

Do Ecological Understanding,  
Connectedness to Nature, Place  
Attachment and Identity  
influence the success of large-  
scale biodiversity stewardship  
initiatives?



Tracey Potts

# Biodiversity Stewardship

- Biodiversity Stewardship
  - is a voluntary commitment made by a private landowner (or group of landowners)
  - to accept a portion of the State's burden to conserve areas of critically important biodiversity.

# Biodiversity Stewardship

- Biodiversity Stewardship programmes are guided by a set of legislation.
- In return for conservation management actions and certain land-use restrictions the State offers a suite of incentives and benefits that are, when possible, tailored to meet the needs of the landowner.

# So, why is scale important?

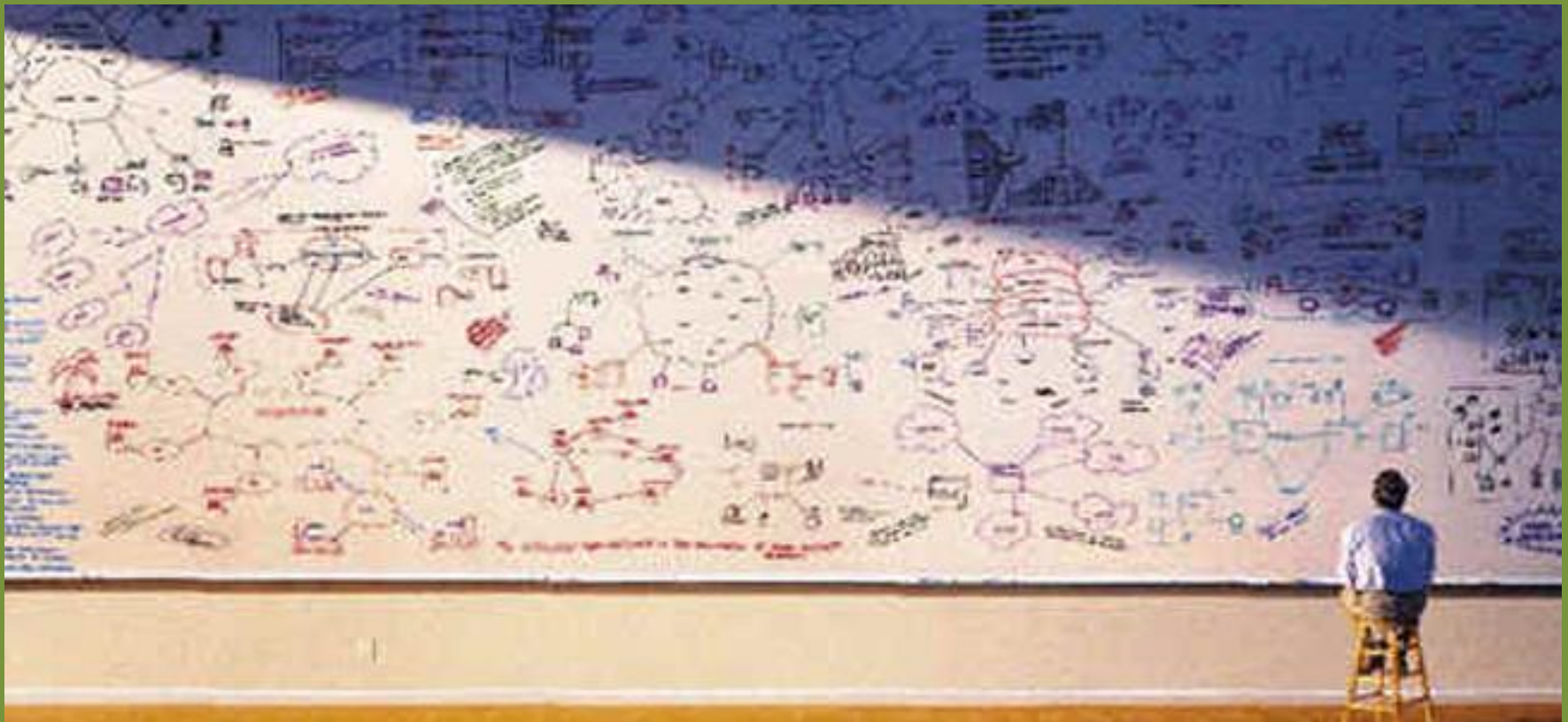
- Value
  - ✓ Ecosystems
  - ✓ Ecological Processes
  - ✓ Minimised threats
  - ✓ Extractive land-uses (farming, food security, culture)
  - ✓ Large-scale restoration programmes (LED)

