Divide and Commodify:
The Fetishization of Viewscapes
in Western Amenity Areas

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Paper no 1/06, ISSN 1503-2736

This is a working paper presented at Norsk Sosiologforenings Vinterseminar 2006

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Acknowledgments: The author wishes to express his heartfelt gratitude to Reidar Almås and all of the staff at Norsk Senter for Bygdeforskning for their generous support of a January 2006 research stay during which a portion of the field work that forms the basis of this paper was conducted, and much of the paper was written. Thanks in particular to Svein Frisvoll, who as a co-researcher has been invaluable to this project, among other things doing an outstanding job of organizing and acting as the lead interviewer during the majority of the Norwegian fieldwork. He also reviewed a draft of this paper, providing valuable critique and ideas, as did Bjørn Egil Flø and Johan Fredrik Rye, who is largely responsible for setting this research stay, and indeed the entire collaborative project, in motion and therefore also deserves special thanks. Finally, thanks to Inga Rudi for her work in transcribing and translating the interviews that are so vital to this analysis.

"(This picture) is the essence of everything for us.

When we come down here in our free time, this is the introduction we get – it sets us in the mood. Yes, there's something going on inside us when we see the house and the sea. That's the first thing we go out to look at in the mornings and we have thousands of pictures of just that view in all sorts of weather because when we are here we are very nature—sea—sky—ocean—occupied with those things.... To tell you the truth, when we started to look at the different categories and were going to take pictures, we had to start thinking all of a sudden. We have just simply walked around here and enjoyed ourselves, and we've had a good time. And then we were forced to think, and then we got the feeling, at least I did, that we were very egoistic here at home. Things around us weren't important as long as we enjoyed our closest surroundings. That was the feeling I got. I was a bit troubled (by your project) because 'oh my, why do I have to think about this when I have such a good time here?' (Hitra seasonal homeowner)

These passages exemplify a fetishization of viewscapes, which I argue is playing an increasingly important role in shaping rural amenity areas. Newcomers or seasonal residents of such locales may fail to appreciate, or choose to ignore, the social relations tied to their property or the consequences that their seemingly innocuous land use decisions can have

for local communities. The "magic" of the commodified natural amenity obscures more complex, holistic understandings of the land in favor of a simplified view based on individualized use or exchange value, which may complicate local planning and natural resource management efforts and conceptions of rurality, and lead to increased social conflict.

This paper explores the driving forces and consequences of the growing commodification and privatization of nature in many rural places in an era of restructuring, through the lens of a Norwegian region that represents an emerging example of this phenomenon and a relatively advanced American case that may reveal glimpses of a possible future for parts of rural Norway.

Intro: In the modern era, rurality has typically been defined in terms of a maximum absolute population or low population density. It is also commonly perceived to be characterized by particular types of social interaction (e.g. *gemeinschaft*), industry (e.g. agriculture or extractive industries), or landscape features (e.g. forests, open space), and conceptualized in contrast to urban places. In sum, rurality is often understood as rural space, farming-related activities, and a "traditional lifestyle" (Wilkinson 1991, p. 51).

While many rural places may still be accurately characterized along these dimensions, other communities, such as those experiencing "exurbanization," are increasingly difficult to classify in this way. Perhaps more importantly, Williams (1973) argues that a focus on the loss of traditional rural ways of life may be glossing over more subtle and problematic changes that are taking places in rural places, owing perhaps to the contested meanings attached to them by different groups of people (Shields 1991).

Inspired by the "cultural turn" within the social sciences, a number of authors (particularly in Europe) in the 1990s proposed to treat "rurality" as a subjective, socially constructed phenomenon (see for example Phillips 1998, Murdoch and Pratt 1993). Mormont

(1990, p. 36) concludes that "rurality is not a thing or a territorial unit, but derives from the social production of meaning." The social construction of rurality seems to be a particularly salient argument for Norway; during its nation-building era of the late 19th and early 20th century, many viewed its rural locales as the containers of true Norwegian culture, in large part because its cities were seen to be the home of elite values tied to Danish culture. Romantic era art, literature and folk stories, such as those collected from throughout the countryside by Asbjørnsen and Moe in the 19th century, helped to cement this valorization of the rural. According to Eriksen (1997), "It is not coincidental that Norwegian national identity should be associated with nature scenery and the rural way of life. Although the country had towns and cities, its scenery and folk traditions were eminently suitable as national symbols since they denoted that Norway had something which Sweden and Denmark lacked."

While there was substantial inequality between the standard of living in Norway's rural and urban locales through most of the 20th century, the differences started to flattened out in the 1970s, a period of centralization (Almås 1999). Yet in a nation that values nature as much as any in the world, with high rates of access to recreational second homes and its rural landscapes as the hallmark of its national image, rurality remains a powerful concept with real consequences. Many rural landscapes have become more valuable for recreation than extraction, as Westerners more and more relate to nature as places of leisure (Whitson 2001), which they increasingly consume (Urry 1995). As Ostergren and Rice (2004, p. 233) indicate, "All over Europe one can readily observe the outward-radiating impact of a highly mobile, leisure-oriented urban lifestyle. As the trend continues, more and more of the countryside seems dedicated to serving either the residential or leisure needs of the urban dweller." New demands are now being placed on rural spaces, producing residential and commercial development (or "exurbanization" – Marx 1964)

led by the increasing value placed on certain natural amenities of rural areas – their specific regional characteristics related to land and water: trees, forests, open space, lakes, rivers, coastline, mountains, canyons, and hills (Marcouiller, Clendenning, and Kedzior 2002).[1] If rural areas do indeed represent nature, traditional culture, and in fact a strong component of Norwegian national identity, their alteration is likely to be very controversial.

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I would assert that the alteration of rural areas is experienced by local people to a significant degree through changes in their sense of community, which, among other possibilities, could be diminished because of fragmentation, could be strengthened through there being increased impetus for active participation in local affairs, could shift to include new types of people who come there (seasonally or permanently) from other areas, or could take on completely new definitions.[2] Two of the primary channels through which people actively attempt to deal with such changes are civil society (i.e. becoming involved with voluntary associations) and formal planning processes.

Many have argued that "sustainable"[3] rural development in an era of restructuring[4] can be attained by practicing something akin to what one author labels grass roots ecosystem management, a participatory planning approach that "adopts a cross-cutting, holistic (ecosystem)

[1] I am using "amenity areas" to refer to rural locales for which their local identity and, increasingly, the (tourism-oriented) economy are increasingly linked to its natural resource endowment.
[2] It is also argued that these changes and tensions stem from other forces such as class conflict – as the peripheral, marginal rural population is increasingly impacted by actors and actions emanating from more central, more powerful areas (Rye 2006) – changes to or crises regarding local identity (Bell 1994), or shifts in the labor market (Almås 1999, 2003). I would argue that these and other factors are intertwined in rural restructuring, a complex process of which community change is a key component.
[3] I put this term in quotes because it has become a buzzword lacking a precise definition in much its usage. I, therefore, generally use "balanced, equitable development" throughout to attempt to avoid this problematic term.
[4] Using a political economic framework, Falk and Lobao (2003, p. 152) assert that economic restructuring involves three sets of processes: first, changes in economic structure or in industries, firms, and jobs, both farm and non-farm; second, shifts in social relationships or historical patterns of institutional arrangements between employers, workers, government, and citizens; and third, because economic restructuring occurs in a spatially uneven manner, it results in differential impact upon the fates of people and places across regions and locales.

approach to policy by seeking to meld nature together with economy and community. It seeks to devolve significant authority to local, place-based alliances (networks) of affected stakeholders from the community" (Weber 2000, p. 238). Bryan (2004) uses similar language: "collaboration, I argue, offers an important promise other forms of public decision making seem to lack – that of creating a sense of 'shared ownership' of our larger and more complex problems and challenges" (p. 882). I would argue that the sense of community alluded to, but typically not explicitly addressed in this literature, is vital to the success of local efforts to foster balanced, equitable development in amenity areas.

The interactional theory of community takes the perspective that local society is not the unit of collective values, communal harmony, self-sufficiency and social integration it once was, and that, in fact, this mythic notion of community has perhaps never truly existed (Wilkinson 1991). Even so, features of this romanticized view of community persist. While rural people are increasingly embedded in extra-local systems, networks, and relations, they continue to interact with each other on issues relevant to their common territory, and this place-based interaction is the foundation of community (Wilkinson 1991). Scholars have long debated the relevance of locality to the concept of community[5], but I agree with Wilkinson that place matters:

> …community has not disappeared and has not ceased to be an important factor in individual and social well-being. People still live together in places, however fluid might be the boundaries of those places. They still encounter the larger society primarily through interactions in the local society. And, at crucial moments, they still can act together to express common interests in the place of residence. Local social life has become very complex in the typical case, but complexity and the turbulence associated with it do not in and of themselves rule out community (ibid, p. 5).

[5] While in the post-war decades the arguments that community had been "elipsed" (Stein 1960) by mass society (Vidich and Bensman 1958) and the modernization of Western life rose to ascendance, there has in recent years been a renewed appreciation for the concept, based on the recognition that the great transformations of the 20th century caused dramatic change and global forces increasingly exert a powerful influence, but "events at the local level continue to affect material, social, and mental well-being in fundamental ways" (Luloff and Bridger 2003, p. 203).

The interactional theory of community is summarized as being comprised of three components: territory or place; social organizations or institutions that facilitate recursive interaction among inhabitants; and, social interaction on issues of common interest (Wilkinson 1991).[6] Wilkinson (ibid.) also argues that community is integral to social well-being and that its development has a positive impact on the natural environment of places, consistent with Taylor and Singleton's (1993) assertion that community is critical to solving collective action problems endogenously.[7] This is my point of departure on the concept, while I would also stress that community should not be seen as objective or static, but rather the product of continual negotiation through political processes in the community "field" (Bourdieu 1987).

