



VALUING NATURE

**Exploring values of nature
on the Somerset Levels with
'ecological entrepreneurs'**

Pathways to positive futures

Objectives and background

- Objectives
 - Explore the motivations of 'ecological entrepreneurs'
 - their application and uptake of ideas of valuing nature
 - Roadmap to positive futures for SLM
- Background:
 - Designated landscape
 - Toolkit on tourist experiences
 - Participation and discussion groups

Key activities

- RSPB:
 - Tours
 - SL leadership meeting
 - Regional/HQ staff
- Range of businesses where nature plays a role:
 - Contacted 18
 - Interviewed 14 businesses
 - Workshop
- Interviews:
 - About past, present and future

Who?

- Businesses where nature plays a variety of roles:
 - Farmers
 - Agricultural contractors
 - Peat production
 - Willow production
 - Nature tour guide
 - Accommodation – cottages and camping
 - Food
 - Rural business marketing

Where?

- Somerset Levels and Moors:
 - Fragmented landscape of moors and 'islands'
 - Small scale industry
 - Complex drainage system
 - Contested knowledges about land and water management
 - Rejected designations
 - Uncertain future – sea level rise, climate change, flooding

My sense of 'ecological entrepreneurs'

- Busy keeping business afloat
- Constantly changing and adapting
- Close to nature and place
- Aware of landscape as human made
- Care for nature
 - but feel that gov and non-gov organisations are interfering or too narrow
- Economic priorities – some have little time to think about 'nice-to-haves'
 - Social values of nature
 - Positive future for the area
 - What nature should be like according to an 'expert'

Themes: Ecological entrepreneurship

- Sustainable businesses
 - Continuing, building on, maintaining current business
 - Challenges, small trials, accessing funding
 - Gist: nature comes second, business comes first
- Thriving place and community
 - Awareness of area
 - Securing legacy – knowledge of the past
 - Bigger plan for the area

Themes; Ecological entrepreneurship

- More involvement and partnership
 - Being part of decisions
 - Improving trust between nature NGOs and businesses
 - Opportunities for young people
- Better communication
 - Awareness of who else is out there
 - Communication channels
 - Scepticism about 'experts'
 - Seeing 'bigger picture'

Questions the placement raised for me?

- How do you 'foster collaboration'?
- What sorts of conditions/ events build trust?

Learning Experience

- Conceptualising entrepreneurship:
 - Problematised popular version of EE's as global good citizens
 - In relation to particular context
 - As virtuous non-leaky circle (nature – cafes – accommodation)
 - Pre-entrepreneurship – 'making more' not new value
- Politics of claiming business practices as 'ecological entrepreneurship'
 - Governing independence and creativity?
- Methodological
 - Good to have some material for people to respond to

Opportunities and challenges

- Near term
 - Circulating a roadmap of positive futures (via contacts and social media)
 - Session with NGO's
- Long term
 - Convening a group of businesses to present what's working elsewhere
 - Business group contact
 - Session with decision makers
- Challenges:
 - Being honest to what participants said
 - Representing findings as a model
 - Getting businesses to engage

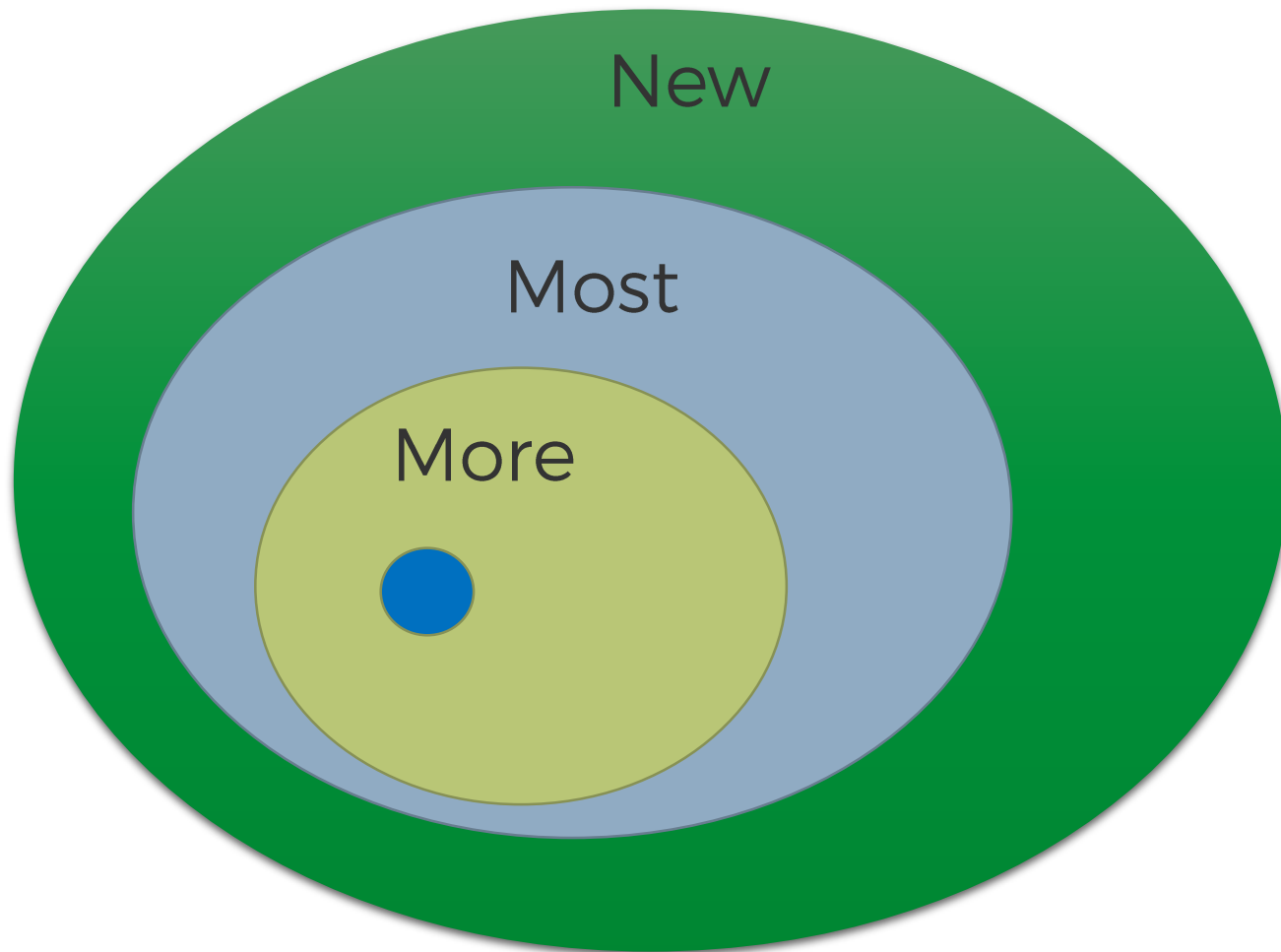
Progress on plans for outputs

- Notes on engaging with ‘ecological entrepreneurs’
 - Opportunities and challenges for putting idea of EE’s into practice
 - ✓ How can nature-NGO’s engage with EEs?
 - Describe range of connections between business and nature
 - Conceptualisation of EE’s
- Roadmap for positive futures for SLM
- Blogs

Thanks

- Any questions or comments?

Dominant idea of value



Ecological entrepreneurship

- Sustainable business
- Thriving place and community
- More involvement, partnership
- Better communication



Nature and
place not
important

Place-based
nature is at
the core