of the mainland area is protected:

- 34 NP
- All PAs have their own **protection regulations**
- For all NP and PL, a **management plan** will be developed

**The frames and possibilities for tourism development lies in these regulations and in the management plan**



# National tourism strategies

## Norw. national action plan for tourism, 2005:

- Goal: Focus on nature and NPs.
- National Parks as "branding"

## National tourism strategy, 2007 (more realistic):

- Focus on **value creation** (nothing about PAs/NPs)
- Focus on **sustainable tourism** (Management plans for PAs! In which PAs/NPs can tourism be given a higher priority?)
- Focus on **destinations** (Svalbard, World Heritage, Samii culture, "Nature")

# ”Value creation based on natural heritage” (national pilot project 2009-2013)

## Goals:

- How can PAs and valuable nature play a role in the development of the local society?
- Improve the cooperation between the PAs and the local community.

## **15 local projects** (≈ 3.200.000 € in 2010).

- Often in the **vicinity** of PAs; Improve access; Small scale facilitation (paths, viewpoints); Information/interpretation programs; Landscape maintenance etc.

# Dovre-Sunndalsfjella NP

- One of the few Norwegian NPs with a management plan that includes a special chapter on tourism.
- This NP has been through a pilot period with local management authority since 2000.
- Strong wish to prepare for value creation, within the frames in the approved management plan
- The first NP in Norway with approval as Charter park within Europarc Federation (in 2010).

# Experiences from Dovre-Sunndalsfjella (D-S) NP

(presented by the leader of the management board of D-S NP in a national seminar March 2011):

The present Norwegian management system (on all levels) has little experience with value creation and sustainable tourism development

Most Norwegian tourism enterprises have little experience with product development adapted to NP frames

Generally, there is little experience on **how to combine management and development.**

Norwegian authorities: **Not really decided whether to go for value creation; the focus is on "pilot projects"!**



# What will be the future position of tourism in our protected areas?

- Tourism development in **and around** NPs shall represent something different, and supplement "the general tourism product"
- The surrounding areas can be "bridgeheads"
- Many enterprises are already established in the NPs
- The contractors in Norway need help in developing their focus on this niche and its possibilities.

## Some facts...

- Number of enterprises has increased.
- There is a move from leisure to business.
- Norwegian visitors dominate, but NPs are also very important destinations for foreigners
- The majority of the enterprises experience growth.
- **Optimism:** 80 % believe the demand for their product will increase.
- **Activity** enterprises demonstrate the fastest growth

# Challenges for the local district:

- To see the exotic and special - take **the external, tourist perspective**
- Create **commercial products** (based on common resources)
- Let the tourist, not the producer take **the added costs** by operating in and around conservation areas.
- Make sure the added value stays in **the district**

# Challenges for the management authorities

- **A new mgm model is now being implemented:**  
Local mgm authority (quite similar to the Dovre-Sunndalsfjella NP model). Will there be room for value creation? In what way?
- Today: Many tourist activities are based on **exemptions**.
- The authorities tend to lean on **standard rules** instead of cooperating in order to find local solutions
- Although: there is an ambition of developing a more **'adaptive management'**

# We need improved planning, cooperation and entrepreneurship.

- The mgm authorities must relate more actively to **relevant stakeholders**, including tourism actors.
- The protected areas and the **adjacent land** must be seen in connection.
- National, regional and local authorities must act like a team
- There is a need for better integration of **resource and visitor management**. Including value creation.
  - Lots of ideas and good practice abroad!!
- Important with both good managers and good entrepreneurs that **show the way** ...