Project Background: I have recently begun a fine-grained study of two places that are increasingly embedded in complex webs that challenge traditional notions of rurality, community, and nature-society relations. While a considerable literature has developed within rural sociology and natural resource management regarding the phenomenon of amenity-led development, a critical appreciation for the driving forces of this trend and its social and ecological consequences seems to be lacking.

This effort is framed around one overarching question: What are the possibilities for balanced, equitable development in rural areas experiencing economic and housing growth based largely on the commodification of nature? Because they are the sites of convergence for a number of important forces of change, rural amenity areas provide a unique opportunity to interrogate this and other important sociological questions. How is rural community change

[6] Bell (1998) elaborates upon the third component by differentiating between community interests and community sentiments in the determination of solidarity, which have been shown to lead to different levels and types of community attachment and voluntary participation (Ryan et al. 1995).
[7] These authors argue that community is characterized by: stability of relations, mutiplex relations, direct (unmediated) relations, and shared beliefs and preferences.

linked to economic restructuring? How is nature an active ingredient in the continual construction/destruction of community? What opportunities/constraints do local people face in attempting to steer the forces of change? How do local (permanent and seasonal) people perceive and respond to these changes? What are the social and ecological consequences?

In this paper I present reflections on my initial fieldwork for this project. The study of amenity areas in northern Wisconsin and mid-western Norway reveals a number of parallels between locales facing the consequences of similar trends (e.g. rural economic restructuring and growing neo-liberalist politics). This exploration also brings to relief, however, a number of important differences that may be particularly relevant for residents and stakeholders of rural Norway, underscoring the salience of the notion that it may be easier to preserve public goods versus attempting to convert private goods into public ones. As alluded to, a key preliminary proposition is that a fetishization of viewscapes is driving real estate development in amenity communities, leading to a growing demand for homes with coastal views, and a concomitant challenge to the formation of community, preservation of environmental quality, equitable enjoyment of rural landscapes, and ultimately, balanced development.

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Bayfield County, Wisconsin and Sør-Trøndelag, Norway share common characteristics including forested hills interspersed with pastures and an extensive coastline. They also contain areas that have experienced natural amenity-led development during a period of rural restructuring in recent decades. Sør-Trøndelag, Norway, has had a significant number of seasonal homes for some time, but they have tended to be more modest, with less accompanying commercial development. In addition, this region retains a stronger industrial and primary sector and is less dependent upon tourism than its American counterpart at this stage.

But communities in Sør-Trøndelag have begun to shift more of their development activities toward tourism and other amenity-based activities, including building modern seasonal homes. It has been estimated that roughly half of Norwegians own or have access to a seasonal home (Rye et al. 2005), and the exploitation of this tradition for development should only increase in the years to come, ceteris paribus. According to Flognfeldt (2004), the 1990s brought changes that "meant that second home ownership turned from a hobby and family activity into a professional real estate business" (p. 242).

Bayfield County: Bayfield is Wisconsin's second-largest county by land area and the state's northernmost, lying 503 kilometers north of the capital, Madison. It is also one of the state's most pristine, with extensive forest lands (400,000 acres of which are publicly-owned), 962 lakes, and diverse terrain (BCLUPAC 2003). Much of the county is on a peninsula that juts into Lake Superior, giving it more than 100 miles of coastline on the largest body of freshwater in the world. The county was created by the state legislature in 1865, and after the introduction of the railroad, a thriving timber and mining industry caused the population to swell to a peak of 17,201 in 1920. The population then dropped by 32 percent during an extended period of decline over the next half century (ibid.). According to Keller and Jurek (1998, Ch. 1),

> In the early 1960s, northern Wisconsin suffered from economic recession, adrift in an otherwise healthy economy. Economic carcasses littered the area: Logging had dwindled; farming had never taken root in poor soils with a short growing season; water pollution, excessive catches, construction of locks and dams, and an invasion of sea lampreys had all but destroyed the rich Lake Superior fisheries. Yet the northern waters and forests retained a measure of their natural beauty and abundance. On Superior's coastline, one still sensed the mystery and power of *Kitchigami* (big sea).

Consistent with the "rural renaissance"[8] experienced by many U.S. places, Bayfield County grew by 18% in the 1970s. This migration-fueled growth has continued. The 2000 population of 15,013 represents an increase of nearly 30% since 1970, coincident with a shift from traditional industries such as logging, mining, and fishing, and toward amenity-based activities, including retiree-attraction, the development of seasonal homes, and tourism (BCLUPAC 2003). Indeed, people come to Bayfield County to "consume" amenities such as coastal views and recreational opportunities, like hiking and snowmobiling, boating and fishing, and exploration of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.[9] This park was created in 1970 after a decade of effort and controversy, including objection from the local Red Cliff and Bad River Bands of Lake Superior Ojibwa, who saw this as yet another example of the taking of Indian lands. Proponents, led by Wisconsin U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson, sought to preserve the relatively unspoiled 21-island archipelago – featuring old growth forest, sea caves, bears and other wildlife – particularly in the face of the development of the largest of the islands, Madeline Island, much of which had become a de facto private playground for wealthy seasonal residents (Keller

[8] This refers primarily to the demographic shift in the U.S. in the 1970s, in which rural counties – after experiencing outmigration and population stagnation for much of the 20th century – experienced substantial in-migration and overall population growth and concomitmant economic revitalization (Johnson 2003).
[9] Pictured above is the Lake Superior harbor of the City of Bayfield. The photo was taken by an informant/participant in this research project as a "valued view."

and Turek 1998). A portion of the park became the nation's newest wilderness area in 2004, and it was recently rated the second most pristine national park in the U.S. (Tourtellot 2005).

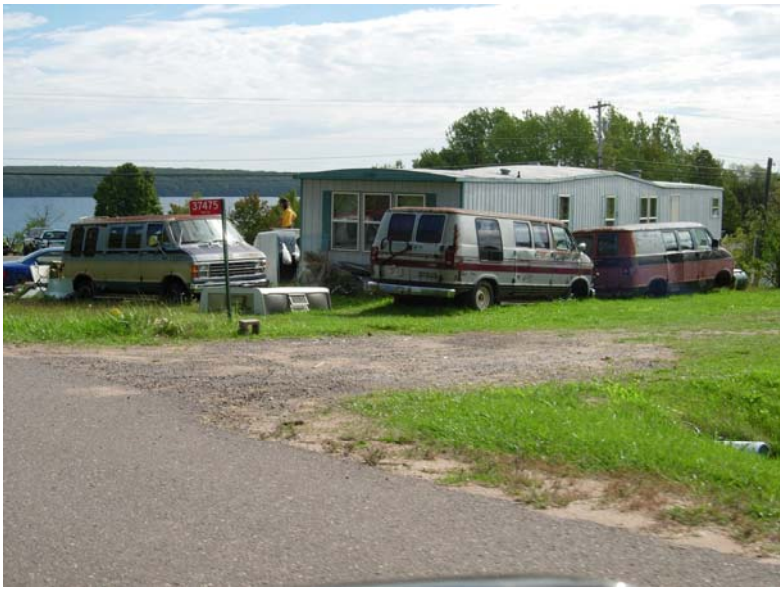
Bayfield is now classified by USDA as a "recreation county" based on the economic impact of recreation and tourism.[10] This sector accounted for nearly 4,000 jobs and $130 million in revenues in 2001 – growing 169% over a decade – 42% of all housing is now seasonal, and "leisure and hospitality" jobs are 25% of total jobs (U.S. Census Bureau 2004a). Most of the property along its Lake Superior coastline has long been developed for housing (much of it seasonal) or commercial activities. New housing development, therefore, seems to be occurring largely in the rural areas outside of the Bayfield and Washburn communities, particularly on lots that provide a lake view. The focus of this project is on the cities of Washburn and Bayfield – and the rural areas surrounding them – and at the Red Cliff Indian Reservation.

The city of Bayfield (pop. 611) is ideally positioned as the self-described "Gateway to the Apostle Islands" of Lake Superior.[11] Historically a fishing village that since its founding has also benefited from tourism, Bayfield is now home to a handful of commercial fishermen. Modern Bayfield is driven by tourism, as demarcated by the dozens of

[10] Recreation counties grew by 17% in the 1990s, virtually all from migration (Johnson 2003)
[11] The above photo of Bayfield was taken by Shaun Golding on a return trip from Madeline Island aboard the ferry.

bed & breakfasts, several gift stores, kayak and bike rental facilities, tour and fishing guide boats, and a number of bars and restaurants. It receives thousands of visitors annually from all over the globe because of its pristine natural setting and outstanding stock of historic buildings. Its 45-year old "Apple Fest" drew 60,000 visitors in one autumn weekend in 2005. Organizers describe the demographic profile for this event as "families, higher end vacationers who enjoy Bayfield's sailing, art and bed and breakfasts as well as regional residents who return each year to participate and enjoy the best of festival activities" (BCC 2006).

