The Principles of Sustainable Environmental Tourism Development

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Abstract: Ecotourism stands to reason that there are many differences between the developing world and the developed world when it comes to issues of sustainability and sustainable community development. Planners and managers must also face the problems that may arise. These issues tend to be complex. Ecotourism, by its very nature, builds up expectations and raises the risk of hit-and-run tourism; this is described as an influx of nature-lovers and culture-addicts to the latest wild spot, followed by its abandonment once discovered and degraded. Tourism has proved to have negative impacts as well as the positive ones. It is criticized for contamination indigenous culture. This takes the form of changing values resulting in social ladies like drug addiction, child prostitution, etc. Moreover, ecotourism attractions can be located in the most remote and rural areas. Many elements are involved when designing an optimal ecotourism strategy. Sustainable development is an important aspect of ecotourism development that involves harvesting our natural resources without depleting or permanently harming them. Sustainable development not only ensures that consumption of tourism does not exceed the agility of the host destination to prosper, but also provides for the freedom, education and welfare of the host community. The physical environment, economy, and social make up of these two regions of the world are very different and therefore are subject to different problems, requiring individual methods of approach and research. Ecotourism creates an impact on natural ecosystems but more importantly, it offers a way to promote conservation in ecologically fragile regions; benefit the economies of local communities; provide the public with a nature-based education experience. In this article the site design of any ecotourism area will include many different elements.

Key words: Eco-Tourism, Environmental Development, Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Many of eco-tourism planning are in a way that will damage the environmental sustainability. Sustainable eco-tourism planning is to help the preserves to survive without altering eco-tourists basic mission and unique status in the global environmental scheme. What is ecotourism?(Ziffer, K., 1989).

So for example, in a true ecotourism project, a nature reserve allows a small number of tourists to visit its rare animals and uses the money that is generated to continue with important conservation work. The local people have jobs in the nature reserve as guides and wardens, but also have a voice in how the project develops (Ziffer, K., 1989).

Tourists stay in local houses with local people, not in specially built hotels. So they experience the local culture and do not take precious energy and water away from the local population. They travel on foot, by boat, bicycle or elephant so that there is no pollution. And they have a special experience that they will remember all of their lives. Here is another definition of ecotourism:

“A form of tourism inspired primarily by the natural history of an area, including its indigenous cultures. The ecotourist visits relatively undeveloped areas in the spirit of appreciation, participation and sensitivity. The ecotourist practices a non-consumptive use of wildlife and natural resources and contributes to the visited area through labour or financial means aimed at directly benefiting the conservation of the site and the economic well-being of the local residents.

The visit should strengthen the ecotourist’s appreciation and dedication to conservation issues in general, and to the specific needs of the locale.

Ecotourism also implies a managed approach by the host country or region which commits itself to establishing and maintaining the sites with the participation of local residents, marketing them appropriately, enforcing regulations, and using the proceeds of the enterprise to fund the area’s land management as well as community development.”(Ziffer, K., 1989).

This type of tourism can only involve small numbers of people so it can be expensive. But we can apply the principles of ecotourism wherever we go for holiday. Just remember these basic rules.

Objectives of the Study:
· Be prepared. Learn about the place that you're going to visit. Find out about its culture and history. Learn a little of the native language, at least basics like 'Please', 'Thank you', and 'Good Morning'. Think of your holiday as an opportunity to learn something.

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· Have respect for local culture. Wear clothes that will not offend people. Always ask permission before you take a photograph. Remember that you are a visitor.
· Don't waste resources. If the area doesn't have much water, don't take two showers every day.
· Remember the phrase "Leave nothing behind you except footprints and take nothing away except photographs." Take as much care of the places that you visit as you take of your own home.
· Don't buy souvenirs made from endangered animals or plants.
· Walk or use other non-polluting forms of transport whenever you can.
· Be flexible and keep a sense of humor when things go wrong.
· Stay in local hotels and eat in local restaurants. Buy local products whenever possible and pay a fair price for what we buy.

There are lots of names for these new forms of tourism: responsible tourism, alternative tourism, sustainable tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, educational tourism and more. Ecotourism probably involves a little of all of them. Ecotourism, which encompasses a range of activities including scientific tours, student internships, trips for nature lovers, bird-watching trips, and filming expeditions, is a relatively new phenomenon. Everyone has a different definition but most people agree that ecotourism must:
(a) conserve the wildlife and culture of the area.
(b) benefit the local people and involve the local community
(c) be sustainable, that is make a profit without destroying natural resources
(d) provide an experience that tourists want to pay for.

