

Being well: Examining human beings and nature practices (HUMNAT)

1. Excellence

1.1 State of the art, knowledge needs and project objectives

People in Western societies are increasingly faced with a growing range of health and mood-related problems, such as exhaustion, stress, insomnia, anxiety, shame, aggression, guilt and feeling out-of-place. Mental illness and sick leave resulting from stress, the competitiveness of working life and overconsumption are also becoming more prevalent, reducing the quality of life (Dakka & Smith, 2019; Furchheim et al., 2020; Pilgrim, 2021). In the face of these problems, it has been suggested that leisure and adventure tourism outdoors, fast or slow outdoor pursuits, green spaces and time spent outdoors can act as a remedy for many of the societal ills of our times (Capaldi et al., 2014; Cox et al., 2017; Grau-Ruiz et al., 2024; Lundvall & Maivorsdotter, 2021; Varley & Semple, 2015; WHO, 2016). In research on relations between humans and nature, increasing emphasis is being placed on health and wellbeing (Adler & Seligman, 2016), commonly conceptualised in two different ways: ‘Hedonic wellbeing’ with a focus on happiness and the attainment of pleasure and ‘eudaimonic wellbeing’ encompassing meaning and the process of living a fulfilled life in connection with the living environment (Fuchs 2025; Løvoll, 2019; Roberts et al., 2020). Nevertheless, hedonic perspectives on the relationship between wellbeing and nature are criticised for being individualistic and related to overconsumption and the risk of destroying parts of the natural world (Eikje, 2024; Løvoll et al., 2024). Moreover, Boyd et al. (2024) note that research on nature- and place-based interventions for human health often focuses on reactive healthcare models, which are based on a separation between human beings and nature, leaving out the fundamental connection between all living beings and the interpretation of life and the environment (Fuchs 2025).

Taking these steadily intensifying problems as a starting point, **this project’s primary objective** is to critically inquire into the term *wellbeing* by reversing it to ‘being well’. The primary objective is strongly allied with the need for an improved ecological understanding of human existence as deeply involved and interconnected with nature (Bignall & Braidotti, 2019; Fusch 2021, 2025). We will examine a selection of human encounters with nature and nature’s encounters with humans, via sensory, relational, and embodied approaches. **A further objective** is to explore how human experiences, and digital technologies intersect when people spend time and/or do activities outdoors. Accordingly, **the overall ambition** is to address and challenge the current understanding of human relations with nature that are neither exploitative nor recreational. Accordingly, we will contribute with an ecological ethical understanding of human beings’ relationship with nature. We will use multidisciplinary perspectives and multimethodological approaches as well as a sensory-affective methodology to unpack how ‘being with nature’ evolves into a personal and socio-cultural experience as a way of advancing research in the social sciences and humanities. The results of the project will deepen the knowledge and (re)activate knowledge about primary connectedness with living being in conviviality with a focus on human/nature reciprocity: human beings’ need for nature and nature’s right not to be exploited.

Background

Studies have confirmed the impact of outdoor life on health and wellbeing and how this can be used as a remedy for physical and mental illnesses (Fasting et al., 2023; Graves et al., 2020). Being with and among nature fundamentally involves experiences of various dimensions of satisfaction with life and presence and being part of something bigger, that is, sublime, aesthetic experiences (Bischoff, 2015; Jax et al., 2018; Løvoll et al., 2020). Research has shown that being in nature and moving in different types of environments create positive and novel feelings, which are considered to contribute to wellbeing. Moreover, Ives et al. (2017) highlight that quality of life and good health are affected by the characteristics of the natural environment, such as forests, lakes, grasslands and parks (see also Gascone et al., 2017). Despite the positive impact of nature on health, Brymer et al. (2019) and Roberts et al. (2020) argue that there is still a pressing need for a more in-depth exploration of the relations between human beings and nature, as well as on their nature-related practices.

According to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), humans have a massive impact on the planet and its climate via their exploitative and destructive practices. Efforts have been made to establish global projects, such as the ‘One Health’ initiative, which is ‘an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimise the health of people, animals and ecosystems’, together with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Brymer et al., 2019; UN, 2015). However, such global projects create tensions, as they involve ethical and moral reflections, norms, and values, as well as the

imposition of responsibilities and requirements for the transformation (on a societal level) of behaviours (Fuchs, 2021, 2025; Mackay & Schmitt, 2019; Mensah, 2019; Öhman & Östman, 2019). Still, these projects are particularly important because state institutions, education systems and intergovernmental organisations, such as the WHO and UN, strive to address these issues but often struggle and fail to develop sustainable (health) policy guidelines (WHO, 2018).