Despite a strong tourism economy, Bayfield was clearly "hollowed out" in the 1990s; while the percentage of its total housing units that are seasonal nearly doubled, its population dropped by 11 percent. In the adjacent town of Bayfield, however, the population grew by 3.6 percent to 625 in 1990s, as the number of total housing units grew by 39 percent, 40 percent of which are now seasonal in this rural county subdivision (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).[12]



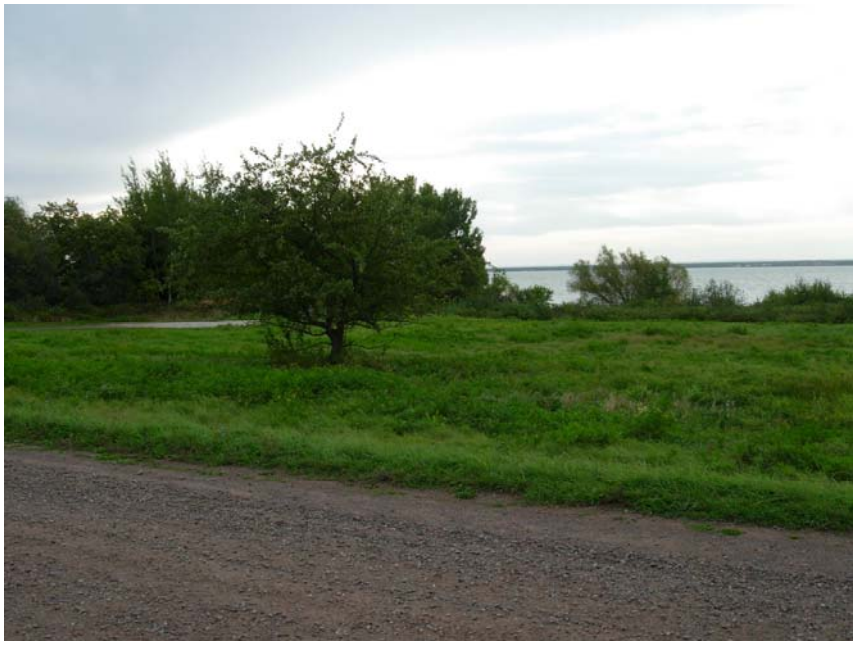
The reservation for the Red Cliff Band also lies on the shores of *Kitchigami,* three miles north of Bayfield, and has a total of 21 miles of shoreline within its boundaries.[13] The Red Cliff population of nearly

[12] Median housing value grew by 108% in town of Bayfield and 93% in city of Bayfield in the 1990s (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). In city of Bayfield, the poverty rate of 11.8% is substantially higher than the state average, while the median household income (MHI) of $32,266 is only 74% of the state MHI. In town of Bayfield, however, both the poverty rate of 9.1% and MHI of $42,750 are nearly equal to the state average (ibid.).

[13] The above photo by Svein Frisvoll is of a home in the primary residential area of Red Cliff, with Lake Superior and one of the Apostle Islands in the background.

1,000 grew by over 20 percent in the 1990s, but its economy is severely underdeveloped, with very little private enterprise to speak of. It once boasted its own productive forest, but by the 1960s all of its marketable timber had been cut (Keller and Turek 1998). It has been estimated that half of the tribe's population is now unemployed, contributing to a poverty rate of roughly 30 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Many tribal members combine traditional livelihood activities, such as small-scale agriculture, hunting and trapping, and fishing with seasonal work in construction or the forest products industries of the region. There have been local efforts to increase tourism, but the Red Cliff Band's casino is arguably the most modest and least profitable in the state. While their built environments and level of economic prosperity could scarcely be more different, the Red Cliff and Bayfield communities are inextricably linked in at least one way; Red Cliff students comprise roughly 70 percent of the Bayfield school district population.[14]

Washburn (pop. 2, 280), which lies 12 miles south of Bayfield on Lake Superior's Chequamegon Bay, seems to be in transition.[15] Founded by a railroad company in 1883, Washburn soon became a company town, as DuPont's



[14] Red Cliff's new tribal chairperson, Patricia De Perry, has made local headlines with her controversial proposal to require that, consistent with the makeup of the student body, 70 percent of school board members be enrolled Red Cliff tribal members and 70 percent of teachers and staff be Native American (Kreuser 2005).
[15] The above photo by Svein Frisvoll provides the view from an undeveloped and overgrown section of Washburn's waterfront, which lies mere blocks from its downtown.

explosives plant just south of the city was the dominant employer from 1905 to 1971 (USIU 2005). Washburn's economy then became dependent on a declining forest products industry and its status as the county seat and home to U.S. Forest Service offices. In recent years, fiscal austerity and overall economic restructuring have reduced employment in public administration and forestry, which is increasingly controlled by large corporate firms. While Bayfield's built environment is clearly oriented towards Lake Superior, Washburn seems to have developed with its back to the bay. Not surprisingly, its tourism economy is much less developed than Bayfield's. According to a seasonal resident of the adjacent town of Bayview, "Washburn is an authentic small town...while I think one of Washburn's most important assets is the public ownership of two miles of downtown lakefront, real estate development in Bayfield is driving the locals out."[16] But Washburn is also beginning to feel increasing development pressure from seasonal home developers and commercial interests. While it appears that the Washburn area may have received some displaced Bayfield residents through a process of rural "neighborhood" stratification (Salamon 2004), its population dropped slightly in the 1990s.[17] In Bayview, however, the population grew by 22 percent to 491 in 1990s, as the number of total housing grew by 32 percent, 23 percent of which are now seasonal (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

The unevenness of amenity-led development is evident in Bayfield County; despite the fact that the neighboring communities under study have similar natural resource endowments, they occupy very different positions in the trajectory of development. This inequality, accompanied, and in part driven by, the presence of a large number of seasonal residents and

[16] This is a paraphrase based on my field notes and recollection, as I have not transcribed all of my interviews as yet.
[17] Washburn's median housing value, while somewhat lower than Bayfield's, actually grew by 92% in the 1990s (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). In city of Washburn, the poverty rate of 10.3% is substantially higher than the state average (but lower than that of Bayfield), while the median household income (MHI) of $33,257 is 76% of the state MHI. In town of Washburn (an adjacent rural county sub-division), however, the poverty rate of 4.6% is nearly half of the state average and its MHI of $46,500 is higher than the state average and 40% higher than that of city of Washburn. While in Bayview the poverty rate is higher (7.6%) the MHI is the same as in town of Washburn (ibid.).

tourists – from Minneapolis, Chicago, Texas, and beyond – in a rural county in transition may be a recipe for conflict, if the values, interests, and behaviors of newcomers and long-time residents collide, hindering development of the sense of community necessary to effectively manage change to the economy, culture, and natural resources of the area.

Sør-Trøndelag: As discussed, Sør-Trøndelag is also experiencing rural restructuring, including an increase in amenity-led development. This county in mid-western Norway has a variety of localities facing different development problems connected to the growth of rural "late modern economies," and features examples of various strategies to deal with this restructuring. During the last several decades, like Bayfield County, Sør-Trøndelag has experienced substantial change. This is perhaps seen most clearly in its rural labor markets, where two of the foundational economic activities of the region – fishing and agriculture – have been increasingly replaced by expanding service sectors (Almås 1999).

It is not only in the economic sense that life in Sør-Trøndelag has begun to be transformed. While anchored by Trondheim, Norway's third largest city, most of the county has traditionally been very rural in character, with a large fjord bisecting it and numerous small villages scattered along it, the county's Atlantic coast, and within its mountain valleys. The social, cultural, and political effects of restructuring have also been dramatic, resulting from the "levelling out" of traditional differences between rural and urban areas, bringing a "national" culture to the "periphery." At the same time, the integration of rural places with various urban, national, and global processes has become more transparent (Almås 1999). Sør-Trøndelag has long been a site for seasonal home and related recreational activity and has an estimated 26,000 seasonal homes, accounting for 34% of all housing units in the county (Statistics Norway 2004a).

This study focuses on two amenity areas that lie just off Norway's western coast, near the

mouth of the Trondheim Fjord: Hitra and Frøya. The primary industries of this region experienced profound restructuring during the 1960s and 1970s. While the contraction of small operations and expansion of larger firms marked the fishing industry during this period, coastal "farming also underwent a large decline, partly because the combination of farming and fishing – which was necessary for those having small plots – almost disappeared. In 20 years, from 1951 to 1971 (this region) lost 1,900 of its 12,200 inhabitants" (Almås 2003, p. 173-4).

The island of Hitra lies 120 kilometers west of Trondheim. Based on the finding of an axe at Dolm, it is estimated that Hitra has been inhabited for 9,000 years. Its historically-dominant small-scale farming and fishing economy developed in the 17th century, while the population of Hitra municipality reached a high point of 5,382 inhabitants in 1950 (Statistics Norway 2005a).[18] In 1994 it was connected to mainland Sør-Trøndelag by the deepest undersea tunnel in the world (ibid.), a momentous development for an area that for decades had been served by ferry. Hitra has a dramatically variegated topography that includes 7,000 lakes and ponds and 2,500 smaller islands of various sizes, a small mountain range with a high point of 345 meters above sea level, and the home to the largest flock of deer in northern Europe, of which 600-800 are hunted annually. Given its setting, it is no surprise that this 680 square kilometer municipality has become an attractive locale for amenity-led development, particularly after it was connected to the mainland (Almås 2003).[19] This assertion is substantiated by recent commercial development in Fillan, and Hitra's more than 1,100 seasonal homes, which comprise roughly half of the housing units in this community of 4,025 people (Statistics Norway 2005a).

[18] The separate municipalities of Fillan, Hitra, Sandstad, and Kvenvær were united in 1964 and Fillan chosen as the new municipal center.
[19] The 565 square kilometer main island of Hitra is the 7th largest island in Norway (Statistics Norway 2005b).

As had been common in the Bayfield County study area (particularly within its substantial Norwegian-American community[20]), the livelihood of most families in this area of Sør-Trøndelag historically depended on small-scale agriculture and fishing. At the same time that seasonal home development and related commercial development have markedly increased, as in the city of Bayfield, Hitra has experienced a hollowing out; its population decreased by 14% from 1970 to 2000 (Statistics Norway 2004c) and it suffered from net out-migration in 2004 (Statistics Norway 2005a). While Hitra is one of Norway's first and top sites for fish farming, its unemployment rate is higher than the national average, a symptom of the turbulence, integration, and restructuring in the industry that began in the late 1980s (Almås 2003). The median after-tax income for Hitra households of $37,016 is 89 percent of the Sør-Trøndelag median and 86 percent of the national median (Statistics Norway 2005a).

