

Landscape character analysis approach in determining protection decisions and strategies

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Abstract: Natural landscapes are important economic and socio-cultural resources which make contributions to the life quality of the public (Brabyn, 2005). Scientific and application studies for the description and evaluation of landscapes have been taking place in the world since the 1950's (Şahin et.al., 2013). European Landscape Convention (ELC) has provided a legal attribute and international recognition to concepts such as landscape and landscape description as well as landscape planning, landscape management, preservation of landscape quality, landscape inventory, landscape repair etc. Today, landscape has become a fundamental research scale in ecological studies as well as a spatial planning – management unit for planning – management purposes (Coşkun Hepcan et.al., 2012). Undoubtedly, landscapes have to be defined (putting forth the landscape character) first in order to plan and manage both natural and cultural landscapes and they should be classified and mapped accordingly. Landscape receives its character by themselves and/or thanks to the interaction over time of both natural and cultural landscape components. The reflection of the interaction over time of these components to the terrain forms the different landscape types. In other words, landscape character is a term that expresses the pattern formed by the different permanent and perceivable elements and processes as well as how these elements are perceived by people. It reflects the different spatial combinations of properties such as geology, soil, plant cover, area usage, settlement areas etc. Landscape elements are overlapped in a certain hierarchy and homogeneous patterns with similar properties are collected under a certain name for determining landscape types. Natural and cultural landscape elements together determine the landscape character (Şahin et.al., 2013). Landscape character is a formation that is determined by abiotic, biotic and cultural functions (Mucher et al., 2003). Processes that appear as a result of the interaction of landscape components are effective in determining the functions of landscape. These functions can be put forth in different means such as habitat value, cultural value, biodiversity etc. (Şahin et.al., 2013). After the landscape characters are determined, their functions are determined and mapped and their primary functions are considered first while making land use and management decisions. The objective of this study was to put forth the relationship of landscape character analysis studies in Turkey with the planning regulations, development plans, national and international strategies.

Keywords: Ecology, Protection, Planning, Landscape Character analysis