In parallel with this, there is also an established critique of how consumer culture is promoting people's use of nature, while outdoor life and nature practices have increasingly become a focus of this criticism because of their association with exploitation of and damage to the environment (Aall, 2011; Aall et al., 2023; Eikje, 2024; Haukeland et al., 2021; Løvoll et al., 2024). These issues are further complicated by digital technologies being increasingly used to promote encounters with nature. (see Beames & Maher, 2024). In this context, there is an ongoing discussion about technological innovation for its own sake and how digital innovations may add 'unwanted layers of clutter that reduce direct interaction with geophysical, ecological and sociocultural elements of the landscape while lessening the quality and quantity of interaction between humans' (Beames, 2017, p. 2; see also Varley & Semple, 2015). Indeed, according to for example Capogna and De Angelis (2020) and van Kraalingen, 2023, digital technology represents both risks and opportunities in terms of understanding the relationship between humans and nature. In using digital technology, human beings might separate themselves from nature, and convey consumption, gender, and class biases (Lupton 2022). Initial explorations of how (digital) technology mediates people's encounters with nature exhibited ambivalence to, and a mechanistic understanding of other living beings, while adopting an anthropocentric view (see Rørvik & Johansen, 2024; Zeng et al., 2024). Researchers advocate a broader understanding of what digitalisation does to human experiences and encounters with nature and society. The imperatives created and/or reinforced through tags, tweets, ratings and shares, remains poorly understood (Couture, 2021; Lundvall et al., 2024; Lupton & Smith, 2018). Nonetheless, in recent years, there has been an explosion of websites, apps, and devices inspiring people to engage in training, physical activity and/or recreational outdoor activities. However, we have identified a lack of knowledge about how people approach and think about an ecological ethic and responsible actions concerning the interdependence to nature. In research performed to date, this human/nature relation is depicted as 'one-sided' (unilateral), with nature considered to play a passive role.

1.2 Research questions and hypotheses, theoretical approach and methodology

To highlight the conceptualisation of 'being well' together with nature (i.e. with other humans and living beings), it is imperative to adopt critical perspectives that acknowledge the complex interplay between humans, nature, time and technology. In this proposed project, we will critically consider how wellbeing is entangled with *being well* – that is, living in ways that are ethical and attentive to and considerate of relations with humans, nonhumans, the natural environment and the planet. By framing this project within this way of understanding health and wellbeing, we consider meanings achieved in nature as being formed by the experiences of being well in the world, in which nature ceases to exist only as a backdrop (Roberts et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2016). In this context, it is valuable to bring up the concept of the Anthropocene, which arose within the field of earth sciences but has also been increasingly utilised in the social sciences. In the social sciences, this concept describes how human activity has a planetary-wide impact and how this planetary supremacy of humans is associated with the dark side of individualism and exploitation (Vetlesen, 2015). However, there is a need to contribute with insights on how responsibility, ethics and even technology might slow down the anthropocenisation of the planet and make positive contributions to the understanding of being well. A step that human beings can take towards being ethically responsible and caring of nature is to be conscious about one's own mindset and the positioning of oneself as separate from the world, nature and others (Fuchs, 2021, 2025). To counteract this conception of separateness, an awareness of temporality and environment could help scholars, practitioners and recreationists to (re)imagine their relationship and reciprocal attunements and togetherness with themselves, others and nature (Hurst & Stinson, 2023). The following four Work Packages (WPs) address and outline the research questions and theoretical and multimethodological perspectives of this proposed research.

WP1: Unpacking time with nature. The aim of this WP is to map and explore how people in Norway spend time in nature and green environments. While engagement with nature, such as *friluftsliv* (outdoor life), is often understood as an *activity* (Gelter, 2000), there has been less focus on the dimension of *being* in nature. To obtain a wider perspective on engagement with nature (Grau-Ruis, Løvoll & Dyrdal, 2024), psychological

concepts such as place and belonging are important within the growth-related approach of eudaimonic wellbeing. The increasing emphasis placed on balance and harmony, as well as low-arousal positive emotional experiences such as calmness and peace, is highlighted by these concepts recently being added to the regular Gallup poll on wellbeing (Gallup and the Wellbeing for Planet Earth Foundation, 2023). The correlations between the Human Development Index Score (HDIS) and the Harmony Composite Score (HCS) by country demonstrate that the level of harmony experienced in life by a population and a country's economic development correlate to a certain degree, but the concept of 'harmony with others' appears to be less dependent on socioeconomic factors. Norway has among the highest HDISs, while its HCS is intermediate, and lower than those of comparable countries such as Iceland and Japan, which have HDISs close to that of Norway (Lomas et al., 2023, p. 34). This suggests that important aspects of wellbeing, such as inner peace and harmony with others, have been overlooked in science-based approaches to wellbeing in Norway. At present, little is known about how *being in nature* shapes *being well* in everyday life. While we are aware of sociodemographic differences in the actual activities in nature that people perform, little is known about the role of nature immersion in relation to harmony with oneself and others, including other living beings and organisms. Moreover, how attention to *being well* with nature and green environments relates to pro-environmental attitudes requires more attention, which should provide information helpful for building a sustainable future. Research Questions (RQs) are:

RQ 1: What is the relationship between diverse types of nature immersion and *being well* among Norwegian citizens?