While Hitra is well-known for the famous "Hitra action" of 1975, when local farmers holding a tax strike caused a national stir, only a small number of farms remain in operation in Hitra (Almås 2003). As in the rest of the country, Hitra experienced a major growth its local governmental services sectors starting in the 1970s (Almås 1999). Coinciding with this has been an effort to centralize municipal functions and retail and service offerings for the municipality in one place. In the case of Hitra, this place is Fillan. There, the municipal administration is completing its new modern offices and a number of retail outlets have opened in recent years, the feasibility of which depends to no small degree on the spending of seasonal residents and tourists, who were responsible for nearly $9 million in retail commerce in 2005 (Hulsund

[20] In our field work for this project we met numerous Bayfield County residents with strong Norwegian ties, including a well-known local political leader and Red Cliff tribal member with a Norwegian grandparent, and a gift store owner who had visited Frøya – the childhood home of her grandmother – in the recent past.

2006a).[21] Reflecting the growth of the public sector, one-third of the economically active population of Hitra is employed in public services, while one-fifth is employed in farming and fishing, and 15 percent in industrial production (Almås 2003).

Frøya was connected to its neighbor Hitra by another undersea tunnel in 2000. Its population of 4,114, while substantially lower than the peak population of 6,571 in 1965, nonetheless exceeds that of Hitra and benefited from a net in-migration of people in 2004 (Statistics Norway 2005c). But Frøya is smaller in size, with a total land area of 231 sq km. Within the municipal boundaries, however, are roughly 5,400 skerries and smaller islands, several with active fishing villages. In general, Frøya has a more uniform topography than Hitra, with less forest coverage upon a flatter, more rugged, rockier terrain that allows the sea to make its great physical, social, and psychic presence nearly constantly felt.

Amenity-led development is no less pertinent here, and Frøya has a growing number of seasonal housing units and a nascent tourism industry of its own, as it has recently started to "come out of Hitra's shadow," according to one seasonal resident. The northern part of the municipality features a well-known national nature preserve and landscape protection area around the island grouping known as Froan, where a number of endangered species of plants and birds find refuge in land and water area that covers more than three times the area of the main island (Almås 2003). Roughly 60 permanent residents and substantially more seasonal residents live on three of the islands, *fiskevær*[22] that have been valuable since at least the 17th century due to their proximity to some of the best fisheries in northern Europe. The presence of residents

[21] In this local newspaper article (Hulsund 2006a), the owner of a small grocery in a rural place known as Knarrlagsund indicates that roughly one-third of his sales are directly tied to seasonal residents/tourists, while if you consider customers whose own living depends on seasonal residents/tourists this figure rises to half of all sales.

[22] *Fiskevær* historically referred to island-based fishing villages located near productive fisheries and owned and controlled by coastal landlords in a quasi-feudal manner akin to the company mining towns of Appalachia in the U.S., in which employees lived in company-owned houses, exchanged labor or commodities produced for goods from company stores, etc.

within a protected area has caused substantial conflict over (actual and perceived) restrictions on the ability of local stakeholders to visit and utilize the resources of the various places within the preserve, which was established in 1979, largely as a response to development pressure.[23]

While a very small number of small farms remain in business, Frøya is even more dependent on fish farming and processing than Hitra, and still stings from the loss of a fish processing plant, a large local employer that recently was purchased by a Dutch firm and relocated. A long-time Frøya municipal civil servant describes the event in this way:

> *Frøya municipality owned large parts of that business from the start. But they sold all their stocks to Hydro Seafood. And of course when you have a business without local attachments then you really just have a certain amount of values on some papers somewhere that are available for everyone who wants to spend some money, or who wants to sell what they already have – so I guess we became a victim in that respect. And they moved to Poland...and the slaughterhouse part was moved to...Hitra. So there is only a tiny administration staff left.*

Despite the vagaries inflicted upon the region by the globalization of the industry, the fish-related economy remains relatively robust, however, and is anchored by Salmar, a mid-sized, locally-owned fish farm operator and processor that provides roughly 250 local jobs, has salmon net pens in the waters of the region, and is clearly a vital contributor to local economic and social life.[24] In addition, a number of local fishermen continue to survive on small scale fishing, launching their deep sea trawlers from the main island or a *fiskevær*.

While there are currently no wind turbines in operation on Frøya, there are plans to erect a large number of turbines there, which has caused consternation among permanent and seasonal

[23] The Frøya government was considering selling an area that included Froan to the state for a military practice-firing area (Frisvoll 2006).
[24] Roughly 200 of Salmar's local employees are Frøya natives, while the remainder are (often seasonal) workers from Sweden and the Baltic nations.

residents alike.[25] Like Hitra, Frøya has also recently built up one central place in a planned fashion, leading to depopulation of smaller outlying islands and places within the main island. Sistranda now features the offices for the municipal administration, high school, a hotel, a number of retail outlets, and a fairly busy commercial pier. And just as in Hitra, the public sector is the largest employer: one-third of the economically active population of Hitra is employed in public services, while 25 percent are employed in industrial production, primarily fish processing, and 15 percent in fishing (Almås 2003).[26]

Methods: I spent most of June 2005 in Norway, based at the Centre for Rural Research in Trondheim. I made several three to four day trips to Hitra/Frøya over this period. Svein Frisvoll, a geographer from the Centre, and I conducted interviews and toured each island.[27] I also took a ferry trip to one of Frøya's most well-known outlying islands, Mausund. In October 2005, Svein and I spent a week in Bayfield conducting a total of 8 interviews and touring the Washburn-Bayfield area. I returned to Hitra-Frøya in January 2006 and among other things was given a tour of a Salmar operations facility located on a floating raft next to some of its salmon farming net pens in Froan; observed a community meeting on Sørburøy regarding a land use plan for Froan; and interviewed two seasonal residents of Hitra-Frøya in Trondheim and two more key informants in Frøya, for a total of 15 interviews at Hitra-Frøya. We conducted the interviews in the native language of each site, most as a team. While eight of our 23 total interviews have been typical key informant interviews, most were based upon an application of

[25] While the proposed 63-wind turbine park proposed for Frøya was recently approved by local referendum and subsequent 13-10 approval by the municipal council, the utility company NTE has called for a new hearing of the plan due to significant local opposition (Kothe-Næss 2005). Hitra has for several years featured a number of energy-producing wind turbines on the mountains in the center of the island.

[26] While its unemployment rate is significantly lower than that of Hitra and lower than the national average, the median after-tax income for Frøya households of $36,070 is slightly lower than Hitra's, and is 87 percent of the Sør-Trøndelag median and 84 percent of the national median.

[27] Svein Frisvoll also conducted two interviews with Hitra-Frøya stakeholders in my absence. I ended up conducting three interviews in Norway on my own, in Norwegian.

photo-elicitation, the linchpin of our qualitative efforts. While similar processes have been used in natural resources management and leisure research for a number of years (e.g. asking visitors to national parks to photograph the sites they visit), our design appears to be somewhat unique.

In each place, we used a list of seasonal residents, the rosters of local governmental entities, and a snowball sample that began with key informants to identify potential participants from four stakeholder groups: seasonal residents, political/bureaucratic leaders, business owners, and "typical" permanent residents, attempting to recruit as broad a spectrum of the population in terms of age and gender as possible, with a focus for seasonal residents on people who lived for most of the year in urban locales, based on our hypothesis that urban newcomers might be exerting pressure on local social relations.[28] While some potential participants declined to participate, most were willing, which was somewhat surprising given the relatively high burden placed on our informants. We have had the most difficulty in recruiting members of the business owner stakeholder group to this point, while elected or bureaucratic leaders have provided most of our non-photo-based interviews.

We providing participants with written instructions and, if necessary, a single-use camera (most ended up using their own digital cameras). We asked participants to photograph places/things in their area that: 1) are important and valued ecologically and/or socio-culturally; 2) detract from their quality of life; 3) have changed for the better or worse; 4) should be preserved and 5) should be modified or redeveloped. After beginning each interview with some background questions, we interviewed each photographer while viewing the photos, using them as the basis for semi-structured interviews to probe about photograph choices and connect the results to the broader themes. Photos simultaneously capture multiple meanings and can be used

[28] For the Bayfield County fieldwork I was able to randomly select a portion of my seasonal and permanent resident sample by choosing a random number and contacting every n'th property owner from a database of Bayfield County, a queried version of which was kindly provided to me by the Bayfield County Land Records Department.

to examine individuals' multilayered perceptions of themselves and their community that are not as readily captured by traditional research methods. While the photographs themselves are of interest, their primary utility for us is as the de facto guide for an effective interview.[29]

*Reflections the Methodology***:** We have completed 15 interviews using this new methodology. While this is clearly a small sample, I will briefly present some initial reflections on the efficacy of this process. Most importantly, the use of photos taken by the participants seemed to facilitate effective interviews. They ranged in length from 1.5 to 3.5 hours, while the interviews conducted without photos were typically much shorter. The interviews were long, it seemed, because the photos allowed participants to speak relatively freely and naturally.[30]

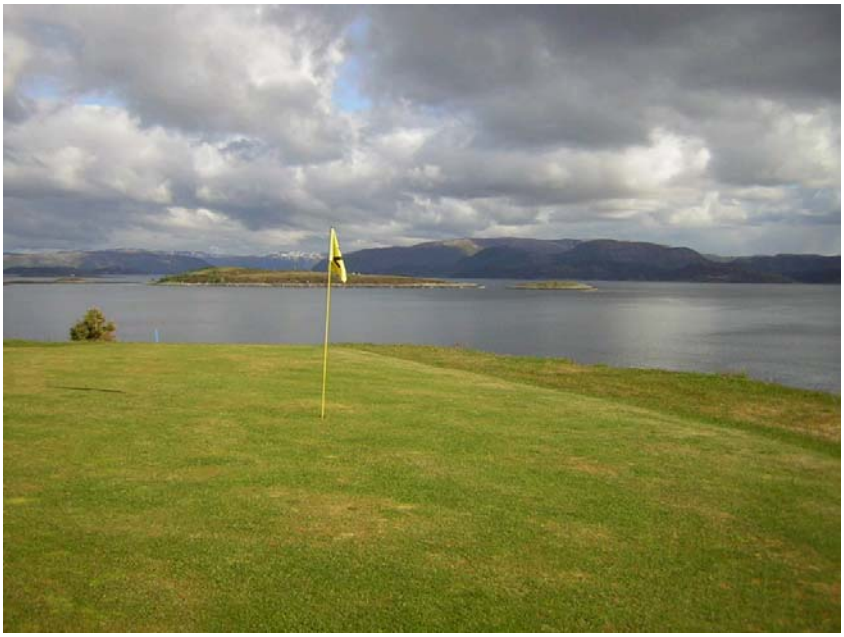
[29] It should be noted that several of the participants in this process used existing photos, chosen to match the categories of interest we provided, for the purpose of our interview.
[30] It should be noted, on the other hand, that the non-photo-based interviews were perhaps less open-ended but also more structured.

