

# **Out of my way: Using qualitative methods to understand recreation conflict between bushwalkers and mountain bike riders**

**Kirsty TUMES**

Monash University, [kirsty.tumes@buseco.monash.edu.au](mailto:kirsty.tumes@buseco.monash.edu.au)

## **ABSTRACT**

As a consequence of the increase in recreation in protected natural areas and the expanding diversity of activities, recreation conflict has been identified as a concern for managers. To date, researchers have focused on examining recreation conflict from a quantitative perspective employing predetermined scales and questionnaires. This method of inquiry has been useful in progressing the understanding of recreation conflict, however the subtleties in understanding the complexities of recreation conflict may have been overlooked. This paper draws on exploratory research findings from fieldwork and interviews with bushwalkers to demonstrate the value and importance of understanding the user's perspective and their experiences. Findings suggest that recreation conflict incidents have occurred between mountain bike riders and bushwalkers when mountain bike riders engaged in inappropriate behaviour such as riding on walking-only tracks. This paper therefore highlights the complexities and subtleties of recreation conflict and provides suggestions to inform the development of a more comprehensive model for recreation conflict management in protected areas.

**KEYWORDS:** recreation conflict, goal interference conflict, social values conflict, qualitative method

## **Introduction**

In general, traditional outdoor recreation activities such as bushwalking and horse riding together with newer mechanistic activities including four wheel driving, mountain bike riding and heli-skiing have seen a burgeoning in participation, which in turn has provided social benefits to the community. Benefits noted in the literature range from 'reducing stress and solitude' to 'spending quality time with family and friends' (Manfredo et al. 1983; Driver and Bruns 1989). However, changes in recreation values along with how people recreate, together with a move away from traditional activities to ones employing new technologies that are mechanistic in nature, have led to competition and in some cases conflict between recreation activity groups over land and water resources. This

*ANTHROPOLOGICAL NOTEBOOKS* 13 (1): 45–55.

ISSN 1408-032X

© Slovene Anthropological Society 2007

antagonism has led to conflict situations between user groups which have manifested in behaviours such as physical and verbal aggression and the development of prejudice and stereotyping.

Previous theories examining recreation conflict having primarily been taken from a positivist perspective employing pre-determined scales and questionnaires in order to quantify the problem. Knopp and Tyger (1973) argued, however, that intense emotions are generated in clashes between motorised and non-motorised recreation activities. Schneider (2000) research reveals that a recreation conflict situation can possibly produce stress during a conflict experience and Vitterso et al. (2004: 237) found that recreation conflict is affective and argue that 'subjective feelings should be an explicit part of a comprehensive theory of recreation conflict'. While the above authors and others have expressed the need for an in-depth understanding of the emotions and feelings that develop from recreation conflict, and the effect that recreation conflict has on a person's recreation experience, it appears, to the best of the author's knowledge that this has not been explored. Exploring and understanding users' subjective feelings and experiences may offer great assistance in advancing the understanding of recreation conflict and how best to manage this issue. This paper therefore suggests that further development in understanding the issue of recreation conflict may be advanced by returning to first principle and looking at this issue through a qualitative lens. Employing qualitative research aimed at understanding the users' viewpoint may offer rich insight into this issue and assist in developing a more comprehensive model of recreation conflict.

### **Previous understanding of recreation conflict**

Although it is difficult to find agreement on how recreation conflict should be defined (Watson 1994), the majority of the outdoor recreation conflict investigations have been based on Jacob and Schreyer's (1980) conceptual framework. Jacob and Schreyer's model of conflict asserts that conflict stems from incompatibilities between one party's goals and another party's behaviour. Therefore if the achievement of a person's goal is obstructed or frustrated by the behaviour of another, conflict will occur. Jacob and Schreyer (1980) propose four major classes of determinants that influence recreation conflict, which are activity style, resource specificity, mode of experience, lifestyle tolerance. Activity style refers to the personal meaning individuals assign to an activity. These individual meanings, not the activity itself, contribute to conflict evaluation. Therefore the more intense the personal meaning a recreationist assigns to an activity, the greater the likelihood contact with a recreationist with less intense personal meaning attached to the activity will result in conflict. Resource specificity relates to the significance attached to using a specific recreation resource for a given recreation experience, 'therefore when a person who views the place's qualities as unequalled confronts behaviours indicating lower evaluation, conflict results' (Jacob and Schreyer 1980: 374). Mode of experience relates to the varying expectations of how the natural environment will be perceived. Jacob and Schreyer (1980: 375) explain that '[...] modes, or ways of experiencing an environment are described as a continuum ranging from unfocused to focused'. Therefore 'as the mode of experiencing the environment becomes more focused, an individual produces

