

## **Contrasting perceptions of anthropogenic coastal agricultural landscape meanings and management in Italy and Canada**

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The Anthropocene concept entails the idea that humans have become the most influential driving factor on the environment. In this context, it is useful to get insights from coastal areas that are affected by a huge impact of human activities in shaping the territory, are prone to several threats linked with climate change, and featured by interlinked economic, cultural and social systems. We compare evidence from three different methods focusing on the perceptions of coastal agricultural landscapes: i) a survey focusing on residents' perceptions of local rural landscape elements; ii) an expert-elicitation multicriteria exercise (Analytic Network Process) focusing on the relationship between economic actors, ecosystem services and local competitiveness; and iii) a Q-methodology survey to identify public discourses concerning management alternatives. The methods were applied in two coastal case studies characterized by land drainage, shoreline barriers and coastal armoring that represent high cultural heritage; created by humans they rely on active management to persist. Moreover, in both the case studies concerns have been raised about the role of agriculture in the rural development context and the perspectives of local stakeholders towards the management of the reclaimed lands.

The first area is located on the southern side of the Po River Delta (Emilia Romagna, Italy). The area was reclaimed during the 19th and 20th centuries for agricultural production and is now characterized by intensive agriculture in the hinterlands, an urbanised coastal area with a developed tourism sector, and the presence of remnant wetlands which are mostly included in the Po Delta Natural Park (covering around 30% of the case study). The second area is located in the dykelands of the Bay of Fundy (Nova Scotia, Canada) whose origins go back to the 17th Century when French settlers built the first dykes to reclaim salt marshes for farmland. While some are still farmed, a range of different cultural and economic assets is present in the Dykelands including commercial and recreational infrastructures. Both case study areas are included in UNESCO World Heritage Sites ("Ferrara, City of the Renaissance, and its Po Delta" and the "Landscape of Grand Pré").

In both cases evidence points to the tendency of the residents to acknowledge public goods related to recreational assets as important to manage for, whereas more pragmatic experts/educated stakeholders are more prone to rate protection-related services (e.g. flood protection) together with cultural services. Several differences were also evidenced in the two case studies. First, the importance of farming in the Dykelands was mainly a cultural/emotional attachment, whereas provision services were considered as the main valorisation factor in the Po Delta area. Secondly, second-home dwellers in the Po Delta showed a higher interest on local landscape elements, non residents in the Dykelands showed a higher interest in governance of the territory than on management of specific traditional landscape elements such as dykelands or wetlands.

These results outline the need to consider different management perspectives and options and the critical role of awareness concerning local environmental threats and challenges in the two case study areas.