While we provided the framework, the photographs were subjects of the participants' own choosing, such that they generally had quite a bit to say about each. The photo-based interviews flowed more naturally than those in which informants did not take photos, and we found that in most cases, after we had finished discussing the photos, we had already covered the bulk of the topical areas laid out in our interview guide. Indeed, the photo-elicitation process proved to be quite effective at drawing out the perspectives of participants in a manner that required relatively little probing. This process also allows respondents to be active contributors to the project, an important element in a study designed to incorporate elements of community-based research, in which informants are transformed into participants. Nearly all of our participants commented that they very much enjoyed the process. Several commented that the interview was much more interesting for them than it would have been otherwise, as they were forced to think about the issues – and capture elements of them in a tangible way – ahead of time, causing them to be ready for a meaningful discussion. The above picture was taken by a permanent resident of Hitra-Frøya and exemplifies the type of site captured by several respondents in both the U.S. and Norway sites: the dilapidated rural building.

One permanent resident of the region, who had moved there as a part of the "green movement" in 1970s Norway, indicated that she had, in recent years, grown weary of living in a

"claustrophobic" rural environment. A native of Oslo, she had, in fact, been urging her husband to move to the city, and they had recently purchased a condominium in downtown Trondheim, which they called their "city cabin." She credited the photo-elicitation process for helping to see her community from a fresh perspective and renew her appreciation for the quality of life there.

One aspect of the local landscape is captured below. This photo, of the recently developed Hitra golf club, was one of several in the Hitra-Frøya case representing places that had been improved via *dugnadsånd*, or the spirit of (voluntary) community work that has historically been very important to rural Norwegian society.[31]



Quite on the other end of the spectrum, as alluded to in the quote at the start of this paper, another participant, a seasonal resident from the other side of Hitra, was quite troubled by our request for her to take pictures of things/places in her community that she was concerned about because it forced her to think about negative or stressful issues, ruining (at least temporarily) her sanctuary's idyll. She clearly preferred to leave these cares behind in her everyday, urban life. She indicated that in the end, however, the process proved to be somewhat

[31] Two permanent residents in our Hitra-Frøya sample took multiple photos of places/things representing the fruit of dugnadsånd-based effort, as did at least one permanent resident of Bayfield, and we were given a tour of a rural community center maintained in this fashion by a town of Bayfield informant. It should also be noted that a seasonal resident of Bayview with lifelong ties to ther area also took a photo representing such a place/thing, hinting at the potential for community development and collective action between permanent and seasonal residents.

cathartic for her as well, for it caused her to begin to think more about the connections between their use of a seasonal residence and the broader social life of the community.

The photographs themselves have proven to be quite useful.[32] They now serve as concrete representations of each place and the myriad ways in which residents perceive community persistence and change through the landscape, built environment, and human activities, such as the fish farming of local operations such as Salmar, which are seen by many local (and at least some seasonal) residents are critical to the survival of a productive economic base in the Hitra-Frøya area.[33]

Finally, another aspect of the project methodology that should be noted is its collaborative nature. To this point, nearly all of the interviews have been conducted in tandem, with each interviewer serving as the lead interviewer in his respective native country (and language). There are potential drawbacks to this approach, based on the issues such as the altered dynamics caused by the presence of two outsiders/academics and the notion that because with no local ties, a foreign

[32] It might be argued that by using this photo-based methodology, we are feeding the fetishization of viewscapes and other rural amenities. While I recognize that this is something to be reflexive about, I would assert that we mitigate the potential negative implications by using the photos primarily as an interview guide, for a process in which we ask participants why they chose to photograph the places/things they did, attempting to understand that which lies outside the particular view presented in the photo and which exists beyond it (the social relations tied to it). Interestingly, it was in my reexamination of the photo presented on p. 3 and the accompanying narrative from our interview that I was struck by the idea that Marx's concept of commodity fetishism might be important for better understanding the roots and effects of the development of these places.

[33] This photo, which features the founder and owner of Salmar at a local event, was taken by a seasonal resident and participant in this project.

researcher acting alone might be given more honest feedback. But we feel the positives outweigh the negatives. By utilizing this method, we were able to comfortably (and seemingly effectively) interview people in their native language. Further, in each study site, the native researcher had enough cultural competence and knowledge about the area to provide the research team with credibility, while the other researcher could then play the role of the foreigner and ask what otherwise might seem to be "silly" questions, but which might therefore yield interesting answers. In the Norway case, I found that while I asked a number of questions at each interview, the respondents generally focused on Svein as the native speaker and lead interviewer, and did not seem at all distracted or inhibited by the presence of an American, who largely faded into the background. I could understand the vast majority of what was spoken in the interviews and when this was not true, we were able to clarify the issue in English during the interview, but most such issues were dealt with in debriefing sessions that followed each interview, in which we could clear up any confusion and compare our respective takes on how the interview went and what themes emerged.

Tentative Propositions: My study of the processes behind and impacts of rural restructuring in amenity- rich areas rests on the central notion that nature has been "commodified" in a new way, and with potentially important consequences. The commodification of the natural amenities of places like Bayfield-Washburn, Wisconsin and Hitra-Frøya, Norway appears to be exerting a growing influence on the shape of rural places, the nature of their communities, and the health of their ecosystems. This trend is part of a larger process that Marsden (1998, p. 15) characterizes as being based on "new demands, for 'quality' food production, public amenity space, positional residential property, areas of environmental protection, and for the experience of different types of rural idyll or urban antithesis," which are

now much more entrenched in rural space than they were twenty years ago. These demands can perhaps be fruitfully viewed as being based on the growing desire of (relatively wealthy) individuals to "consume" the amenities of rural places.

> *Well, the one thing we've got to keep doing a better job on is integrating seasonal folks into our town, because 30, maybe 40 percent of the houses are second homes or in some cases fifth homes… I mean, I just made contact with someone who came here, not quite out of the blue, because they have a relative who has a second home here and they know some other people, but these folks have shitloads of money (Bayfield business owner and civic leader).*

Capitalizing on these demands for amenity consumption has become an important industry in many places, efforts that are often supported by local growth coalitions (Molotch 1976) because of the promise they hold for population stabilization, economic development, and (in some cases) personal gain. What does it mean for nature to be commodified for individual consumption? The simplest conception of commodity is perhaps that of any good or service offered as a product for sale on the market. In the amenity realm, the most natural commodity suspects would be golf course green fees, ferry tickets, kayak rentals, trail and park entrance fees, fishing licenses, tour and trip guide fees, hotel and bed & breakfast charges, etc. I might even assert that the t-shirts, keepsakes, books, antiques, lattes, beers, fish dinners, apples purchased in amenity-rich communities are examples of the commodification of nature when they are sold to people drawn to the place because of its natural amenities.

It is often argued that people seek to escape modernity by retreating to seasonal homes or making trips to places like Bayfield County and Sør-Trøndelag, which offer "a sense of place, rootedness, identity, and authenticity" (Williams and Kaltenborn 1998, p. 14). These (rural) characteristics are set in opposition to the conditions of their everyday (urban) experiences. Development patterns, however, seem to reflect a growing desire to extend modernity to such

places. For many amenity migrants and tourists, it seems that nature may primarily serve as the pretty backdrop for the types of individualized, consumption-oriented activities they enjoy from whence they come, as opposed to a site for active recreation, getting in touch with nature, or continuing family traditions as was perhaps more common in previous eras. This is what Tuan (1998) refers to as a "thin" habitat.

Indeed, after initial field work in each study site and some time to reflect, the most important instance of commodification of nature seems to be that of viewscapes, a notion exemplified by the quote and accompanying photo of a personal Norwegian viewscape presented at the beginning of this paper.

> *New residents are dramatically altering the landscape as they create their ideal rural home, with a house on a ridge and a view of the lake unblocked by trees...They don't realize that while they think they're only 'thinning' some trees, this has a real impact on the land, leading to major erosion and pollution when their neighbors do the same thing (Town of Washburn permanent resident).*[34]

[34] This is a paraphrase based on my field notes and recollection, as I have not transcribed all of my interviews as yet.

The above passage and photo – from an informant who is an academic professional and relatively new permanent resident of Bayfield County, but one with lifelong ties to the area[35] – demonstrates the manifestation of nature being commodified to accommodate modern desires. I would argue that nature as a view is commodified via many of the aforementioned individual commodities. It seems to me that the most important manifestation of this commodification in my study sites is the development of land, particularly for residential development. While commercial development is a salient issue, it seems to be for the most part effectively planned for and confined to areas zoned for such land use. The landscape seems to be relatively wide open for residential development, however, whereby individuals can purchase their own slice of nature, with views that signify an escape or an alternative venue for their consumptive lifestyles. In both study areas, private home ownership is obviously a highly valorized ideal, in the U.S. based on the preeminence of private property rights and in Norway due to "home" life being such a central societal value (Gullestad 1992). Home ownership therefore has an intrinsic goodness attached to it, causing it to fly a bit under the radar, particularly when it is viewed as economic development by local growth coalitions.