more rigid definitions of what constitutes acceptable stimuli and is increasingly intolerant of external stimuli'. Lifestyle tolerance is the final major class of determining conflict. Lifestyle tolerance refers to the tendency to accept or reject lifestyles different from one's own. Carothers (1999: 86) explains '[...] when a recreationist encounters others, a cognitive processing of information occurs. This action results in the categorization of others according to some group membership, which helps to simplify and order group membership'. As Jacob and Schreyer (1980: 376) explain further, recreation in-groups and out-groups represent categories an individual establishes on the basis of perceived or imagined lifestyle similarities and differences. Therefore, those who demonstrate low tolerance for persons with differing lifestyles will be more likely to express conflict.

Subsequent researchers measuring recreation conflict have offered support to Jacob and Schreyer's (1980) factors affecting conflict, for example Gibbons and Ruddell (1995) found a positive association between goal orientation and conflict: goal interference was greater for goals that were important. They also found a positive relationship between place attachment and conflicts among backcountry winter recreationists. Ramthun's (1997: 108) research also confirms Jacob and Schreyer's hypothesis that being categorised as part of an out-group is closely related to evaluation of goal interference.

Jacob and Schreyer's model has, and remains dominant in the recreation conflict literature, and has been the basis for at least fifteen published studies on recreation conflict and arguably many others. From this extensive body of research the following conclusions can be drawn. Recreation conflict has often been found, however not in all instances, to be asymmetrical with traditional non-mechanistic users' perceiving conflict towards newer mechanistic activity groups. Numerous activity groups have experienced recreation conflict and it can occur not only between user groups but also within an activity group. Finally, the literature suggests that the accumulation of knowledge on recreation conflict has been limited by difficulties and inconsistencies in measuring the determinants that lead to recreation conflict (Hammit and Schneider 2000).

Theoretical approaches into understanding recreation conflict expanded further with Vaske et al. (1995) introducing the distinction between interpersonal and social values conflict. In 1995, Vaske and his colleagues introduced the notion that conflict can occur between groups who do not share the same norms and values. While interpersonal conflict (goal interference) requires the physical presence or behaviour of an individual or group of recreationists, social values (social acceptability) conflict on the other hand can occur between users with different beliefs and values, even if there is no contact between them (Vaske et al. 2004). The central theme behind this notion of understanding conflict is that the issue becomes normative:

[...] norms are standards that individuals use for evaluating activities or environments as good or bad, better or worse. Standards shared by the members of social groups are labelled 'social norms', while personal norms refer to an individual's own expectations, learned from shared expectations and modified through interaction (Vaske et al. 1986:139).

One of the first studies to empirically examine social values conflict was by Vaske et al. (1995). The investigation using hunters and non-hunters as the recreation users groups found that conflict stemmed from social values conflict rather than interpersonal conflict; for instance, the non-hunters had a general disdain for hunting according to the studies. Further studies followed supporting the notion of social values conflict, such as the study of conflict between skiers and snowboarders (Vaske et al. 2000; 2004), or between hikers and mountain bikers (Carothers et al. 2001). Variables used to assist in advancing social values conflict theory included skill level (Vaske et al. 2004), safety and in-group and out-group conflict (Vaske et al. 2000), and tolerance of in-group and out-group (Carothers et al. 2001).

Emerging from this body of research the following conclusions can be drawn. Similar to goal interference conflict, there has been inconsistency in measuring social values conflict which in turn has limited the accumulation of knowledge and progression of the theory. Pre-determined scales and statements have been used as the main methodology. Finally, it is difficult to distinguish from the research if the respondents are reporting on social values or on their own reflections of their individual values and philosophies rather than the level of conflict at the area in question.

## **Method**

The preliminary stages of this research adopted an interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm has the goal of understanding the complex world of lived experiences from the point of view of those who lived it (Jennings 2001; Neuman 2003; Denzin and Lincoln 2000).

Two stages were undertaken for this study. Stage one involved a contextual analysis of the user groups who have experienced conflict episodes in Victoria and Western Australia. From interviews with park rangers in Victoria and Western Australia and anecdotal evidence, mountain bike riders and bushwalkers were highlighted as the user groups who consistently experienced conflict. The focus of this paper is to discuss the preliminary findings from stage two of the research which involved in-depth interviews with the bushwalker user groups.