# Eastern Cape Opportunities

- Large tracts of untransformed vegetation
  - ✓ Significantly less fragmentation compared to provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape
  - ✓ Very few contemporary conservation solutions allow for proactive engagement

# Do large-scale initiatives equal large-scale complexities?

- Short answer?
- Yes!



# Do large-scale initiatives equal large-scale complexities?

- When working with multiple landowners
  - ✓ Social dynamics become complex
  - ✓ Social cohesion and culture are influenced by aspects of identity
  - ✓ Ecological understanding, connectedness to nature and place attachment influence behaviour

# How do we achieve better understanding?

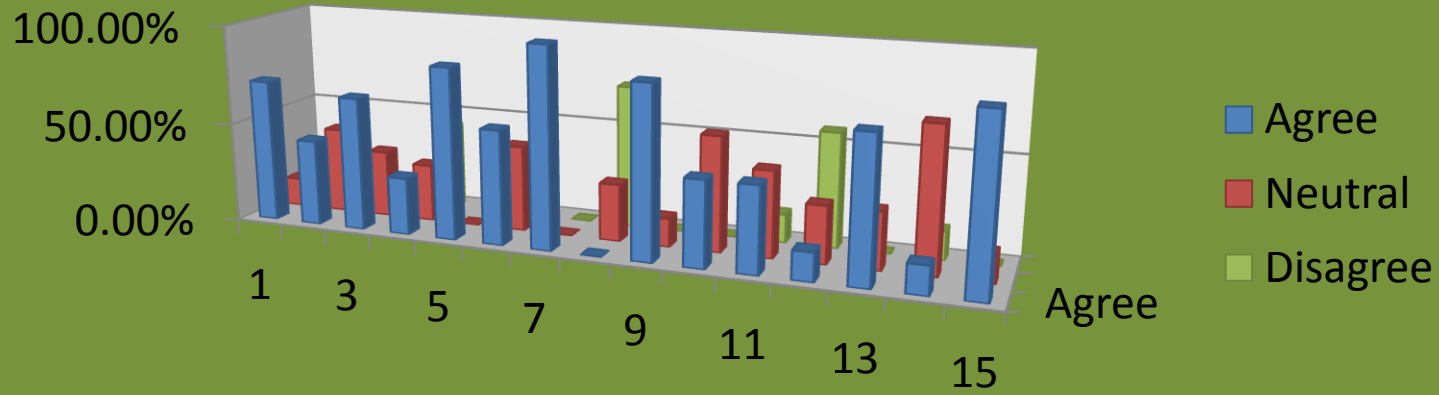
- Large-scale biodiversity stewardship initiatives are rare, so we learn by doing and we learn from doing
- Research using a set of standard scales, with some negatively scored questions
- Replicating those scales in different study sites
- Looking for commonalities, risks and motivators