On Frøya, a very substantial proportion of the undeveloped land has now been set aside for commercial, and particularly, for seasonal home development. A permanent resident of Frøya critical of recent planning efforts asserts that the island is beginning to feel the negative consequences of the traditional Frøya mindset that the only thing you can do with the land is to reshape it – it is not valuable in itself:

> *The value is in the sea. So we end up with terrible solutions. There's very little in this plan about living. A municipality is dependent on the people who live in it, but they have included – in already separated properties and things like that, there are already*

[35] Further analysis of the diversity of stakeholder types and their common and divergent values and behaviors will be pursued as the project continues.

> *1,600, no, 1,800 lots to be used to build vacation homes. And they are not doing much concerning housing sites. There are politicians who say that people at Frøya who buy a home they ask for discotheques, they ask for health services, post offices, banks, sports arenas, kindergartens and important services like that. And we who work her we hear what people say – those who enter this building. And a lot of them are searching for a place where they can build a house and who are not occupied with where they can live – there are more and more of those people. They come here and they say – can you get me a housing site with sea view and is close to the sea? And we say no, we can't (Frøya municipal civil servant).*[36]

A seasonal resident of Frøya from Trondheim with an inherited seasonal home and long-standing ties to the area indicates that her neighbor, a wealthy second cousin who has for many years lived in southern Norway, is in the process of building a very large house next door, with a wing on top of the hill which, according to this informant, offers "no doubt Frøya's best view." She feels that the area has where their houses lie has been indelibly altered by the neighbors' "urbanization" of the landscape. Her "idyll is gone and she feels "locked in" to her own property (and locked out from her favorite view of the sea) and cannot understand how her second cousin can have such little regard for her neighbors or the history of their family's land. She also feels that the neighbor has been able to get away with a number of things that most local property owners would not, which she attributes to local leaders giving preferential treatment to those with wealth and power.[37]

In Washburn the local pro-growth government was recently ousted by candidates supported by Washburn Alive, a group espousing sustainable development. While new single-family homes around Washburn continue to be erected, a recent referendum about a large

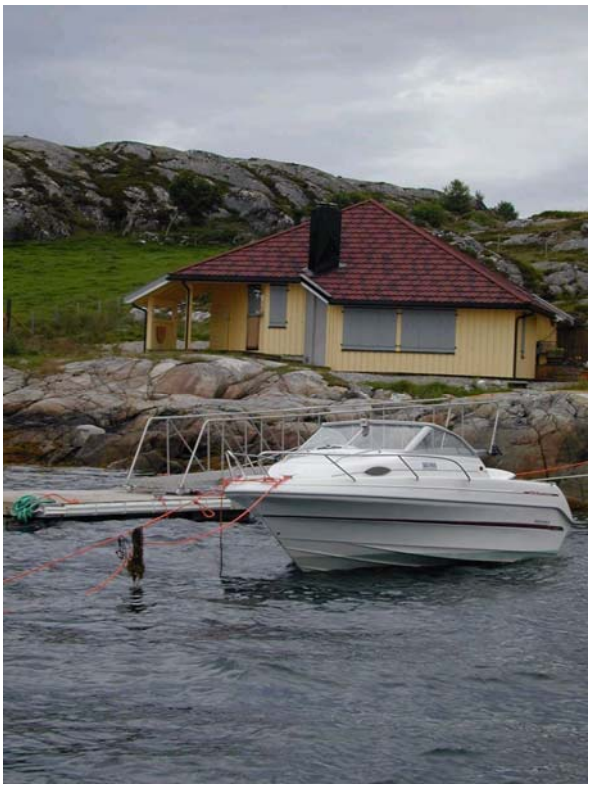
[36] It should be noted that the planning director for Frøya provided a much lower number regarding the lots planned for cabins, a discrepancy that may stem from the use different definitions or different perceptions of the issue.
[37] Frøya's planning director, while pointing out that because the Sør-Trøndelag county administration (as the arbiter of local land use disputes) is very restrictive about new development along the shoreline and thereby fairly restrictive of seasonal homeowners' rights, did not dispute the overall truth to this assertion.

lakeshore condo development proposed for city-owned property was defeated, splitting the local citizenry along the lines of preservation versus development, with newcomers seeming to favor the former and long-time residents the latter. One explanation of this could be that longer-time residents, having lived through various periods of local economic restructuring, are more concerned with seeing the *community*, Washburn and its people, reach a more vibrant state, while newcomers, attracted there because of the amenities, may more concerned with preserving the *place*[38], the physical surroundings to which they have become attached.[39] Other researchers, such as Stedman et al (forthcoming), have recognized this tension: "Bonds among members of traditional rural communities, defined by recurrent patterns of social interaction and shared goals, may be threatened by visitors and new residents who may be attached to these locales for other reasons."

This distinction came into clear relief in a discussion with the planning director of Frøya, who argued that the vast majority of current seasonal residents of Frøya have family ties to the area, many being people who out-migrated during Frøya's difficult post-war transition period – in which its population dropped by more than 2,000 people – who have now returned to their roots to take over a family residence or build a new one in the home area. He argues that it is only in the last few years that people with no roots to the area have begun to build or buy seasonal homes. But he asserts that seasonal residents, with or without deep roots in the area, behave in ways that reveal a very strong individualistic orientation and narrow view of place, in

[38] Place is itself a contested concept. My point of departure is the geographer Tuan's (1977) definition: a spatial setting that has been given meaning through the experience, social relationships, emotions, and thoughts of people.
[39] I recognize that this conception of place is based on attachment (and it could as well be dis-attachment) to physical surroundings, and given that this community is a spatially rooted one, community attachment here is also attachment to the physical. This proposed distinction merits further consideration, as does a related notion: whether the roots of such a phenomenon, long-timers being pro-development and newcomers pro-preservation, may lie in the fact that many long-time residents have been alienated from the natural factors of production as primary sectors jobs have disappeared, as Dickens (1996) argues.

which their ability to use their house in the manner they desire is their number one priority, trumping concern for community and locality.[40]



In our initial exploration of Bayfield County, the differences in development philosophy and orientation towards its natural resources between Washburn and its neighbor Bayfield (12 miles to the north) were striking. The same could be said for Hitra and Frøya. In Frøya, the political and civic leadership seems to have a laissez faire orientation and an overall positive view of second home development as economic development, which one relatively new seasonal resident of Frøya attributes to an aggressiveness and innovativeness of local people.[41] Indications were that the local government had chosen not to actively enforce the "100 meters belt" a national shoreline protection law that went into effect in the 1970s and prohibits new (non-industrial) construction within 100 meters of a shoreline. This law was designed to preserve the right to roam that residents of Scandinavian countries have treasured for decades. This same Frøya seasonal resident, a professional from Trondheim and member of the recently formed public private development partnership Frøya inn i Framtiden agrees with the local government's orientation to the shoreline,

[40] In the case of seasonal returnees to the area, part of the explanation may lie in the fact that the community they left to seek education or work years ago in many ways no longer exists.

[41] According to the Frøya planning director, who grew up there, this characteristic of Frøya natives is one side of a double-sided coin, the other being that many of them will fight stubborn and mightily for their own interests and are burdened by short-term thinking in which things need to happen now (!), which he attributes to their historical dependence on a fishing economy, in which one had to act quickly, for example when the herring were running.

indicating that "with over 5,000 islands, one problem Frøya does not have is too little open shoreline."[42]

In neighboring Hitra, which has had a larger number second homes than Frøya for some time, while the mayor and chamber director are strongly in favor of development and a liberal approach to the shoreline law, the municipal planner seems to be on a mission to ensure that new second homes conform to land use regulations and force the removal of those in violation.[43] The photo on the previous page was one of several similar sites captured by the planner to represent what he considers to be an issue of great concern for Hitra. In our interview with him he revealed strong concern about the individualistic and private property orientation of seasonal residents, as manifested in the building of cabins in prohibited areas and the installation of private floating docks, which are also illegal and unattractive to the viewscape. The planner's aggressive pursuit of adherence to the shoreline law has been somewhat controversial. For example, his proposal to identify and map every illegally built cabin and floating dock for the purposes of taking corrective action was met with vocal resistance, particularly on an outlying island now populated almost exclusively by seasonal residents.

One of our seasonal homeowner informants angrily described an ongoing conflict with the local government over a floating dock, from which he concluded that the in Hitra municipality, industry is given free reign while for small landowners every detail is regulated. This underscores the tension between the vestiges of the traditional rural economy and culture and of the so-called late modern era and the pressure that is being placed on the shoreline

[42] This informant indicates that his top priority in purchasing his seasonal home was for him and his family to be integrated in an active, lively coastal society, and they have succeeded in this regard, according to him. While his motivation seems to be unusual based on my preliminary data, this hints at the possibilities for community development amongst seasonal and permanent residents and points to the logic behind Frøya inn i Framtiden's efforts to recruit and cultivate active relationships with "Frøya ambassadors" like this informant.

[43] This infomrant also clearly revealed the strong tension between politicians and bureaucrats in both Hitra-Frøya, as politicians want to be "yes men' according to bureaucrats, while bureaucrats "simply attempt to enforce the regulations they are given," which politicians see as being overly regulatory and a barrier to development.

development law. This pressure is clearly being felt locally, where a recent article in the local newspaper is devoted to the Hitra mayor's argument that the municipality needs to make it easier for cabins to be developed within the protected zone (Hulsund 2006b) and in the same issue the director of the chamber of commerce is quoted as follows: "people want cabins with ocean views. If we want to have additional seasonal residents on Hitra, we must offer attractive lots near the sea" (Hulsund 2006a). This tension also reveals itself on the national scale, where 74 percent of the applications for dispensation in the coastal zone were granted during 2004 and 24 percent of all of Norway's lengthy coastline is now less than 100 meters from the nearest building (Statistics Norway 2005e).