Interviews to date have been conducted with five male and one female bushwalker. The interview transcripts were analysed in depth to uncover the sources, the manifestations, and the outcomes of the conflict situations. Lists of bushwalking and mountain biking clubs within Victoria and Western Australia are accessible from the internet and other sources such as mountain biking and bushwalking magazines. From these lists, clubs that are located adjacent to and regularly ride and walk in the national parks where the first phase of research was conducted were identified together with state wide clubs representing Victoria and Western Australia for both bushwalking and mountain bike riding. Club presidents from the identified clubs were contacted and together with their club members were invited to participate. Due to the difficulty in recruiting mountain bike riders, flyers were also placed in prominent specialised mountain bike stores in Melbourne and were handed out at a mountain bike race. Snowball sampling was also used as participants that were interviewed would suggest others to include in the study. Those participants that were suggested to be included for the study were screened to see if they were

regular bushwalkers or mountain bikers and if they belonged to one of the clubs that the researcher originally contacted.

Each in-depth interview lasted between thirty minutes to an hour and took place in a location and time that was convenient to the participant, for example, a café or the participant's office. The interview schedule was unstructured beginning with the following statement about recreation conflict:

Recreation conflict can mean different things to people, for example a bushwalker having a verbal disagreement with a mountain bike rider or maybe a bushwalker feeling unhappy or uncomfortable with their recreation experience because of other people who use the park. Or a bushwalker may feel that they have differing values than mountain bike riders.

After this opening statement the researcher then asked the participant to describe a conflict situation that they may have had and then used probing questions to better understand the conflict experiences of the participants. For interviews with mountain bike riders the wording was changed to reflect the mountain bike riders position in the recreation conflict situation.

The interviewer also enquired into the recreation experiences that the participants' sought when recreating within a national park. Asking the bushwalkers and mountain bike riders about the experiences they seek whilst recreating was a key component of the interview. The answers enabled the researcher to unlock the differences and similarities between the user groups with regards to their recreation values, needs and experiences that each group seeks.

The interviews were transcribed and the data imported into and analysed using the QSR's NVivo software. Content analysis using codes was conducted to elicit themes from the transcripts. Content analysis is a technique used for gathering and systematically analysing content of spoken interviews (Neuman 2003). Codes were assigned to tease out any patterns with regards to the source of the conflicts, the manifestations and the outcomes. Codes were also assigned to the experiences the recreation users were seeking. Assigning codes to elucidate themes and patterns from the data enabled the researcher to compare and find patterns in the participant's responses. A journal was kept documenting each interview and noting observations and connections during the interviews and immediately after. Once the data has been thoroughly analysed the researcher's journal entries will be compared to the themes emerging from the data analysis.

## **Results and discussion**

The following represents a summary of the results from the interviews with the bushwalkers. A number of common themes emerged from the interviews including inappropriate riding, adhering to rules and emotions and subjective feelings.

### **Inappropriate riding**

From the six interviews conducted only one bush walker had had an actual conflict experience with a mountain bike rider that resulted in an exchange of words and although there was the chance of possible physical harm to the bush walker this was avoided. All six

bushwalkers discussed situations where they had been scared by a mountain bike rider but no actual physical or verbal exchange had happened with a mountain biker. Initially when the bushwalkers were asked about recreation conflict with mountain bike riders they had a concern. However, when the researcher delved deeper into the issue the walkers that were interviewed did not seem to mind coming into contact with mountain bike riders and in fact had no problems with them. The issue only occurred when a bush walker came into contact with mountain bike rider who was perceived to be undertaking inappropriate behaviour. The single most commented inappropriate behaviour that the bushwalkers were concerned about was when a mountain bike rider was riding on a designated walking-only track. Participant A detailed that a rider riding inappropriately had caused a conflict situation with him:

I had an experience fairly recently with a group on the Great Dividing Trail over at – in the Daylesford area and we were on what’s supposed to be walkers only track and a group of mountain bikes came flying along and we all had to sort of step off the track out of the way and one of the mountain bikes actually, in trying to avoid one of us, came off his bike. And he hit a rock actually on the side and the bike became airborne and so did he and he actually landed – side-swiped one of our walkers and if he’d landed straight on top of him I reckon he would have killed him. And then he landed on the side and skidded off and picked himself and dusted off and jumped on his bike and we roared out you know, ‘You’re not supposed to be on their tracks’ they said, ‘Yes we are’ and just kept on going.

