

Ecotourism Comes of Age



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Ecotourism is:

“Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people”

-- The International Ecotourism Society

What's New about Ecotourism?

- Sustainability goes mainstream
 - Farming
 - Green Building, Green Hotels
 - Carbon Neutral Transportation
- Healthy Communities: recreation; natural landscapes; local food
- Sense of Place & Interpretation: culture, heritage, arts, nature

What's Still the Same ?

- Minimize impact
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect
- Provide positive experience for both visitors and hosts
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- Raise sensitivity to host communities' political, environmental and social climate

Ecotourism by any other name

Sustainable Travel is:

“Tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.”

Ecotourism by any other name

Geotourism is:

“Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, esthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents.”

Ecotourism by any other name

Cultural Heritage Tourism:

“...means traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes irreplaceable historic, cultural and natural resources..”

Ecotourism by any other name

Agritourism is:

"a commercial enterprise at a working farm, ranch, or agricultural plant conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner."

Ecotourism by any other name

Civic Tourism is:

“...an extension of, supplement to and tool for other “place-based” approaches, such as as cultural heritage tourism, ecotourism and geotourism. Towns should “reframe” tourism’s role: see it as an enabler of healthy place making, not only an economic tool.”

What Do They
Have in Common
and
How Does it
Relate to Rural
Tourism???



Ecotourism Meets Rural Tourism

Minimize impact

- Sustainable
- Balance needs of residents and visitors
- Enhancement that protects character of community
- Infrastructure that meets local needs, not just economic development

Ecotourism Meets Rural Tourism

Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect

- Preserve and protect cultural, historic and natural resources; working landscapes
- Preserve and perpetuate traditions: farming, crafts, cuisine...
- When local people show off their community with pride, tourists get more out of their visit.

Ecotourism Meets Rural Tourism

Provide positive experience for both visitors and hosts

- Tourists benefits from the same positive experiences residents enjoy: local experiences & products; vibrant events; engaging streetscapes, unspoiled nature
- Distinctive community identity
- Decide what to share and what not to share

Ecotourism Meets Rural Tourism

Provide direct financial benefits for conservation

- Community Assessment: align advertising with product investment
- Involve the whole community for wise investments
- Creative reuse, i.e. historic buildings
- Conservation easements for agriculture

Ecotourism Meets Rural Tourism

Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people

- Travel businesses do their best to use the local workforce, services, and products and supplies.
- Industry partnerships for prosperity & sustainability (job creation and retention, living wage)
- “Value-Added” products, farm stays & events

Ecotourism Meets Rural Tourism

Raise sensitivity to host communities' political, environmental and social climate

- Focus on Quality and Authenticity
- Who we are, why our heritage is interesting
- What we love about where we live
- Why we respect it and you should too

Ecotourism and Related Resources

The International Ecotourism Society: www.ecotourism.org

The Oslo Statement on Ecotourism:

http://www.ecotourismglobalconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/08/Oslo_Statement_on_Ecotourism_Aug_2007.pdf

National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/index.html>

Vermont's Northeast Kingdom's Geotourism Program

<http://www.travelthekingdom.com/geotourism/>

Discover Appalachia

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/appalachia/>

Civic Tourism: <http://www.civictourism.org>

Partners for Livable Communities: <http://www.livable.com/>

National Trust for Historic Preservation: Rural Heritage:
http://www.nationaltrust.org/rural_heritage/

Sustainable Connections: <http://www.sconnect.org/>

Sierra Business Council: www.sbcouncil.org

The Green Tourism Association, Canada: <http://www.greentourism.ca/>

Community Sustainability Assessment Tool:
<http://gen.ecovillage.org/activities/csa/English/toc.php>

Sustainable Travel International:
<http://www.sustainabletravelinternational.org/>

July, 2007 Blog Report on Green Hotels:
<http://blog.sustainabletravel.com/07-05/>

Green Hotel Initiatives:
<http://www.greenseal.org/>
<http://www.greenlodgingnews.com/>

Carbon Neutral: Raising the Ante on Eco-Tourism, New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/10/travel/10carbon.html?ex=1188705600&en=5ad3b0c4e70ff422&ei=5070>

Books

Community Development Through Tourism, by Sue Beeton. CSIRO Publishing, 2006. (available on Amazon.com)

The Business of Ecotourism, Carol Patterson. Trafford Publishing.

Available on Carol Patterson's Kalahari Management website

<http://www.kalahari-online.com/>