In Frøya, one of the issues of common concern seems to the planned construction of a number of wind turbines along its northern coast, which a retired couple, who are lifelong residents (and former small farmers/fishermen) of the island, fear would "ruin Frøya." While the noise and impact on wildlife are also factors, they seemed to be most concerned about the effect of the wind turbines on local viewscapes, both from the island and of Frøya while afloat, since its topography is quite flat. In both study sites, while all stakeholders recognize the importance of viewscapes to the community and individual quality of life, overall there seems to be a significant disconnect between residents and local government over the direction development/preservation efforts should take. In an oversimplified summary, on Hitra-Frøya, long-time residents and some bureaucrats seem to favor preserving of the commons, both in terms of access and viewscapes, whereas seasonal residents and elected officials seem to be in favor of privatization of both – albeit for different reasons.[44]

[44] This is a highly complex issue upon which I will expand my analysis as the project develops. All of the stakeholders we have interacted with not only seem to recognize that the views of the sea and coastal landscape are perhaps the defining feature of Hitra-Frøya, but also recognize the value of the 100 meters belt. More important,

> *The challenge for a municipality is to start with the people living in the municipality and who are supposed to like it there. And not make a thing like they have done here where they have based it on those who are coming here and spending their spare-time here. Because they don't keep up a community. It's the people who live here that keep up a community. And I think it's wrong of a municipality to make a plan like this and introduce it to the inhabitants. But it's part of the process that has started where real estate agents have to possibility to decide over a lot of the development towards who is buying. And of course the real estate agent makes the most money by selling to people who want second or vacation homes. Because then it will be much easier to manipulate the housing market. And then they will get more out of the trade in real property. And that's the intended policy from the real estate agents. By controlling this. It's a part of the development that's not wholesome.... And especially in relations to small farmers that struggle without getting a part of the subsidies....and produce a whole lot of food that is excellent to eat. But (farmers) also produce the landscape (Frøya municipal civil servant).*

In this passage, our informant points the finger at both local political leaders facilitating the commodification of nature and the real estate agents exploiting it. Underlying this discussion is the important question of whether people and local productive enterprises should be a part of these viewscapes, as I touch upon a bit more below. Long-time residents of both places in particular seem to value the perpetuation of historical practices and productive enterprises because of their potential to provide a foundation for employment and stability of the local economy and identity. A number of Bayfield County informants identified the agricultural landscape and vestiges of the fishing industry of the area as priorities for preservation. The rural town of Bayfield, in fact, recently become only the second municipality in Wisconsin to practice the purchase of development rights from local farmers, but our local political informant indicated that this nascent effort may already be stalled due to lack of funding. Bayfield County informants also pointed to the rapid growth over the past decade in the number of real estate

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however, is the behavior (e.g. land use decisions and policies) of these stakeholders and which calculus (preservation/commons vs. development/privatization) bears more influence on such decisions.

agents operating in the area as an indication of the growing commodification of land in the region. This leads back to the fundamental questions of how rural communities can create a balance between preservation (of local culture, history, landscape, practices) and economic development (of productive and post-productive types) and what sustainability actually means. Without the presence of working landscapes and perpetuation of local culture, will amenity communities even be attractive enough to build sustainable tourism economies? Are pretty views of the coastal landscape or historic buildings enough? As has been suggested by informants regarding Bayfield, if a rural locale develops into merely a façade, a background in which seasonal residents and tourists can act out their vision of the rural idyll, will this be sustainable? Sustainable for whom?[45]

A key to answering this question lies in the ability of local people to shape the future of their community. As alluded to, there seems to be concern in both study sites in this regard, both due to growing commodification and privatization of land and the planning process. In Washburn, it seems that local people have become alienated from active participation in local planning efforts – due to their seeing "plan after plan be written, with little action," according to a local bureaucrat – and the divisiveness of the proposed lakefront development, which brought people in relatively large numbers to the polls to vote in a referendum, but not for proactive planning efforts, such as efforts to create a participation-driven comprehensive plan, as mandated by state law. In Hitra-Frøya, the legacy of decades of central planning seems to loom large; residents turn out to vote, as in the recent referendum over the planned wind farm, but seem to play a passive role in planning. In regards to local plan for the municipality that lays out large tracts of land for second home development and a large wind farm, a local informant indicates:

[45] Recall that the permanent population of Bayfield is dwindling and the income level of its permanent inhabitants is well below the county and state averages.

> *We are not supposed to talk about it. Why don't we have a discussion about the development? Why is there a political level that doesn't express themselves and go out and agitate for or against it. But no – they are completely silent. And silence – that scares me (Frøya municipal civil servant).*

Having attended a community meeting on Sørburøy regarding the creation of an updated land use plan, I was struck by the apparent dominance of bureaucrats when it came to both the discourse at the meeting and what I understand to be the process for the completion of the plan. While the nature preserve and fate of the Froan fiskevær is a highly volatile local issue, this meeting was largely extremely polite and in my estimation a listening session as opposed to a planning meeting, in which local people would be given the opportunity to develop a shared vision and goals for forging a balance between preservation and development of the area. The planning director of Frøya indicates that in the case of Frøya, engaging people, whether ordinary citizens or elected officials, in the development of plans is generally not successful, as they tend to take a passive role, choosing instead to react to things that collide with their interests, such as restriction of their ability to enjoy their property and land in the manner they desire.

In both the U.S. and Norway sites it is not so much the amount of consumption of land for new homes that is problematic at this point, but the type of development that has the biggest impact.[46] In the Washburn and Bayfield areas, it is condos built on the lakeshore and perhaps more importantly (but less visible), big new homes with urban trappings – such as large, chemically treated lawns – being built on hillsides and former pastures, where the views can be captured, with trees removed to reduce impediments to this consumption. In Norway, larger, more modern homes are likewise clearly beginning to replace the traditional rustic cabin shared by families and passed down from one generation to the next, many of them in Hitra built in

[46] The amount of land – a very finite resource – consumed in both places will no doubt be of increasing concern in both places should current rates of exurbanization continue.

illegal proximity to the sea, to enhance their inhabitants' ability to be the sole users of the shore and the views it frames. An exemplar of development geared towards the modern seasonal home buyer is found on the nearby island Stokkøya, where modern houses built on the same architectural plans upon a hillside with stunning oceans views are being marketed to urban professionals desiring a turn-key vacation home outfitted with broadband internet, who will take many of their dinner meals at the "Ocean centre," and have drinks at the beach bar.[47]

In both nations, the conspicuous location of many of these new homes supports the notion that they are "positional goods," intrinsically scarce goods with value determined by their social environment and producing satisfaction for their owners depending upon the amount possessed by those around them (Hirsch 1976).[48] Not everyone can have a house with a great view. As Marx wrote: "A house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are equally small, it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But if a palace arises beside the little house, the house shrinks into a hut" (as quoted in Brittan 2000). This type of consumption, as alluded to, has begun to surface in our study sites, with important implications. Examining it also puts a finer point on the use of the conception of commodity in this context.

But are viewscapes and the other amenity-related phenomena discussed above really commodities? What does it mean to consume them? And is consumption really an important consideration in this analysis? I would argue that it is indeed useful and logical to consider these aforementioned items as commodities, and that consumption-oriented values and behaviors are indeed key ingredients to community change in amenity-rich areas. The natural characteristics of these regions have clearly been turned into products that can be sold on the market and

[47] For more information on this development, go here: http://www.stokkoy.no/

[48] The planning director of Frøya argues that some of the newly wealthy (through, e.g., fish farming) long-time residents of Frøya have erected large homes conspicuously located on hilltops or the shoreline, with outstanding views of the sea. He argues that some local politicians have misinterpreted this, believing that potential seasonal residents, too, desire such lots and thus promote the development of such sites.

converted into surplus capital. It could perhaps be argued that many of them, particularly land, are not reproducible and therefore violate a classic condition of the concept of commodity.[49]

I would assert that the type of real estate development that seems to be occurring in amenity-rich areas in both the U.S. and Norway – in which individualistic orientations towards land, where it is valued for its market value and provision of personal viewscapes while other, more holistic connections to it are rendered less important – signify its ascension as a commodity. In Norway, where half of the population owns or has access to a seasonal home and there is long history of intergenerational family cabins, the third quarter of 2005 saw a record number of seasonal homes be sold on the free market (Statistics Norway 2005d), supporting Jacobs' (2005) assertion that in Norway, as in other European nations, social attitudes are shifting towards a more American conception of private land ownership.

But can a view be commodity? Folks in New Hampshire certainly seem to think so. With property values there skyrocketing in amenity areas there due in part to demand for seasonal and permanent homes for people from "down below" (Boston, New York, etc.), the so-called New Hampshire "view tax" has recently been making headlines. While state officials say there is no such thing as a "view tax," views have become so valuable in some places that assessors are giving "view factors" a separate line on appraisal records, creating (unintended) tax burdens for long-time local landholders (Farenthold 2005). In Wisconsin, the fact that property taxes are based on assessed values of homes, which stems from among other things what (often inflated) prices have been paid for homes in the same vicinity, has caused rural gentrification and displacement in amenity areas as more moderate income families can no longer afford to pay their taxes after large seasonal homes are built nearby. Norway's current property tax formula seems as though it can serve as a buffer against this phenomenon to some degree, but given the

[49] Polanyi (1944) labeled land, labor, and money as "fictitious goods."

(hypothesized) overall shift towards an American conception of property, this should perhaps not be viewed as unchangeable.

Looking through the amenity prism also complicates the notion of consumption, the "using up" of resources. Does consumption necessarily entail using up the item and producing some sort of waste/by- product? Or can the concept also encompass the consumption of the aforementioned amenity-based commodities, not all of which meet this condition, but certainly involve use and alteration? I would argue that it can be widened to include the consumption of viewscapes and other amenity-based commodities, which are utilized by individual consumers and thereby indelibly altered. But can we "consume" a view? After all, once you've viewed a landscape, it's still there, unchanged in any tangible way. Indeed, this is not a simple link to make. But if we widen the view from the lens of consumption a bit, we see the chain of repercussions that follows from the commodification of viewscapes – from the gentrification of rural neighborhoods, to the proliferation of (problematic) suburban-style housing, to the privatization of the landscape producing restricted access to these views – as having socially- and environmentally-transformative effects. Urry (1995) argues that "visual consumption" is the primary factor pushing the growing commodification and degradation of rural landscapes. Residential real estate development in amenity communities, with viewscapes as a driving force, clearly seems to be an example of environmentally significant consumption (Curran and de Sherbinin 2004).