RQ 2: How are nature immersion and *being well* related to inner peace and the willingness to act in an environmentally friendly manner?

To answer these research questions, we will design a quantitative nationwide survey with responses from a stratified national representative sample (n= 40 000). 'Being well' will be measured using a series of standardized psychological measures of eudaimonic wellbeing (Nes et al., 2018), in addition to more refined concepts relating to the *being* dimension by adding standardized instruments such as the Meaning in Life Scale, Place belongingness scale, Nature connectedness scale, Ecological awareness scale, Mindfulness scale, Harmony and inner Peace scale, and Spirituality scale. These will be additional outcome variables in comparison to existing yearly quality of life-surveys (Statistics Norway). In this study, we will include nature immersion variables for the same sample, covering *friluftsliv*-related variables. The variables from the survey *Sports and outdoor activities, survey on living conditions* (Statistics Norway, 2024) will be relevant to include to understand the *activity* context: shorter walk in parks close to home, hiking less than 3 hours, hiking more than 3 hours, cycling in nature, skiing less than 3 hours, skiing more than 3 hours, snowboarding, alpine- or randonee skiing, fishing, trip with canoe/kayak, rowboat, trip with other type of leisure boat (Dalen & Oppøyen, 2023). The survey will include new variables with more in-depth descriptive variations of *being* in nature, such as gardening, eating meals outdoors, listening to bird song, going on coastal hikes, using campfires for recreation, wild camping and being in non-facilitated environments, and actively seeking dark experiences during the winter months. In addition, geographical information (provided by GIS) will be provided to include fine-grained variation in place specific information of being well. Moreover, an interview study with the aim of following up on the results from the survey will be carried out to explore nuances and in-depth insights (20 respondents). Statistical analyses, such as regression analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis will be performed using the statistic software R in combination with SPSS. This is a cross-sectional survey which aims to contribute with results of the internal relationships between variables to develop a complex, conceptual understanding of *being well* in relation to nature and pro-environmental attitudes. WP1 will be led by professor Helga Synnevåg Løvoll, together with professor emeritus Peter Varley, associate professor Odd Lennart Vikene, and one postdoc candidate experienced in statistical analyses.

WP2: Togetherness in time and space. This WP will consist of a methodological inquiry exploring how different sensory and affective experiences of togetherness and temporality can inform novel understandings of agency and connection, and ethical ways of being in/with nature. The framework is grounded within (non-)representational approaches (Vannini, 2015) and methodologies without methodology (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016), with a particular emphasis on engaging with sensory-affective and temporal attunements (Hurst, 2023, 2024; Hurst & Stinson, 2023) along with walking methodologies (Hurst, 2023; Springgay & Truman, 2017a, b). This methodological orientation is particularly useful for engaging with embodied experiences of nature

(while spending recreational time in nature) and exploring the transformative potential of attending and relating to nature-based leisure differently. The following RQs are:

RQ 1: How does engaging with sensory-affective and temporal attunement foster *being well* with nature (and more-than-human communities)?

RQ 2: What kinds of conversations and knowledge emerge among sensory and affective experiences with nature?

WP2 draws upon posthuman philosophical and theoretical orientations as framework for engaging with being well *with* more-than-human nature. The ‘post’ of posthumanism serves as a generative departure point from humanist philosophies and theories challenging established dichotomies separating humans from nature and hierarchies reinforcing human superiority over non-humans (Hurst, 2023). Engaging with concepts of togetherness and temporalities, WP2 will consider how we, humans, attend to the ways in which we are implicated in and (re)configured by encounters with nature. Togetherness, as an approach to *being well*, invites us to consider how (and what) we sense among encounters of multiple belonging in nature, and how attuning to the temporalities and sensory affectivity of encounters with nature can contribute to expanded relational accountabilities (Haraway, 2015). Togetherness moves away from privileging human subjects as the knowers and producers of knowledge (Bignall & Braidotti, 2019). It (re)positions knowledge production as relational, constantly being (re)configured among what we sense and feel within the multiple states of belonging to the natural world, and to human society, as revealed by encounters with nature.

