

## **Images of wild nature and conservation interventions – narratives, beliefs and advocacy coalitions in nature conservation policy**

Persuasion and arguments are the key tools used by policy participants in the policy processes, especially when it is difficult to unambiguously define a subject of the policy and when different sides of the policy process assign different values to it. This is often the case in nature conservation policy. For instance, the term "wild nature" can have diametrically opposite meanings for the parties involved in nature conservation policy. Disputes and discussions over the conservation objectives and conservation interventions to be undertaken are reflected in narratives formulated by policy actors in a way to influence other participants of policy process and reach desired policy outcome. **The general goal of the project is to uncover the plurality of beliefs concerning wild nature and its conservation and explore the willingness to revise policy beliefs amongst people involved in nature conservation policy in Poland.** The project will do so through the application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) and Narrative Policy Framework (NPF). This will allow to identify beliefs of policy actors concerning a desired goal of nature conservation and the spectrum of feasible and justified conservation interventions as well as to analyze the willingness of advocacy coalitions representatives to modify their beliefs in the light of new evidence and arguments.

The project follows an approach of interdisciplinary research of social-ecological systems and relies on mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative social studies. It is planned to first identify the coalitions and their compositions and to quantify their beliefs through the analysis of narratives. In the second stage the project will verify and deepen understanding of coalitions' beliefs through the application of individual in-depth interviews with the representatives of different coalitions. The last stage of the project will use a policy Delphi approach to explore the spectrum of perceived conservation interventions and to analyze how new information or arguments influence coalitions' members to change their beliefs.

The project will deliver new information on nature conservation policy actors' ideas and beliefs and explanation of their role in dynamics of policy process. It addresses the deficiency of extensive, broad-scale and explanatory studies concerning policy processes at the national level, and it supplements frequent case study approach by providing another kind of scientific input. One of the important contribution of this approach is inclusion of the Internet sources (such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook) as a valid and important source of policy narratives generated by advocacy coalitions. The use of policy Delphi will deliver new information on how policy actors assimilate other beliefs and ideas which is an important input to understanding policy-oriented learning.