Choose our holiday carefully. Don't be afraid to ask the holiday company about what they do that is 'eco'. Remember that 'eco' is very fashionable today and a lot of holidays that are advertised as ecotourism are not much better than traditional tourism. (Baxter, L., Ecotourism)

**Literature Review:**

**Defining the Experience:**

There are almost as many terms to describe types of travel as there are travel companies. A couple of buzzwords that you often hear these days are "Eco-Tourism" and "Adventure Travel". To further confuse the issue there is also "Sustainable Tourism", "Responsible Tourism", "Nature Based Travel", "Green Travel", "Multi-Sport Adventures" and "Cultural Tourism". The following are Untamed Path's definitions based on common usage.

**Eco-tourism:** Perhaps the most over-used and miss-used word in the travel industry. But what does it mean? The Ecotourism Society defines it as "responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of the local people". A walk through the rainforest is not eco-tourism unless that particular walk somehow benefits that environment and the people who live there. A rafting trip is only eco-tourism if it raises awareness and funds to help protect the watershed. A loose interpretation of this definition allows many companies to promote themselves as something that they are not. If true eco-tourism is important to you, ask plenty of questions to determine if your trip will help "conserve and improve" the places you visit.

**Sustainable Tourism:** Any form of tourism that does not reduce the availability of resources and does not inhibit future travelers from enjoying the same experience. If the presence of large numbers of tourists disturbs an animal's mating patterns so that there are fewer of that species in the future then that visit was not sustainable. Kayaking school on a free flowing river is an example of sustainable tourism. Big game hunting in Alaska is not.

Ecotourism provides a unique opportunity to educate the tourist in a natural environment. Hands-on activities, informative displays, and educational seminars offer the visitor a better understanding of the local environment. Ecotourism, by eliminating the "wear and tear" on a site that conventional tourism encompasses, is concerned with the preservation of such natural habitats and archeological areas. Furthermore, it offers the opportunity for people to view remarkable natural wonders without worrying about damaging the area.

Not only is ecotourism not concerned with bringing in throngs of tourists, it would be defeating the purpose to bring mass tourism to natural areas. Ecotourism, instead, offers purposeful travel to natural areas for a limited number of tourists. As previously mentioned, an ecotourist must be a friend to the environment, so the relatively few people who are willing to sacrifice "luxury" for the environmentally friendly vacation are candidates for the ecotourism industry.

**The Principles for Sustainable Tourism (Tourism Concern/WWF):**

**1. Using Resources Sustain Ably:**

The conservation and sustainable use of resources - natural, social and cultural - is crucial and makes long-term business sense;
2. Reducing Over-Consumption and Waste:
Reduction of over-consumption and waste avoids the costs of restoring long-term environmental damage and contributes to the quality of tourism;

3. Maintaining Diversity:
Maintaining and promoting natural, social and cultural diversity is essential for long-term sustainable tourism, and creates a resilient base for the industry;

4. Integrating Tourism into Planning:
Tourism development which is integrated into a national and local strategic planning framework and which undertakes environmental impacts assessments, increases the long-term viability of tourism;

5. Supporting Local Economies:
Tourism that supports a wide range of local economic activities and which takes environmental costs and values into account, both protects those economies and avoids environmental damage;

6. Involving Local Communities:
The full involvement of local communities in the tourism sector not only benefits them and the environment in general but also improves the quality of the tourism experience;

7. Consulting Stakeholders and the Public:
Consultation between the tourism industry and local communities, organizations and institutions is essential if they are to work alongside each other and resolve potential conflicts of interest;

8. Training Staff:
Staff training which integrates sustainable tourism into work practices, along with recruitment of local personnel at all levels, improves the quality of the tourism product;

9. Marketing Tourism Responsibly:
Marketing that provides tourists with full and responsible information increases respect for the natural, social and cultural environments of destination areas and enhances customer satisfaction;

10. Undertaking Research:
On-going research and monitoring by the industry using effective data collection and analysis is essential to help solve problems and to bring benefits to destinations, the industry and consumers

Results and Findings:
As mentioned, the benefits of ecotourism are becoming increasingly attractive. However, planners and managers must also face the problems that may arise. These issues tend to be complex. Ecotourism, by its very nature, builds up expectations and raises the risk of hit-and-run tourism; this is described as an influx of nature-lovers and culture-addicts to the latest wild spot, followed by its abandonment once discovered and degraded. Moreover, ecotourism attractions can be located in the most remote and rural areas. Therefore, ancient cultures and economies may be harmed or disrupted. These challenges, among others, need to be met. Planners and managers must be prepared and educated on the impacts of tourism. Their optimal strategy must involve minimizing these costs while maximizing the many benefits.