The four collaborators and participants for this WP share an orientation towards exploring distinct aspects of embodied, embedded experiences of human–nature relationships in their research, from new materialist engagements with adventure tourism to multispecies hospitality, walking with nature and more-than-human agency and temporality. Included in this WP is to develop methodology collectively and the participants have all experiences of working with the above-described methodology. The two fieldwork experiences (one in winter, one in summer) will take place in the natural surroundings of a lodge/cabin near Sogndal, Norway. The collective fieldwork will focus on fostering and findings of an embodied awareness of sensory, affective and temporal experiences – including, but not limited to, what participants discover from walking, sitting, touching, listening, smelling and sketching/writing, both individually and as a collective. WP2 will be led by lecturer Chris Hurst, and professor emeritus Peter Varley, together with senior researcher Emily Höckert and PhD Elva Björg Einarisdóttir to collaborate over two 5-day fieldwork experiences in a natural Norwegian landscape.

WP3: The interplay of digital technologies in human nature relations. The aim of WP3 is to explore how human existence and digital technologies intersect and examine the habituation of *being with nature*. Equipment for measuring human activities, such as various wearable technologies (high-tech accelerometers, wristwatches, bracelets, necklaces, and mobile phones), has been designed to ensure the fulfilment of national guidelines emphasising training intensity, frequency and duration of time spent in nature. Such equipment is intended to be worn throughout the day to enable continuous monitoring (Sanders, 2017, p. 37), as well as gathering other forms of memories and representations (photos, notes). This technology sector influences healthcare authorities, tacitly and explicitly emphasising the instrumental either explorative or recreational use of nature for one’s own benefit. However, this approach has destructive consequences on nature itself, via what Vetlesen (2015) refers to as the ‘denial of nature’. Indeed, these forms of data have a profound effect on individuals’ habits and lifestyle choices, and on communities, cultures and societies (Dakka & Smith, 2019) as part of so-called lifelogging, a process of digital tracking of daily experiences for a variety of purposes (Ksibi et al., 2021). The RQs are:

RQ 1: How do the participants, user and non- users of digital devices articulate norms, values and experiences in relation to trekking and time spent outdoors?

RQ 2: How is digital self-monitoring negotiated and represented among the participants as users, and between users and the digital devices in a broader commercial (societal) context?

To address the RQs, the approach requires a strategic selection of samples constituting groups of different participants. They will come from Sogndal, Bergen (Norway) and New Castle (United Kingdom) recruited with the help of social media, partner universities and outdoor life organisations. We will select 15-20 participants per group from different social classes, sexes, ages and nationalities, and separate the participants into groups of users and non-users of digital technology. Specifically, these will include one group whose

members regularly go trekking with devices, one group whose members regularly go trekking without devices and one group whose members never go trekking but will be invited as part of an experimental/intervention group. The participants will self-report via a range of expressive materials including narratives, diaries, photos and drawings to monitor their emotions when spending time in nature. They will also be encouraged to write about their favourite places. The empirical work in WP3 will be based on photo-interviews, narratives and sketches. This research material will be analysed with the help of a pragmatic epistemological analyses (PEA) (Lundvall & Maivorsdotter, 2021; Wickman, 2006.) and a micro-phenomenological analysis (Depraz, 2022). Comparing different choices and experiences is an important step towards illustrating how normative standards are produced and reproduced in the various strata of society, across ethnic boundaries, within national minorities, and in different genders, social classes and geographical regions. We will also conduct focus group interviews to present preliminary findings to stimulate collaborative dialogue together with the informants to deepen the analysis. Accordingly, the analysis will contain of several interrelated facets to illuminate gendered and general themes through narrative and storytelling, to shed light on intercultural, ethical, existential and gendered perspectives. WP3 will be led by professor Suzanne Lundvall, together with professor Gunn Engelsrud, PhD. Jostein Rønning Sanderud, and one PhD candidate with experience in social sciences and qualitative methods.

WP4: Dissemination and knowledge mobilisation

The aim of WP4 is the dissemination and communication of results from the project and will involve a series of activities designed to engage with the scientific field, a wide range of different stakeholders, as well as a book publication summarizing and integrating the findings of the project. For information, see section 2.3.

Risk assessment and undesirable effects:

The design of the overall project is assessed as feasible and with low risk for undesirable effects. However, the project can risk not recruiting enough participants for the survey and/or a low percentage of answers (WP1), as well as a risk of not securing a relevant variation among the participants (WP1 and WP3). We will plan for continued recruitment until we have a satisfying number of participants. The fieldwork (WP2) will be conducted by experienced field workers who apply ecological ethics, which means no threat to human and animal health, climate and the environment, and the society.