Other typical comments with regards to this inappropriate behaviour also confirmed this idea of area violation: ‘It’s just the conflicts that could happen that shouldn’t happen. When bikers or walkers are in areas that they shouldn’t be, for example’ (Participant E), or ‘[...] there are certain sections of it [the track] that are walkers only and the mountain bikers use them all the time’ (Participant A).

### **Adhering to rules**

In addition, bushwalkers were also concerned that the mountain bike riders were not adhering to the rules. The participants discussed that mountain bike riders should do what is right and were very concerned when a mountain bike rider was not obeying the rules. Participant A for example highlighted that: ‘[...] the main reason why you want to be proactive about this [recreation conflict] is because people just aren’t following the rules’ (Participant A).

The issue of mountain bike riders riding on trails marked as walking-only tracks was also highlighted in phase one of this research. Park rangers who were interviewed in phase one discussed that they had seen many riders riding on walking tracks and had also had a number of complaints from bushwalkers. The rangers explained that the walkers were concerned for their safety due to the narrow tracks that inhibit view lines therefore making it easy for a rider to come around a blind corner and hit a walker. It is interesting to note that to the knowledge of the writer, previous research into recreation conflict has not highlighted or used inappropriate behaviour as a variable to examine recreation conflict. It is also important to emphasise that previous empirical studies have collected data on to shared use trails where activity groups recreate in the same space. Therefore previous

research may not have recognised the issue of users recreating in spaces that are not allocated to them.

### **Perceived safety**

A number of conflict sources between mountain bike riders and bushwalkers were discussed at length with the bushwalkers. A pattern that emerged from all six interviews was concern for safety. As discussed above, the bushwalkers concern for safety was derived from mountain bike riders riding on walking only tracks that were narrow with unsuitable view lines for on coming recreation users. The bushwalkers discussed being startled and having to ‘jump out of the way’ on a number of occasions as mountain bike riders came whooshing passed. Participant B mentioned:

[...] they just roar along without any regard to – and just yell out things like bike coming through, bike coming through you know and expect you to jump out of the way when they’re not even supposed to be on there, on that particular sort of track.

Participant E also expressed his concern when it came to not being able to see on coming mountain bikes stating that ‘[...] with blind corners and they’re coming down with gravity so it’s a rate of knots and people have to jump for their lives basically’.

The issue of safety was highlighted further when the speed of the mountain bike was discussed. Participant C mentioned the speed of the mountain bikes also caused walkers to feel unsafe: ‘[...] and the speed differential between a walker and someone on a mountain bike is quite significant and a lot of the tracks they’re on you can’t see what’s coming’.

The theme of perceived safety as a source of conflict supports finding in previous research on recreation conflict. Vaske, Carothers, Donnelly and Baird (2000) hypothesised that in the recreation conflict between skiers and snowboarders skiers perceived snowboarders as reckless individuals that conducted inappropriate behaviours such as riding out of control and the skiers felt threatened by this. The researchers measured safety as a single item statement that it is not safe to have snowboarders and skiers share the same trails. They found empirical support for their assumption discovering that skiers felt unsafe and believed that snowboarders and skiers should use different trails. Initial data and findings from my research, together with other findings (Vaske et al. 2000; Vitterso, Chipeniuk, Skar & Vistad 2004) highlights that model of recreation conflict may benefit from including perceived safety and a source of recreation conflict.

### **Emotions and subjective feelings**

As discussed earlier this research set out to explore the outcomes of recreation conflict experiences between mountain bike riders and bushwalkers. The bushwalkers expressed a range of emotions resulting from their interactions with mountain bike riders. Before discussing these emotions it is important to remember that the only conflict situations that the participants experienced were a result of mountain bike riders riding on walking-only designated tracks and not shared-use trails. The bushwalkers expressed that during the conflict experience they were frightened, angry and felt an element of stress due to the perceived safety concern. To describe their feelings after the conflict experience had taken



place the participants used language such as feeling annoyance and disappointment and one participant commented that the rest of his day had been coloured by the experience. Understanding the emotive feelings that result from a conflict experience is important when exploring recreation conflict. Feeling angry or disappointed after a recreation experience may result in a person choosing not to return to the place where it happened or may even choose to not participate in that particular recreation experience resulting in implications for land managers.

