



Environmental social scientists study a wide variety of topics involving people, society, and their interactions with the environment. My work focuses on how people experience and value nature in their everyday lives.

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## Dr. Daniel R. Williams



### Important Scientist Characteristics:

I'm a bit of a daydreamer and "undisciplined" in my approach, which helps me remain open-minded about possible solutions. I'm curious how different fields of science try to answer similar questions. Each science brings important insights. We must recognize that understanding complex problems involves many different kinds of science.

### Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer:

Why do people feel attached to some places more than others? Can the strength of attachment be measured using a questionnaire or survey?

### Technology or equipment used in research:

In my early days, I used photography as a tool to elicit people's perceptions of natural landscapes. In recent years I have examined the use of social media, such as blog posts people make about the places they have visited, as a way to examine landscape perceptions and preferences.

### • Most Exciting Discovery

• Even in our highly mobile society, people still need to feel attached to one or more places as they go through their lives. They can do this by establishing a long-term connection to a place they visit frequently, such as a second home in a forest or natural landscape.

### • When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

• Growing up in the mountains, I was fascinated by my geology and earth science lessons in 8th grade. Later, in college, I began to think about how I could investigate why people are attracted to natural landscapes and why they form emotional bonds with specific places.