Interdisciplinarity:

The project will consist of multidisciplinary perspectives and methodologies from social sciences and humanities representing different scientific disciplines: psychology, post humanism, sociology, phenomenology, and pedagogy. The project management will secure that relevant perspectives, methods, and definitions are valid and robust to promote a solid investigation of the object of interest: the being in the wellbeing, where humans and nature practices constitute the research context for the project. Furthermore, the multidisciplinary design of the project with a final summarizing book will enable conditions for interdisciplinary findings to form a broad and inclusive ecological understanding of the topic.

Ethical issues:

During the project personal information from study participants will be collected and anonymized. The participants will be informed about the research design and follow the standard procedures for ethical considerations and regulations. The project will adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for processing of personal data. All sensitive data will be deposited at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), the centralized data server with two-step authentication. Further, we will follow internal protocols at HVL and send a proposal on collecting/processing data to the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (SIKT) for further advice and approval. The project will be assessed by the host institution's ethical committee and a data management plan (DMP) will be developed before the project starts and updated regularly during project implementation. The aim of the different WPs together with the chosen methods, types of data, the handling of anonymity of study participants and the storage of data will follow the research ethical lines of direction set out by National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities and Health Management Security as well as the European Code of Conduct for Research integrity (ALLEA, 2023).

Gender perspectives:

The project will involve men and women, and potentially persons who define their gender as non-binary. A gender perspective is necessary to include in the overall analysis of data as this may reveal gender differences, discrimination and specific forms of power discourses related to gender which is of relevance for the understanding of the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the project. Participating researchers have profound experiences of performing of a gender analysis.

Stakeholder/user knowledge:

The design of the project includes different stakeholder groups as the results from the project will be used by public health authorities, institutions within higher education and research with a focus on health promotion, rehabilitation and/or education/outdoor studies, as well as outdoor life and tourism organisations. Together with a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), a selection of different stakeholder groups will be connected to the Project Management Group (PMG) from the very start to give advice and criticism in all phases of the project. Stakeholders from the following sectors are relevant for this project: the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, (Folkehelseinstituttet), the Norwegian Council for Friluftsliv (Norsk friluftsliv) and stakeholders covering issues of sustainability related to Western Norway Research Institute.

1.3 Novelty and ambition

The novelty and ambition of this project is to show that working in a multidisciplinary manner with mixed methods across disciplinary silos is a premise and precondition for achieving a change in basic assumptions and thinking (a paradigm shift) in understandings of being well and with nature. An ecological understanding must consider the cultural, historical, and contextual approaches that assert that the experience of healthy and responsible living presupposes a kinship and connection with living beings from an attitude-based care and commitment toward them, to reverse exploitation and separation between oneself, others and nature. By reversing the term *wellbeing* to *being well*, the project shows that being well on a personal level involves the societal level. This paradigm shift critically reverses the individualistic search for wellbeing and increases the focus to solidarity, and living together with, referred to *conviviality* (Fuchs 2025). To bring about a paradigm shift in this regard, new forms of responsibility at the personal, institutional and political levels are needed. WP1 brings in new national data on time spent in nature and participants' understandings of being well in relation to nature and pro-environmental attitudes. The findings from complex perspectives of wellbeing outcomes (relevant for 'being well') and on outdoor living will provide more basic understanding of the relationship between being outdoors and being well. By combining these two aspects, the findings from the survey will add new knowledge on the correlation between these factors within the same sample. Such knowledge is not currently available. In terms of WP2, its novel contributions are twofold. First, this WP takes up posthumanism as a philosophical and theoretical orientation that can contribute to novel ways of thinking about relations with nature. The WP will contribute to an understanding of how attuning to the temporal rhythms and sensory affectivity of place, and of emergent relational entanglements among humans and nonhumans, is experienced individually and as a collective. Second, the WP will advance the methodological sophistication of embodied, affective and sensory approaches for transformational ethics. By bringing together researchers from adjacent fields of study, this will contribute to the development of methodologies and methods that foster an embodied ethics of being well with nature in leisure, tourism, more-than-human and place-based research. Meanwhile, WP3 will contribute with new knowledge in the relatively neglected field of study on the use and non-use of digital technology when trekking and spending time outdoors, highlighting and explicating norms and values, socio-cultural and gendered experiences, as well as challenging aspects of lifelogging. The inclusion of users and non-users of digital technology in the same study in this way has not previously been explored. The novelty of this WP also lies in developing a language for describing the differences and similarities between representations and experiences of being with nature when using and not using mobile technology/devices.