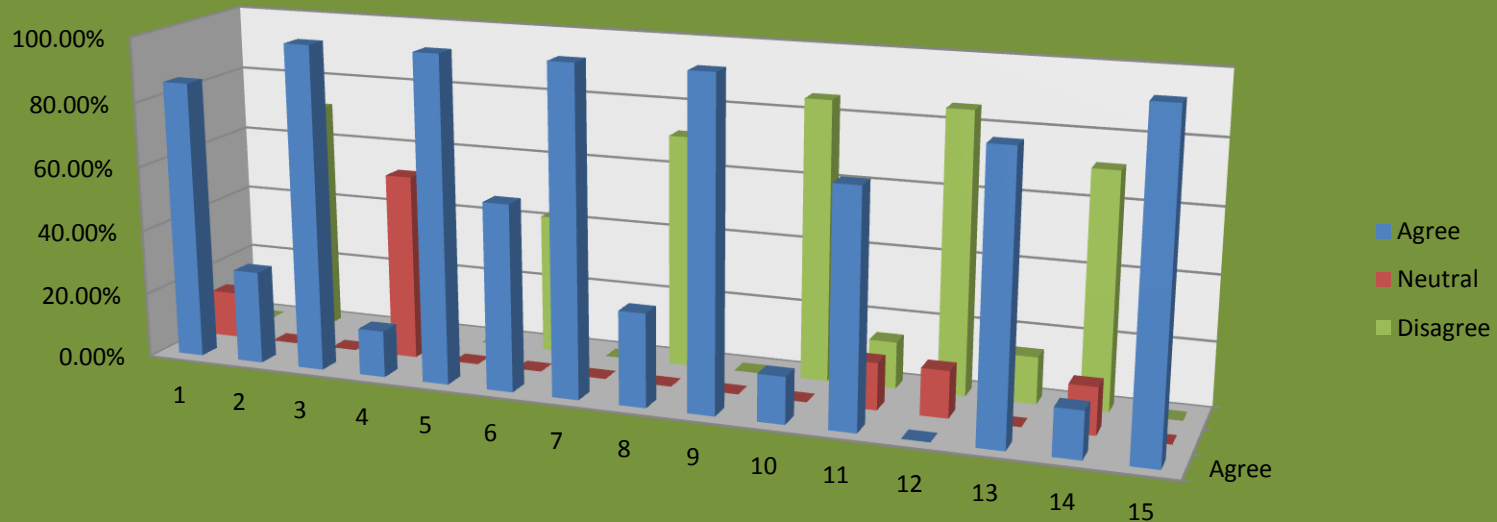
# New Ecological Paradigm

- The New Ecological Paradigm was developed in the 1970's
- The NEP recognizes the innovative capacity of humans, but says that:
  - ✓ Humans are ecologically interdependent with other species.
  - ✓ The power of social and cultural forces are significant, but does not profess social determinism.
  - ✓ Humans are impacted by the cause, effect, and feedback loops of ecosystems.
  - ✓ The biophysical environment can impose constraints on human activity.

## New Ecological Paradigm Scale Study Site 1



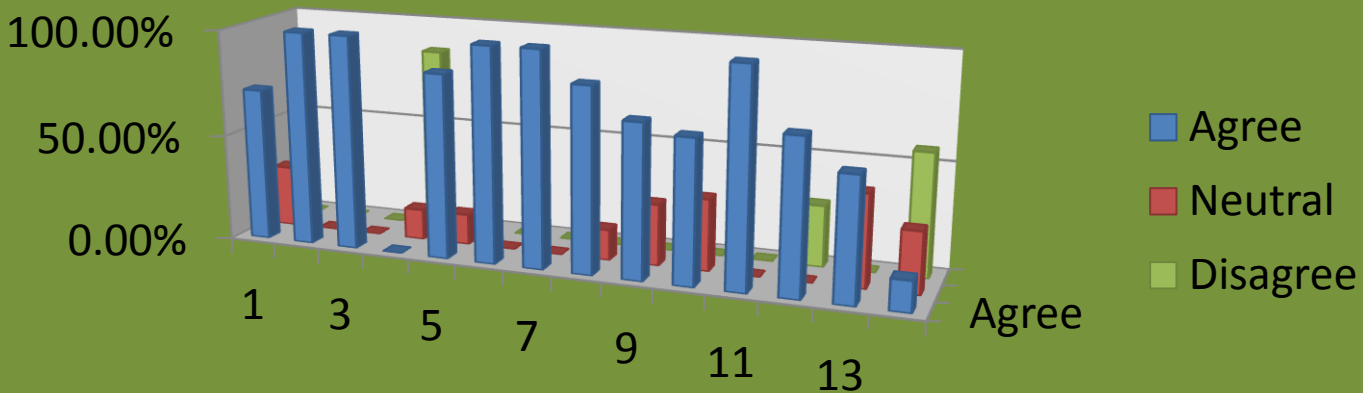
## New Ecological Paradigm Scale Study Site 2