### **Recreation experience**

The participants expressed a range of experiences they seek whilst bush walking. Common to all the interviewed was that of experiencing nature. Participants discussed the joy of seeing and identifying a type of bird or flower for the first time or 'just being a part of the bush'. One participant who leads bush walks regularly relayed: '[...] they enjoy wild flowers and trees, you know, magnificent forests. We even have some who come along and look for fungi all the time, you know, because that's their particular interest' (Participant C).

Together with enjoying nature the participants discussed getting away from it all, the trappings of society and enjoying the solitude of bush walking. Solitude to the walkers did not necessarily mean to them walking on their own, rather solitude from everyday life with a select group of friends. Participant E articulated the above stating:

[...] being out there is really just I suppose getting away from the trappings of civilisation and traffic and phones and newspapers and there is that degree of solitude, I don't mean like a solo walker but just out there with a small group of people, of like minded souls and just really enjoying the environment.

Walking for exercise, keeping fit and completing a challenging walk was also flagged by the participants. Many of the participants would walk up to twenty kilometres on a day walk and the majority of the walkers expressed the importance of undertaking a challenging bush walk. One participant suggesting that their favourite type of walking is seven to ten day trips where he claimed to be 'Independent and having all your gear with you and the ability to navigate through, sometimes on tracks but sometimes off track' (Participant E).

The social aspect of bush walking was also a common thread throughout the interviews. The participants revealed the camaraderie that they feel during and after a bush walk experience and also the great discussions and debates that occur whilst walking. One participant talked about the life long friends that she had made through her club and that she had even managed to 'snag a husband' from the club!

### **Conclusion**

This analysis provides findings from this exploratory study into understanding the experiences of those engaging in recreation in the outdoors. Jacob and Schreyer's (1980) framework provided a sound platform in which an extensive body of literature has emerged. This body of literature has been useful; however it has been limited understanding the subtleties and complexities of this issue and providing a comprehensive model of recre-



ation conflict. Following the lead from authors such as Vitterso, Chipeniuk, Skar and Vistad (2004), who sought to progress the notion of recreation conflict, passed the original concept of attribution theory and hypothesised that variables such as emotions and feelings are an important aspect of recreation conflict. In comparison to Schneider (2000) who explored the stress related responses of conflict rather than quantifying the frequency of conflict occurrences and factors affecting users' perceptions of conflict, this research has set out to further enhance the understanding of conflict in the outdoors by exploring and understanding recreation conflict from the perspective of the users who are regularly recreating in the outdoors almost every day.

Further analysis, exhausting themes and patterns emerging from interviews with bushwalkers and mountain bike riders is still to occur. However, at this early stage the findings reveal that the main source of conflict situations between mountain bike riders and bushwalkers in this study is not an obstruction of goals and the determinants that Jacob and Schreyer (1980) propose, but rather the inappropriate behaviour of users. Mountain bike riders riding in spaces not allocated to their user groups had caused the greatest source of conflict between the user groups and from this inappropriate behaviour sources – such as perceived threat of safety and mountain bike riders not adhering to the rules – enhanced the conflict situation further.

The initial findings from this research have implications for land managers. This research suggests that conflict between bushwalkers and mountain bike riders occurs when riders ride on walking only tracks. Initial findings from the interviews with mountain bike riders show that they ride on walking-only designated tracks because they have not been provided with sufficient trails to ride in the current management plans. Land managers seeking to reduce and manage recreation conflict between bushwalkers and mountain bike riders may find this research useful when preparing future management plans. Adopting a qualitative research methodology, it is hoped, will shed new light on the issue of recreation conflict. Findings from this research, together with other authors' findings may assist in developing a more holistic and comprehensive model of recreation conflict and provide useful information and tools for land managers grappling with this issue every-day in the field.