As alluded to, Marx's concept of commodity fetishism appears to be particularly salient to understanding the processes taking places in these contexts. This is the notion (from the first volume of *Capital)* that with the rise of a commodity-driven, market-oriented society, social relations begin to be perceived as relationships between things, such as between capital and

labor. The true relations are masked due to the "mystical" or "magical" nature of the commodity. The resulting "veil of ignorance" renders the (potentially exploitative and destructive) relations of production invisible to those outside of them.

In my application of this concept to these cases, the social relations tied to land are obscured by what appears to be a relationship between things: land and the market. Land begins to be divorced from its local social context as it is perceived via one-dimensional views that are largely devoid of people.[50] One of my primary propositions at this stage in the project, therefore, is that a fetishization of viewscapes is important both because it seems to be a driving force behind real estate development in amenity areas – leading to a growing demand for homes with coastal views – and because of the barriers to community development produced by such a phenomenon.

It is not the relations of production of a widget, but rather the process of converting amenities like views of the "powerful and mysterious" *Kitchigami* into commodities and with what consequences that I hope to make visible through this project. The veil of ignorance appears to be in place in both sites, as indicated by the aforementioned quotes from the Town of Washburn resident and the Hitra seasonal homeowner, who was troubled by our photo elicitation process because it forced her to look beyond the veil – the view – to the class division and social conflict that seemed to lurk on the other side.

This notion has parallels to preliminary data from Jacobs (2005), which suggests that European (including Norwegian) attitudes towards land ownership are moving towards a more classic U.S. conception, and away from an orientation that integrates the *social function and obligation of private property*. Importantly, it appears that in Hitra-Frøya, the rational planning

[50] Cosgrove (1984) has written about the historical importance of landscapes to social formation and notes that idyllic landscape paintings, for example, have often been drained of labor in favor of open, pastoral scenes.

efforts of the local government are (perhaps unwittingly) contributing to this fetishization of viewscapes in important ways.

By creating zoning and land-use plans that call for a stark separation between areas designated for seasonal homes and those designated for permanent homes, the local government is enforcing the physical separation between permanent and seasonal residents, at least in the setting of the home environs, where seasonal residents spend the bulk of their time when at Hitra-Frøya. This forms a barrier to interaction and community building and may also help to explain why so little conflict between permanent and seasonal residents has surfaced in our primary research to date. Further, while it allows planners to control the siting of various land uses, such rational planning encourages the division and commodification of local land – particularly those areas with views of the ocean – for sale as vacation home lots. The sites can then be naturally seen by prospective buyers in a one-dimensional way, with little apparent connection to permanent residents and their ways of life, leading to the fetishization of viewscapes. After seasonal residents become ensconsed, if they indeed experience little interaction with local people with more multi-dimensional or simply different conceptions of the land and what it means to live in community there, the veil of ignorance will likely remain in place. Just as the oyster requires the gritty, irritating influence of sand to produce a pearl, the veil of ignorance can only be removed, the true relations related to these land use decisions revealed, through a confrontation of some sort, which may in many cases be uncomfortable and troubling.

Conclusions: Contrary to some of the amenity literature, which paints the issue in black and white terms, one of the most striking things about our research to date has been the apparent lack of conflict between seasonal and permanent residents in both study sites. I would argue that

this is a temporary state of affairs, produced by the need for and often unquestioned desirability of economic development in these rural places on the one hand, and the veil of ignorance that results in members of both stakeholder groups not fully recognizing or choosing to ignore, the subtle development processes – and their consequences – taking place. Therefore, increased social conflict and environmental degradation may be upon these places before they realize what has happened. This will serve to diminish the very amenities – including the community and local culture that I would argue is integral to their attractiveness, but is under-recognized due in part to amenity fetishization – that made these areas desirable in the first place.

I would assert that a key condition for places grappling with issues related to amenity-led economic growth is the existence of a functional community, such that residents of a locale, supported by social organizations or institutions that facilitate recursive interaction, can come together around issues of common interest.[51] A combination of forces seems to be hindering the development of community in both study areas, including: the gentrification of Bayfield and resulting displacement of service workers and other moderate income people to Washburn and other more affordable locales;[52] the division of rural hillsides and landscapes for residential use, driven by the desires for personal viewscapes on the part of relatively wealthy people, some of whom may be there for only a few weekends a year and have little interaction with other residents; the contested meanings attached to the area by different stakeholder groups; the continued alienation of certain communities from the economic mainstream of the region; [53] and,

[51] It is argued by many in the participatory planning literature that community can grow out of the planning process if certain procedures are followed. I do not deny this possibility, but rather wish to stress that a sense of shared ownership and commonality found in community – not necessarily harmonious, but involving recursive interaction in the public sphere – would seem to be vital to the success of such efforts.

[52] More than one Norwegian informant expressed worry about gentrification pricing the working class/younger generation out of the local housing market.

[53] My early take on how Red Cliff fits into this regional amenity economy is that right now it really doesn't. There appears to be interest by Red Cliff leaders in better capitalizing on the growth taking place all around it and some

the pricing out of younger, working class residents in Hitra and Frøya from the local housing market.

While there is no doubt interest in building and being a part of community on the part of many residents from the various local stakeholder groups, economic, demographic, and environmental change may be producing blockages in the arteries of community in many cases. In his study of a rural English village, Bell (1994) found that nature provided a level of common ground for a class-divided local populace; while the scenes captured by the various local stakeholders involved in the project suggest this possibility, my (preliminary) data hint at how nature can also facilitate the deepening of class divisions.

Due to a combination of the histories related to planning processes and politics, and the notion that an increasingly individualistic orientation towards place has permeated local affairs in both areas, it is perhaps no surprise that civil society appears to be the channel in which many residents choose to pursue their interests. These efforts – such as fundraising and voluntary labor to build parks, golf courses, hiking trails, marinas, and even restaurant facilities, or groups with more political ends such as Washburn Alive, formed to support local candidates promoting sustainable development in Washburn or the ad hoc association that came together to oppose to windmills in Frøya – involve the building of a form of community, but with others sharing the same interests, consistent with trends in civil society throughout the Western world. Many clearly are geared towards improving the quality of life in their locality in certain ways, and some even involve permanent and seasonal residents working together in an arena perceived to be one in which they can achieve common goals. Others seem to be more narrowly focused and even divisive. But in comparison to the probability of effectively bringing diverse stakeholder

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interest by leaders of the neighboring communities to "help" further this goal, but I don't perceive much integration in regional efforts.

groups – including seasonal residents who may be viewed by some permanent residents as having no right to get involved with helping to shape the future of amenity areas – together in participatory planning processes, civil society may represent a possible arena for community development amongst such groups. While Frøya inn i Framtiden is not a pure civil society-based organization since the local government is a partner in the endeavor, its "Frøya Ambassador" program, which seeks to harness the talent of seasonal residents and other people with ties to the area, seems to be based on a recognition of the potential of such an approach. Hitra and city of Bayfield are also pursuing similar strategies. Interestingly, while the Frøya planning director seems to take issue with the orientation of Frøya inn i Framtida, his biggest worry about the future is that the short-term, individualistic thinking of so many *permanent* residents will hinder Frøya's ability to move closer to the mainstream of modern Norwegian society (found in the center), which he sees as key to local vitality; creating bridging ties with stakeholders who may live for most of year in more so-called mainstream places seems consistent with this goal. But such ideas are clearly controversial for many local people, who wish to hold on to their notions of how life was and should be, and a sense of a traditional, more homogeneous (in values, occupations, etc.) community (on the periphery).

An underdeveloped[54] sense of community reveals itself through such things as the divisive election and referendum in Washburn; the current controversy surrounding the new Red Cliff tribal chair's school district reform proposals; rancorous debates over wind farm development in Frøya, the nature reserve at Froan, and the level regulation of seasonal homes in Hitra; and, the discomfort for one set of informants caused by a lifting of the veil of ignorance,

[54] I chose this term for two reasons: 1) at this early stage, I don't have a strong enough understanding how the sense of community in my study sites have changed since amenity-led development began in earnest over the past three decades, and therefore can't justifiably conclude that it has been altered in some way or experienced cleavage; and, 2) It alludes to the notion that there are a good number of new permanent and seasonal residents in the study areas but the development of community may be lagging behind economic development and population growth.

which brought to the surface strong negative feelings relating to the land uses practiced by both permanent and seasonal neighbors, local industry (fish farm operations), and the decisions of the local municipality regarding their personal property, all of which served to dampen their experience with the rural idyll they so enjoy at their seasonal home, a critical component of which is the ability to consume an unfettered viewscape in peace and quiet. These realities clash with the rosy rhetoric of sustainability and collaborative planning efforts, which require proactive action based on collective goals developed via the input of a diversity of stakeholder groups. Indeed, as argued by Hurley and Walker (2004), "because it makes choices that determine how resources will be used, (planning for sustainable development) is inherently political" (p. 737).

Creating a shared understanding of what "sustainable development" even means in practice would be difficult in and of itself in places like Bayfield-Washburn and Hitra-Frøya. With community – in which its members interact recursively and meaningfully in a variety of settings, not solely as clerk-customer at the grocery store or as civil servant-citizen at the municipal offices, and are given the opportunity to have *uncomfortable*, but revealing discussions – in an underdeveloped state in these amenity areas, the veil of ignorance will largely remain in place, and the quest for balanced, equitable development may have limited potential for success.

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