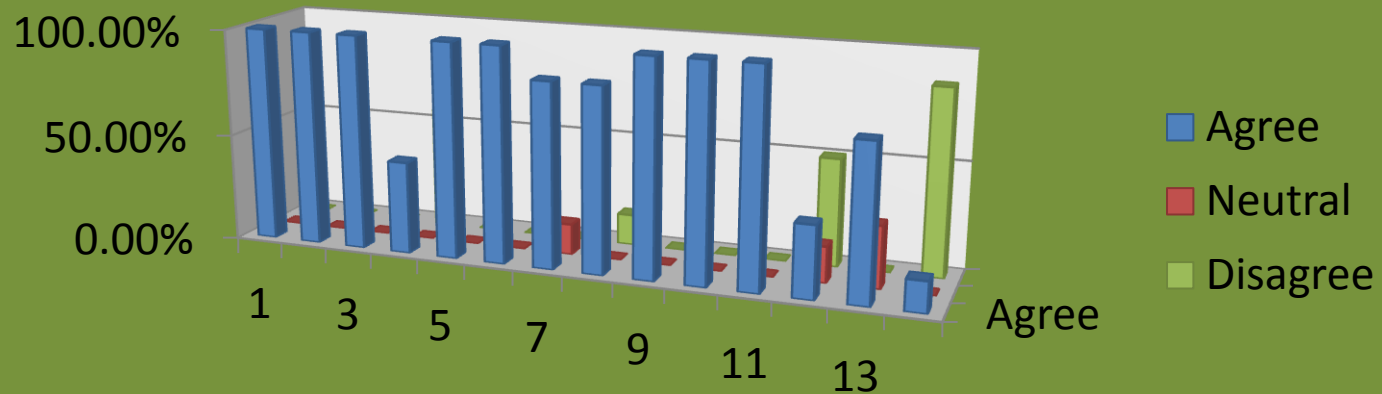
# Connectedness to Nature

- The Connectedness to Nature Scale provides a measure of an individual's level of feeling emotionally connected to a specific part of the natural world.
- This measure consists of 14 items rated on a 5-point scale.

## Connectedness to Nature Scale Study Site 1



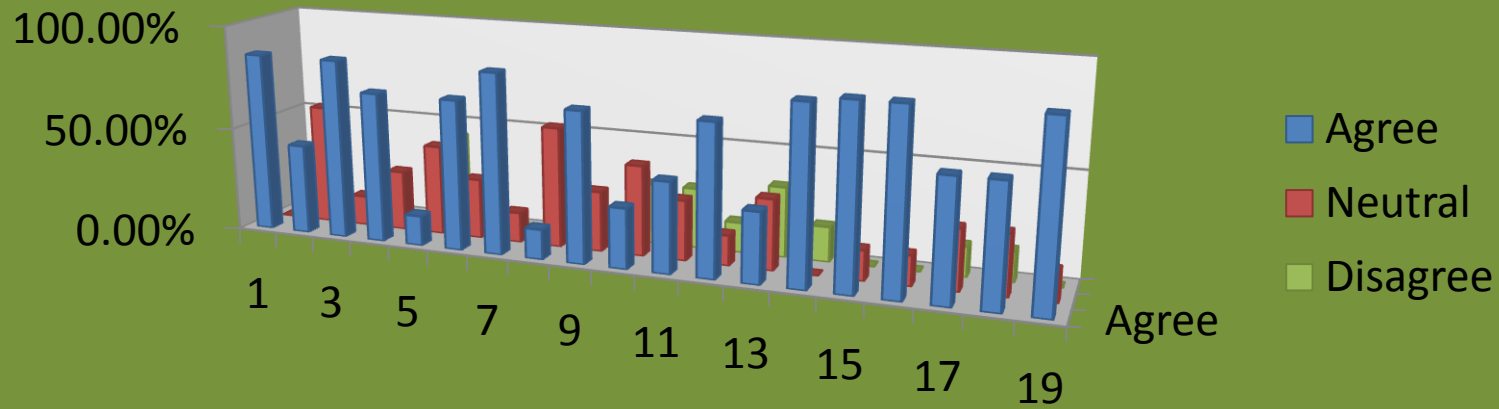
## Connectedness to Nature Scale Study Site 2