## References

- Carothers, Pam, Jerry Vaske & Maureen Donnelly. 2001. Social Values versus Interpersonal Conflict among Hikers and Mountain Bikers. *Leisure Sciences* 23 (1): 47-61.
- Carothers, Pam. 1999. Recreation Conflict. *Department of Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism*. Fort Collins: Colorado State University.
- Denzin, Norman and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2000. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Driver, Bev L. & David H. Bruns. 1999. Concepts and uses of the benefits approach to leisure. In: Edgar L. Jackson and Thomas L. Burton (eds.), *Leisure Studies: Prospects for the 21 st Century*. State College , PA: Venture Publishing, pp. 349-69.
- Gibbons, Shannon and J. Edward Ruddell. 1995. The effect of goal orientation and place dependence on select goal interferences among winter backcountry users. *Leisure Sciences* 17 (3): 171-81.
- Hammitt, William E. & Ingrid E. Schneider. 2000. Recreation conflict management. In: William C. Gartner and David W. Lime (eds.), *Trends in Outdoor Recreation, Leisure and Tourism*, New York: CABI Publishing, pp. 347-56.
- Jacob, Gerald & Richard Schreyer. 1980. Conflict in Outdoor Recreation: A Theoretical Perspective. *Journal of Leisure Research* 12 (4): 368-80.
- Jennings, Gale. 2001. *Tourism Research*. Milton: John Wiley & Sons.
- Knopp, Timothy B. and John D. Tyger. 1973. A Study of Conflict in Recreational Land Use: Snowmobiling vs Ski-Tourism. *Journal of Leisure Research* 5 (3): 6-17.
- Manfredo, Michael, Bev L. Driver & Paul J. Brown. 1983. A test of concepts inherent in experienced based setting management of outdoor recreation areas. *Journal of Leisure Research* 15 (3): 263-82.
- Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2003. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Pearson Education.
- Ramthun, Roy. 1997. Activity Identification, Experience, and Outgroup Evaluation as Predictors of Recreation Conflict. *Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism*. Utah: The University of Utah.
- Schneider, Ingrid. 2000. Response to Conflict Among Wilderness Visitors. *USDA Forest Service Proceedings RMRS* 15 (4): 160-3.
- Schneider, Ingrid and William Hammitt. 1995. Visitor Response to Outdoor Recreation Conflict: A Conceptual Approach. *Leisure Sciences* 17 (3): 223-34.
- Vaske, Jerry, Rachel Dyar & Nicole Timmons. 2004. Skill Level and Recreation Conflict among Skiers and Snowboarders. *Leisure Sciences* 26 (2): 215-25.
- Vaske, Jerry, Pam Carothers, Maureen Donnelly & Biff Baird. 2000. Recreation Conflict among Skiers and Snowboarders. *Leisure Sciences* 22 (4): 297-313.
- Vaske, Jerry, Maureen Donnelly, Karin Wittman & Susan Laidlaw. 1995. Interpersonal versus social values conflict. *Leisure Sciences* 17 (3): 205-22.
- Vaske, Jerry, Bo Shelby, Alan Graefe & Thomas Heberlein. 1986. Backcountry Encounter Norms: Theory, Method and Empirical Evidence. *Journal of Leisure Research* 18 (3): 137-53.
- Vittersø, Joar, Raymond Chipeniuk, Margete Skår and Odd Vistad. 2004. Recreational Conflict is Affective: The Case of Cross-Country Skiers and Snowmobiles. *Leisure Sciences* 26 (3): 227-43.
- Watson, Alan, Michael Niccolucci & Daniel Williams. 1994. The Nature of Conflict Between Hikers and Recreational Stock Users in the John Muir Wilderness. *Journal of Leisure Research* 26 (4): 372-85.

## **POVZETEK**

Zaradi vse pogostejšega vdiranja vse bolj raznovrstne rekreacije v zaščiteni naravna okolja je rekreacijski konflikt postal pomembna skrb menedžerjem športne rekreacije. V preteklosti so se raziskovalci osredotočali na raziskovanje rekreacijskega konflikta predvsem s kvantitativnega vidika – s pomočjo vnaprej vzpostavljenih lestvic in vprašalnikov. Takšne metode raziskovanja so pripomogle k razvoju in razumevanju rekreacijskega konflikta, vendar pa so zvečine spregledale subtilnost v dojetanju zapletenosti tega konflikta. Članek se osredotoča na raziskovalne izsledke terenskega dela in intervjujev s pohodniki, ki kažejo na vrednost in pomembnost razumevanja vidika in izkušenj uporabnikov. Izsledki kažejo, da se rekreacijski konflikti med gorskimi kolesarji in pohodniki sprožajo takrat, ko prvi prekršijo določila in kolesarijo po pohodniških poteh, ki niso namenjene kolesarjenju. Članek osvetljuje zapletenost in subtilnost rekreacijskega konflikta in daje predloge za izdelavo bolj razumljivega modela za upravljanje z rekreacijskim konfliktom v zaščitenih območjih.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** rekreacijski konflikt, konflikt preprečevanja doseganja cilja, konflikt družbenih vrednot, kvalitativne metode