



UCT KNOWLEDGE CO-OP



ACCESS IMPLICATIONS OF REGULATORY PRACTICES IN THE LOWER SILVERMINE WETLAND. A CONSERVATION AREA: FISH HOEK

AUTHOR: TAFADZWA DZINGWE

SUPERVISOR: A/PROF FRANK MATOSE

**UCT DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
2019**

The UCT Knowledge Co-op facilitated this collaborative project.

See <http://www.knowledgedco-op.uct.ac.za> or

Contact us at barbara.schmid@uct.ac.za / 021 – 650 4415

Introduction

The major aim of the study was to examine the regulation of access by City of Cape Town Parks and recreation, Fish Hoek Council, Storm water and Law enforcement agencies in relation to the Lower Silvermine Wetland.

This is because Silvermine Wetland is a commons area that users can access, but control and regulation of access and the maintenance of the Wetland have had major setbacks in trying to ensure that the Wetland is protected, maintained and conserved.

Approach

The researcher interviewed ten respondents using semi structured interviews to which he was referred by the local councilor. Observations and reports were also used

The first type of respondents who make up the first part of the study are users who have a relationship and use of the Wetland

The second type of respondents represent authorities that have a regulatory and maintenance mandate to the Wetland in relation to access.

Narratives were used as a way of gathering themes from what every respondent would have said.

The themes formed the basis of key discussions of the study and findings.

Key Findings from users

Knowledge and perception of the Silvermine Wetland

Droughts and flooding: affects nature's fauna, flora and users' livelihoods

Wetland and river relation: how users relate and use the commons such as running, walking, drawing resources etc

Contribution towards the maintenance and development of the Wetland

Funding has been scarce and not enough to maintain and conserve

Wetland and river maintenance

Pollution and growth of invasive plants are affecting nature and users' access

Key Findings from authorities

Enhancing regulation because of

Unstable boardwalks affecting the blind who access

Obsolete pavements, benches, boards prohibit users safe and comfortable access

Robberies and breaking of non permissible activities

Suspicion behavior from other users that are a safety threat to other users

Growth of invasive plants making the Wetland a security and environmental concern

NB Some of the above reasons for enhancing regulation had been mentioned by some users

Key Findings from authorities

Reasons of not enhancing regulation

History; knowledge and relationship on how it has been a commons to users in spite of recent setbacks

Daily routine in the nature: entry points were easy from each users perspective

Built a bond with the Wetland: users are now attached to the Wetland

Failure to adjust to the use either permits, boom gates and fencing of the Wetland

Maintenance of the Wetland

Insights for Users of the Silvermine Wetland

more research on the usage knowledge and perceptions of those using the area to derive benefits from nature

need for an Association of stakeholders of the Wetland

Reporting of suspicious movements might be key to safety and security

need to strengthen the leadership role of Government and governance functions

Contribution by residents to the civic society group Riverine Rovers might be beneficial in conserving the nature

Insights for the Local Authorities

Enhancing regulation might be a solution to some issues that are an obstacle to users accessing the Wetland

Infrastructure should be constantly refurbished if funds are available.

The creation of a Disaster Management System is essential in the case of the Silvermine Wetland, rather than merely a Maintenance Management Plan (MMP), to respond to droughts and flooding

All companies/entities that have their cables pass through the cable bridge should be engaged so that they assist in the maintenance and development of the Wetland

Fish Hoek Council could set up a crown funding to assist in maintaining the Wetland

PRASA need to facilitate the removal of the homeless people under the bridge.

Coordinated efforts are essential to reduce adverse effects. Advocacy by the authorities to the Western Cape government is important to ensure that the necessary resources are provided to address the challenges of safe access

Conclusions

There is need to base users use and relationship to the Wetland together with how the Wetland is regulation taking into account the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 Section 24

It might be of significance for authorities to know what the Wetlands really mean to users as it helps in how they go about their mandates in the Wetland

More so users need to understand the control measures of permissible and non permissible activities

It can be helpful if both users and authorities protect and conserve the environment for the sake of future generations