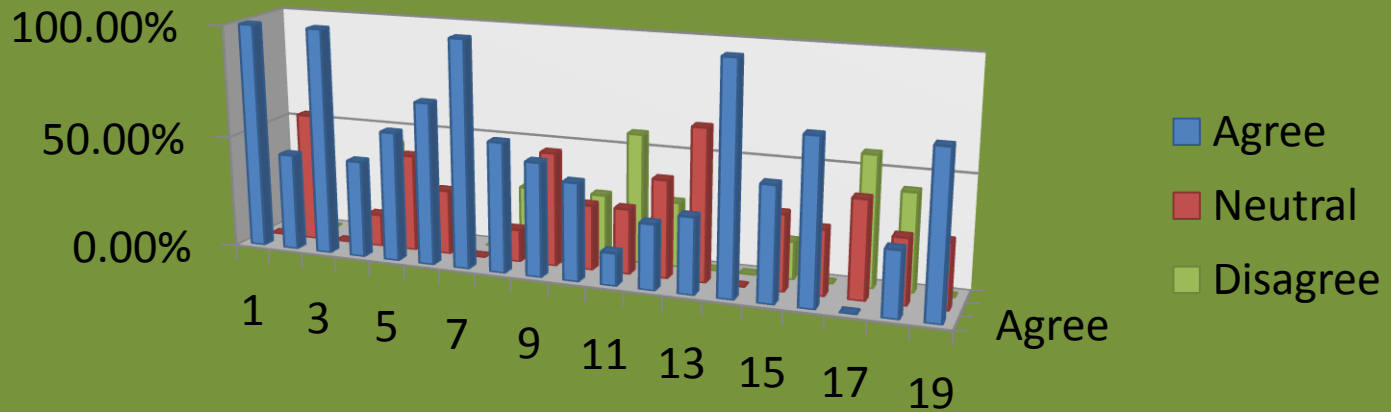
# Aspects of Identity

- Self-definitions are built on the relative importance that individuals place on characteristics
- When working with multiple landowners, we need to focus on the influence of personal identity on social identity and the role of relationships