Seeing the increased international interest in Nordic outdoor life, the overall outcome of the project will add important aspects of the cultural and existential meanings of being with nature. By including both quantitative and qualitative methods and different theoretical approaches, this project will enable an analysis of the

consequences of socio-cultural and class differences in access to nature and in the understanding of connectedness versus separation between living being and nature. Furthermore, using different nature practices and exploring experiential opportunities, avoiding linear and technique-oriented practices and mechanistic approaches, the findings of the overall project will address meaning and embodied approaches to being in/with nature, including ethical and sustainability approaches. By considering ethical and sustainability perspectives, the ambition is to generate new and innovative knowledge about relations with human beings and nature to reduce and counteract current tendencies of exploitation and destruction of the natural environment, along with human overconsumption. This involves reformulating our understanding of ‘being well’ with the aim of opposing ‘wellbeing’ as a programmatic consumption-based idea.

2. Impact

2.1 Potential for academic impact of the research project

There is an immense potential for short- and long-term academic impact of the findings from this multidisciplinary research project in this time of emergency for responsible action towards the togetherness and humans and nature. This impact will cover scientific publications from the WPs, publications of methodological development, and a renewal of theoretical approaches and practices in relation to wellbeing, health and outdoor visits/practices. Moreover, this research project will contribute with uncovering new knowledge for developing studying programs in health promotion, the field of tourism and outdoor studies, and physical education. The outcomes of the project will show the urgent need that understanding bodily awareness and sensibility are important in order to realize an ecological understanding and engagement in sustainable development for the future. *Being well* is a more fundamental condition for humans from which it is possible to act responsible with nature. By re-versing the conceptualisation of wellbeing to being well is to enable taking responsibility and reduce consumption. This will also affect policy making for education and health built on holistic and context-setting approaches to a sustainable healthy living with nature.

Open science practices will be supported using the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) Dataverse and the project website to make project data available. Pre-publication will allow free access to scientific publications from the project. This project will comply with HVL’s Open Access Policy as well as national Norwegian and European policies, adhere to Plan S, and will submit articles to open access journals. The proposed study will be pre-registered at the OSF registry (OSF | OSF Preregistration) which is a public, open-source repository. The project will comply with the GDPR. We will manage research data outputs in full compliance with the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) principles. The DMP will define planned project datasets and metadata, data collection and processing, data sharing, security and access, during and after the project. The central administration at HVL has advisers specialising in data protection and ethics who will oversee these aspects of the project. The research data and metadata generated in the project will be stored indefinitely post-project on Dataverse at no charge to the project.

2.2 Potential for the societal impact of the research project

As this research project will investigate what happens upon reversing the terminology of ‘wellbeing’ to ‘being well’ we will contrast and investigate the notion of being with nature, this will have a societal impact in catalysing discussions regarding ethical approaches to recreational and exploitative habits in the use of nature. Accordingly, we integrate the examined and developed paradigm shift into discussions of health promotion and outdoor tourism, as well as the politics of nature preservation. The project will contribute to several of the SDGs: #3 Good health and well-being: #3.4: Promote mental health and well-being; #4 Quality education: #4.7: Ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development; #11 Sustainable Cities and Communities: #11.a: Strengthen links between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas; and #12, Responsible Consumption and Production: #12.8: Ensure people have relevant information and awareness for sustainable living.

2.3 Measures for communication and exploitation

The dissemination of results from the project will involve a series of activities designed to engage with members of 1) the academic community (national and international), 2) local, regional and national communities, 3) policymakers, and 4) practitioners, along with a broader range of stakeholders and the general public. The measures for communication and exploitation will be planned in collaboration with the SAB. For the academic community we will publish extensively in peer review journals (6-9 articles), such as Journal of

Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning, The Nordic Journal of Wellbeing and Sustainable Welfare Development; The Nordic Journal of Health and Wellbeing; Scandinavian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality, Journal of Sustainable Tourism. Furthermore, participate in and present at national and international conferences. We will organise national and international research seminars (20-30 people) in Sogndal and Newcastle, the second and third year of the project, and a closing conference (150-200 people) on findings of the projects and research theory and methodologies. In June 2026 we will host an international seminar on “Living Together/Conviviality, together with the SAB and Thomas Fuchs as a key-note speaker. Further dissemination and communication are through articles, a book, social media and newsletters including local, regional and national communities, and policy makers in the field of higher education, outdoor and tourism management. This in order to raise awareness and knowledge about the project reversing the understanding of well-being and creating a paradigm shift to being well. The broader audience of practitioners’ and general public audiences will be reached through the researchers’ and SAB’ participation in the annual meetings and conferences in Norsk Friluftsråd (Norwegian Council for friluftsliv), annual meetings in Norges Turistforening (The Norwegian Trekking Association), through articles published in chronicles (for example Khrono, Utdanningsnytt), with their social media channels. The Division of Communications from HVL will assist in the dissemination of invitations, newsletters, and continuous communication. For open science practices see section 2.1.