Many elements are involved when designing an optimal ecotourism strategy. Sustainable development is an important aspect of ecotourism development that involves harvesting our natural resources without depleting or permanently harming them. A niche market must also be determined in order to effectively match people and their interests with the ecotourism attractions at each particular site. However, with the existence of such tourists, each site must, to some degree, restore itself by natural means with or without the assistance of human management. This idea is discussed when looking at the ecological carrying capacity. The final important element of ecotourism development is known as site design, which takes all elements discussed thus far into consideration when designing satisfactory ecotourism facilities with as little ecological impact as possible (Mühlbauer, M., 2005).

Sustainable Development:
Sustainable development is an emerging doctrine that demands a long-term view of economic activity. The concept has evolved within the past few years and has rapidly become a way of paying for natural conservation and increasing the value of the natural land that is left. Sustainable development not only ensures that consumption of tourism does not exceed the agility of the host destination to prosper, but also provides for the
freedom, education and welfare of the host community. It has become common knowledge that it is unethical to save nature at the expense of the local people. The host community should be given the opportunity to act as partner in the sustainable development of its land, not as enemy of it.

**Ecotourism Site Design:**

The site design of any ecotourism area will include many different elements. These elements have to do with creating ways to prevent any environmental problems with the ecosystem and to keep visitors traveling to a certain ecotourist spot. It requires holistic, ecologically based strategies to create projects that do not alter or injure, but instead help repair and restore existing site systems, such as plans end animal communities, soils and waters.

The basic result of sustainable ecotourism is to help visitors appreciate the natural and cultural uniqueness of a site by bringing them closer to it. In order to achieve this, the site design must be human-scaled and intimate, so that sensory features—such as sights, smells, and sounds—are appreciated and preserved.

**Conclusion:**

Tourism has proved to be an engine of growth in many economies in the word. It provides for the generation of income, wealth and employment, and helps in the sustainable development of remote areas. Although beginning to be understood for its potentials to provide for development in the world, tourism still remains a sector that needs serious attention.

Tourism has proved to have negative impacts as well as the positive ones. It is criticized for contamination indigenous culture. This takes the form of changing values resulting in social ladies like drug addiction, child prostitution, etc. A far more widespread negative impact is caused by mass tourism in environmentally fragile areas like mountains, hills, deserts and coastal regions. Due to heavy tourist traffic in some area, the cultural and environmental assets of the community are under threat. Although this phenomenon is not widespread, there is a need to take note of the possible negative influences of tourism so that timely preservation action can be taken and irreparable loss avoided. The movement towards sustainable ecotourism is at once a threat and an opportunity to create more sustainable tourism: by diverting tourist traffic to ensure the carrying capacity of any destination is not exceeded; by planning for regeneration of natural resources; and by generating awareness in the host community whereby they are prepared and formed to deal with the negative impact of mass tourism.

As in most cases, a middle path is the most creative way to maximize the sustainable economic potential of tourism, while at the same time minimizing the negative social influence and threats to the environment. Only ecotourism where the tourism, the service providers, the host community and authorities are well informed and prepared to homes tourism as an engine of growth can yield sustainable results.

Ecotourism, in partnership with research, has the potential to significantly affect nature conservation in many positive ways. The question of sustainability remains unanswered because many sites with nature-based tourism are relatively new and the long-term impacts have yet to be measured. The challenges of removing trash from remote wilderness lodges, of bringing in electricity with low-impact electric wires, or of minimizing the introduction of exotic species require the test of time to determine their success.

In the not-too-distant future, our wilderness areas will be small islands of biodiversity amidst seas of domesticated landscape. As the planet’s sustainable natural, relatively unaltered ecosystems become increasingly rare, ecotourism allows more people to see isolated populations of wildlife, while benefiting local economies. Ecotourism has an impact on natural ecosystems, but importantly, it offers a way to promote conservation in ecologically fragile regions.

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Eagles, McCool, 2002. Since the creation of the first national parks in the ‘New World’ (United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia) at the end of the 19th century, protected natural areas have become important tourist attractions in many countries (Butler & Boyd, 2000). This trend has increased in recent years with the development of nature-based tourism and a growing outdoor recreation industry.