## Aspects of Identity Scale Study Site 1



## Aspects of Identity Scale Study Site 2



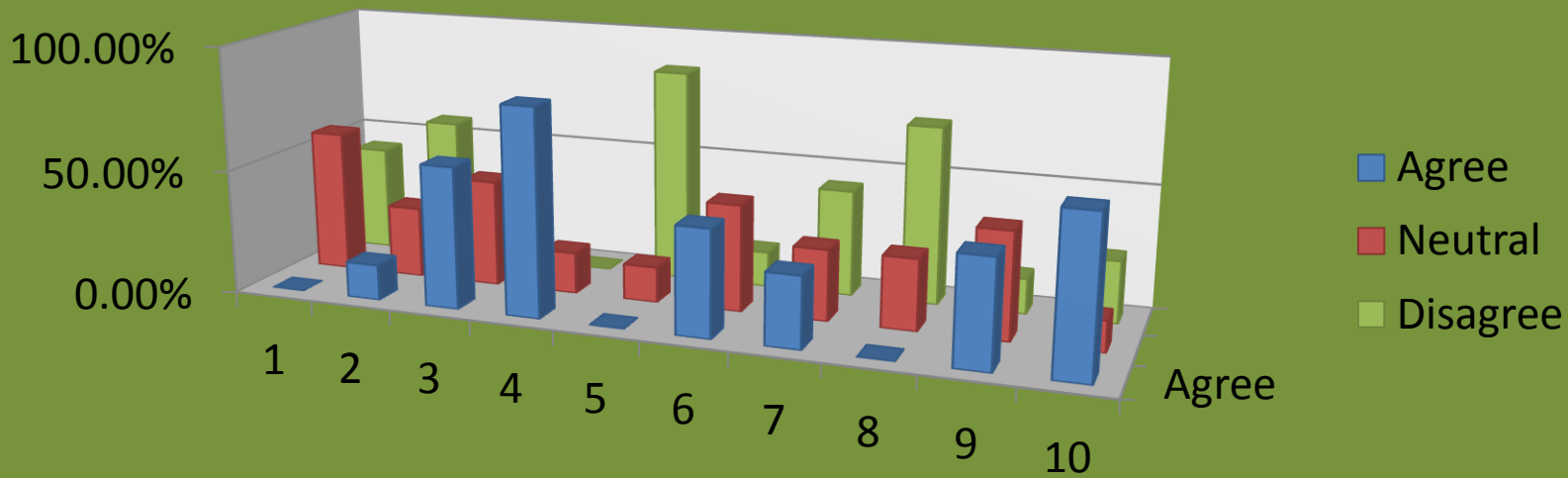
# Land-use / Institutional Scale

- This section focuses on the potential impact a change of land-use will have on personal identity.

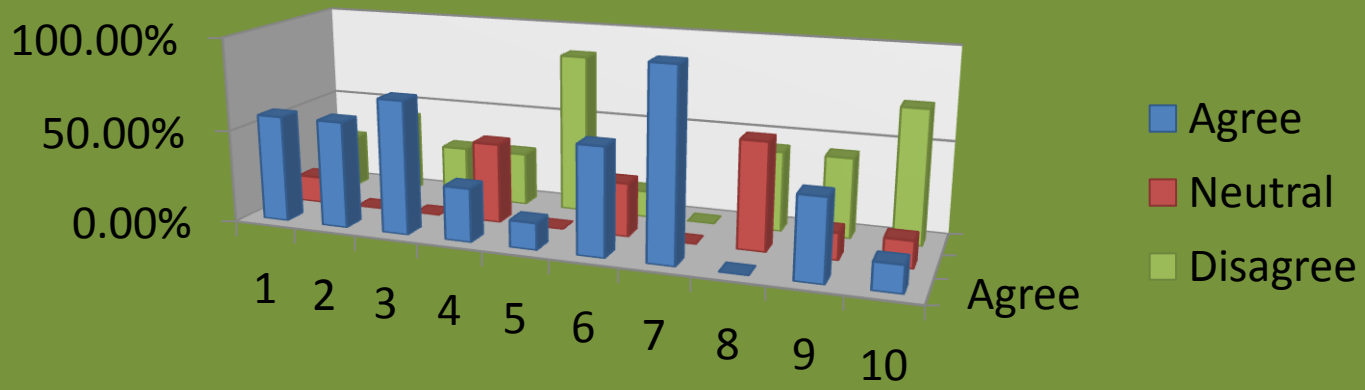
Example:

- ✓ Can carbon/water be considered agricultural products?
- ✓ If not, how does the shift from “traditional agricultural production” influence the personal identity of a “farmer”?