3. Implementation

3.1 Project manager and project group

Professor **Suzanne Lundvall (SL)** at the Department of Sport, Food and Natural Sciences (DSFNS), Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), will be project manager and lead the Project Management Group (PMG). Lundvall has experience from managing a 10-yearlong multidisciplinary longitudinal project in Sweden named School-Sport and Health funded by the Swedish Research Council and The Swedish Research Council for Sport Science. She has also been part of cross-sectional research and educational projects, Erasmus+- and EU-Horizon projects, within movement/sport, health and outdoor life, lately including perspectives of sustainable development. She has extensive experience of mainly qualitative methodology covering discourse analysis, visual methodology, practical epistemological analysis. Lundvall will lead, besides the WP0 Project Management/PMG and WP4 Dissemination and knowledge mobilisation, WP3 together with Professor **Gunn Engelsrud (GE)**, DSFNS, HVL. Engelsrud specialises in qualitative research with a particular focus and long experience of research on phenomenology, movement experience and health. She is the current leader of the research group Learning, Physical Education and Outdoor Life (DSFNS). Associate professor **Jostein Rønning Sanderud (JS)**, DSFNS, HVL, specialist in nature studies, play and movement will also be part of WP3. Professor **Helga Synnevåg Løvoll (HSL)**, Department of Sport and friluftsliv, Volda University College, Norway will lead WP1 and be part of PMG. She is a professor in friluftsliv and an experienced researcher with a long history of studying human relationships with nature. Her research is concerned with identifying experiences that bring new perspectives and understandings of human beings and the world they live in. Inspired by recent theories about quality of life (eudaimonic wellbeing), she is particularly concerned with what is experienced as meaningful and how outdoor life can contribute to a richer and nature-friendly life. This is explored in various ways, including emotionally, aesthetically and spiritually. Professor emeritus **Peter Varley (PV)**, at Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University, UK, affiliated to HVL, will be part of WP1, WP2 and PMG, and has a research focus on consumer behaviour, tourism and hospitality, place development, marketing, social theory and sociological theory. He is an expert on research epistemologies and qualitative method. Associate professor **Odd Lennart Vikene (OLV)**, DSFNS, HVL, specialist in friluftsliv will also be part of WP1. Lecturer **Chris Hurst (CH)** at Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University, United Kingdom, will lead WP2 together with Peter Varley, and be part of PMG. She is a critical tourism scholar and lecturer in Tourism and Hospitality and part of PMG. Her research attends to material-affective atmospheres, and the implications of spatiotemporally and more-than-human agencies in nature-based tourism and protected areas. Her research is within posthumanism and non-representational theoretical frameworks and methodologies. Senior researcher **Emily Höckert (EH)**, Faculty of Social Science, University of Lapland, Finland and PhD **Elva Björg Einarsdóttir (EBE)**, Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Iceland, both specialising on spatiotemporally and more-than-human agencies, will also be part of WP2. Moreover, in WP1 **one postdoc (NN)** with experience in statistical analyses will be recruited, as well as **one PhD (NN)** with experience in social sciences and qualitative methods in WP3.

3.2 Project organisation and management

The project has three scientific WPs (WP1-3), a project management WP (WP0), and a dissemination WP (WP4). The Gantt chart below shows all WPs including all tasks, deliverables, and milestones.

Tasks (T)	AoT	Nov-Dec 2025				Jan-Dec 2026				Jan-Dec 2027				Jan-Oct 2028			
WP0 Project Management		Nov	Dec	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Project group management meetings (MM)	SL/GE/CH/PV/HSL	MM1	MM2	MM3		MM4		MM5		MM6		MM7		MM8	MM9		
T0.1 Data Management Plan	SL/GE/HSL/HSL	D0.1															
T0.2 Ethical approval	" " " "		D0.2														
T0.3 Meeting Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)	All	X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
T0.4 Kick-off seminar	All		M0.1														
T0.5 Interconnecting/multidiscipl findings	All															D03	
WP1 Unpacking spending time w nature	HSL/PV/postdoc																
T1.1 Recruitment of post doc	SL/HSL/PV			D1.1													
T1.2 Design survey & Piloting, recruit. par	HSL/PV/OLV			M1.2	M1.2.1												
T1.3 Data collection	HSL/PV/PV/OLV							M1.3				M1.3.1					
T1.4 Data analysis & manuscript prep	" " " "								D1.4				D1.4.1		D1.4.2	D03	
WP2 Togetherness in time and space	CH/PV/EH/EBE																
T2.1 Collective methodology work	CH/PV/EH/EBE																
T2.2 Prep. data collection	CH/PV																
T2.3 Data collection	CH/PV/EH/EBE							M2.3									
T2.4 Data analysis & manuscript prep	" " " "								D2.4				D2.4.			D03	
WP3 Digital repr. of experiences w nature	SL/GE/JS/PhD																
T3.1 Recruitment PhD	SL/GE/JS			D3.1												D3.1.2	
T3.2 Design data collec., pilot, recruit parti	SL/GE/JS/PhD					M3.2											
T3.3 Data collection	" " " "							M3.3	M3.3.1								
T3.4 Data analysis & manuscript prep.	" " " "							D3.4		D3.4.1		D3.4.2			D03		
WP4 Dissemination	All																
T4.1 Project info website, social media	SL/GE/HVL comm.															D03	
T4.2 Conferences + closing conf	All				D4.2					D4.2.1						D4.2.3	
T4.3 Seminars and workshops	All					M4.3.1		M4.3.2				M4.3.3					