## Occupational/Institutional Scale Study Site 1



## Occupational / Institutional Scale Study Site 2





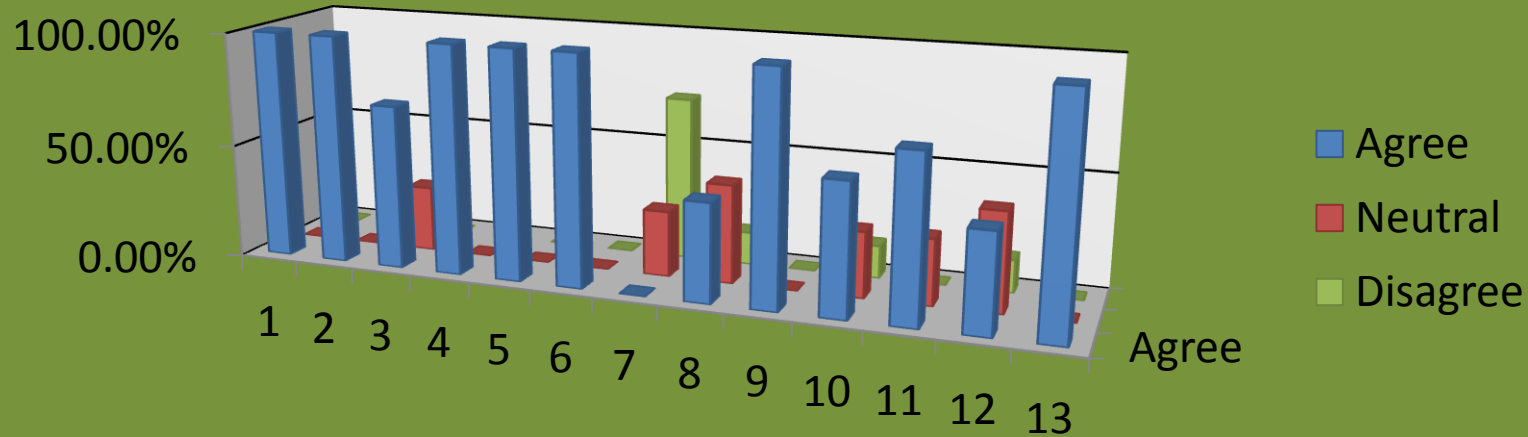
# Place Attachment Scale

- Place attachment is measured using a scaled-down list of 61 potential place attachment items
- Modern society is leading to a decline of place-based community.
- Not specifically a decline in meaning, but a change in how meaning is created.

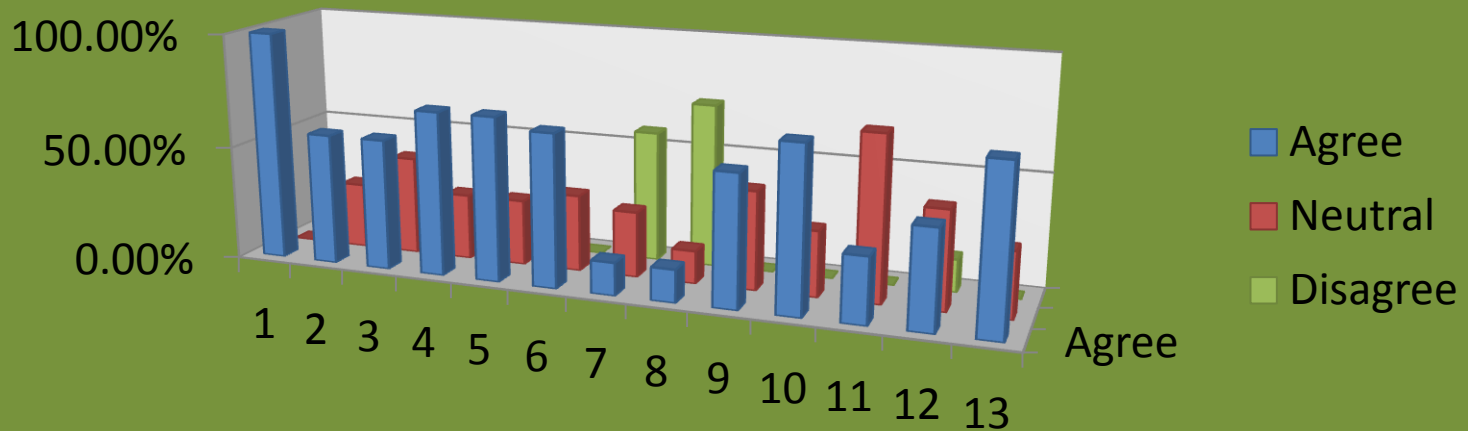
# Place Attachment Scale

- My interests are focussed on:
  - ✓ Does Place Attachment increase or decrease over time?
  - ✓ Does degradation of a landscape influence Place Attachment?
  - ✓ Does Place Attachment influence conservation behaviour?
  - ✓ Can you “buy” Place Attachment?

## Place Attachment Scale Study Site 1



## Place Attachment Scale Study Site 2



# Summary

- Informing beneficitation and incentives
- Re-design of “negotiation language”
- Understanding barriers and motivators
- Behavioral predictor – proactive approach as apposed to traditional “willingness” surveys

Thank you

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