Abbreviations: AoT= Allocation of Tasks; MM= Management Meetings; X= meeting SAB; FoTo No= Forskningsdager, Norge; FoTo No; Forsknings Torget, Norge.

Deliverables (D): D0.1 = DMP; D0.2 = Ethical Approval; D0.3= book; D1.1=recr. postdoc; D1.4 & D1.4.1= submission manuscr survey; D1.4.2= submission manuscr interviews

D2.4.1 & D2.4.2= submiss. manuscr; D3.1=recr PhD; D3.1.2=PhD thesis subm.; D3.4, D3.4.1, D3.4.2 = submiss. manuscr.; D4.2= Intern.conf.; D4.2.1= FoTo; D4.2.3= Intern.closing

Milestones (M): M0.1 = Kick off; M1.2= design survey; M1.2.1=ended pilot & recruit partic; M1.3 =ended datacollec survey; M1.3.1 =datacollec.interv.

M2.3= ended datacoll; M3.2=ended piloting, recr particip; M3.3= focus gr interv; M3.3.1: datacoll. ended; M4.3.1= FoTo No; M4.3.2=semin stakeholders; M4.3.3= Semin. stakeholder

This project will serve as an essential bridge to multidisciplinary research, to collaboration with other national and international institutions and is embedded in the research group Learning, Physical Education and Outdoor Life at the Faculty of Sport, Nutrition and Natural Sciences, HVL. The PMG consists of five members, the WP leaders. Each member of the PMG has a solid experience of international research collaborations. The PMG will have regularly meetings (two to three times a year) with the aim to monitor progress, follow up data collection, lead the interdisciplinary meetings, control for deliveries and communication activities (seminars, conferences, publications, social media communication). Furthermore, to identify risks and unexpected challenges and propose contingency measures accordingly. Before the offset of the project the PMG will meet the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) for consultation and meet twice per year. This project is also a follow up of a recent internationally pilot study called *Encounters of nature and technology – everyday life movement cultures with trekking as case*. The PhD will be supervised by Lundvall and Engelsrud. The Postdoctoral fellow by Synnevåg Løvoll and Varley. The head supervisors will schedule monthly meetings with the PhD and Postdoc to discuss the progress of their projects and other topics of relevance. Further, the supervisors will practice an open-door policy towards the PhD and Postdoc.

Scientific Advisory board (SAB)

The SAB will be consulted by the PMG and meet twice a year. Its main functions will be 1) to ensure the quality of the research process by assisting the research team and WP leaders in working with problem formulating, progress and knowledge promotion during the project period. 2) to assist the research group with advises regarding the validity of the results/findings and consider the ethical and theoretical standard. 3) to contribute to the symposium and the end of the project and support the knowledge promotion to a wider audience within political audience, higher education within outdoor life and health programs as well as within sustainability, nature preservation and relational pedagogy. The SAB consists of **Professor Ingerid Solrunsdatter Straume**, HVL, with expertise in educational theory and foundational thinking, educational policy, history, and sustainability. **Professor Simon Beames**, The Norwegian School of Sport Sciences with expertise in Outdoor adventure and learning and social theory, Adventure & society, Outdoor learning Mobile technology and social media. **Professor Ivo Jirasek**, Palacky, University in Olomous, Czech Republic, with expertise in Experiential Education, slow outdoor life, and phenomenology. **Professor Thomas Fuchs**, philosopher and psychiatrist at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. His expertise is within phenomenology, conviviality and ecological ethics. **Professor Ingun Grimstad Klepp**, The Norwegian Institute for Consumer

Research. Her expertise is within sustainability, clothing and consumption. Besides the SAB, important national networks will be *Norsk Friluftsliv*, the network *Friluftsliv in Higher Education* and the international networks European Conf. in Positive Psychology, Folkehelsekonferansen /Nordisk folkehelsekonferanse, International Outdoor Educ. Research Conference.

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