

ECOTOURISM

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OVERVIEW

Threats:

- Environmental damage
- Urbanization
- Human waste
- Garbage
- Crowding
- Noise pollution
- Wildlife disturbance
- Unfair wages & labor conditions

Benefits:

- Tourism can help alleviate poverty
- Possible longer term benefits than hunting or forestry
- Increased demand for learning / experiential holidays
- Conservation
- Education

DEFINITION

"Ecotourism is environmentally responsible
Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy, study and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present), that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations"

(Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993)

COMPONENTS OF ECOTOURISM

- Natural areas
- Contains educational and interpretive features
- Generally for small groups
- Minimizes negative impacts
- Supports the protection of natural areas by generating economic benefits for host communities, organizations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes


(World Tourism Organization)

RANDOM FACTS

- "Eco-Tourism" is often misinterpreted for such things such as: "Adventure Travel", "Sustainable Tourism", "Responsible Tourism", "Nature Based Travel", "Green Travel", "Multi-Sport Adventures" and "Cultural Tourism"
- 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

TOPICS COVERED

- What we will be discussing today in class:
 - Topic 1 → Balance between allowing travellers access to wildlife & preservation of their ecological integrity
 - Topic 2 → Managing The Popularity: the Conflict in Ecotourism between economic viability and environmental sustainability.
 - Topic 3 → Community-based Ecotourism
 - Topic 4 → Money towards education and development of local populations



BALANCE BETWEEN
ALLOWING
TRAVELLERS ACCESS
TO WILDLIFE &
PRESERVATION OF
THEIR ECOLOGICAL
INTEGRITY

BALANCE

- Achieving balance between conservation and development
- Two elements: development density and participation of the local residents
- Example of positive impact of ecotourism: Jiuzhaigou Biosphere Reserve

JIUZHAIYOU BIOSPHERE RESERVE

- located in Sichuan province, China
- World Heritage site since 1992
- Listed as a Biosphere Reserve in 1997 by UNESCO
- Home of golden snub-nosed monkey, giant panda
- More than 4000 plant species and 100 animal species



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ENDANGERED SPECIES



DEVELOPMENT DENSITY

- Too low development density:
 - No harm done to the reserve
 - No facilities for visitors /travelers
- Too high development density:
 - Many facilities for visitors to enjoy, high profit
 - Loss of the protected area, threatens wildlife animal, destroys the landscape
 - Negative impact: land degradation, water pollution

PARTICIPATION OF THE LOCALS

Example of Jiuzhaigou Biosphere Reserve

After ecotourism started:

- Locals gave up farming and hunting and participated in ecotourism business (ex: family hotels, souvenir shops, guides)
- Population of agricultural business dropped from 98% to 18%
- After 2002, hotels moved out from the reserve area to lower the development density.

Table 1 The percentage changes of land use coverage of 1987, 1997, and 2002, Jiuzhaigou County

	Percentage of changes	
	1987–1997	1997–2003
Forest	-8	+2
Shrubbery	+131	+11
Grassland	+22	0
Waters	+33	+229
Farm land	-26	-61
Residential land	-28	+119
Bare land	+5	-15

(Li, et al., 2006)

- GDP change from tourism: 28%(1990) to 68% (2002)



MANAGING THE
POPULARITY: THE
CONFLICT IN
ECOTOURISM BETWEEN
ECONOMIC VIABILITY
AND ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY

THE QUESTION:

- Question: Can and should the use of park or preserve be limited to some fixed number of travellers per year?
- Answer: The question deserves and solicits an answer that is more complex than what could be provided by an argument created to provide a yes or no answer. This presentation will demonstrate that while there are needs for both imposing limits to ecotourism and not to, the reason for the necessity of these limits are often complex and the best answer to this question is one of management that aims to make ecotourism sustainable.

MAN VERSUS NATURE: WHO'S NEEDS DO WE PROTECT?

Environmental Reality

- Human development threatens the environment which leads to an increase in demand on natural resources.
- Extraction of resources can further threaten fragile ecosystems.

Economic Reality

- Protecting the environment through preserves takes away and hinders economic growth within developing countries.
- People depend on environment to extract economic wealth.

Conflicting Realities

- The political cost of protection
- Poaching and illegal activities.
- The cost of environmental enforcement.

MAN VS. NATURE: ECOTOURISM AS A SOLUTION

A Compromise?

- Developing countries have less ability to protect the environment against 'human needs', compare to richer and more developed countries.
- A compromise is need to make environmental protection as a way to address human needs.

Ecotourism

- Ecotourism changes how people relate their economic needs to the environment.
- Ecotourism provides jobs that creates incentives for protecting the environment.

Limiting Ecotourism

- Ecotourism's ability to compromise depends on the profitability of the sector which is dependent on the numbers of tourists.
- Limiting the number of tourists will limit economic viability of ecotourism.

UNLIMITED ECOTOURISM

Without limits

- Ecotourism isn't just for Eco-tourists.
- Ecotourism becomes too popular.
- Developing economies can depend too much on it.

Ecotourism

- Destroys the environment.
- Creates incentives for locals or others to poach and extract resources from the environment.

Solution?

- Sustainable Ecotourism should not only balance the needs of the environment but also to the needs of the people.
- Systematic Management



COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM

COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM

- Ecotourism is the notion that well-planned tourism could provide both economic and political incentives for conservation, as well as bring additional benefits to local communities
- Today many conservation organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and the World Wildlife Fund use ecotourism as a method for preserving wildlife and their environment.

COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM

- The connection between the chosen environmental area, adjacent ecosystems, and local people must be established
- It is difficult to protect the flora and fauna unless there are economic benefits to the country as well as to the local people
- The many potential benefits that can be derived from ecotourism need to be integrated with conservation management and community development in order to be effective

COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM

- Ecotourism can “empower the local communities by giving them a sense of pride and awareness of the importance of their natural resources and control over their own development”
- This established confidence of the local population can and has produced positive results that further the ecotourism industry and better the conservation attainments

COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM

- Community-based approach to ecotourism is distinctive because it accounts for the standpoint of all members of the community, even those not directly involved
- Lash and Austin (2003) define community-based ecotourism as “when the local people are involved in all aspects of the conservation and development process, both as principle actors and prime beneficiaries”

COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM

- The three goals community-based ecotourism is trying to achieve are:
 1. to establish a business which aids the local economic development but also minimizes negative impacts on flora and fauna
 2. to contribute to the conservation of the environment and local communities
 3. to ensure the participation of the local communities in the development and management of ecotourism activities

COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM

- Community-based also educates
- A successful ecotourism project benefits all that are involved, the tourists as well as the locals
- A community based approach to ecotourism recognizes the need to promote the quality of life of people *and* the environment
- Concerns regarding ecotourism are that many operations claim to benefit local communities have failed to do so

COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM

- A community-based advocates the empowerment of the local communities
- gives the opportunity to decide which forms of tourism and conservation programs they want to be develop
- In order for ecotourism to be successful organizations must have successful links to communities with trained staff who continually dialogue with communities by understanding expectations from the start and assisting where change is necessary

COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM

- Ecotourism certainly can be a potential tool for communities to both promote their own empowerment and conservation of their local environment
- But ecotourism will always have limitations and will never be as effective as pure protection but community-based ecotourism specifically can promote involvement and improvement of the entire community while preserving the environment



TOURISM DOLLARS &
EDUCATION OF LOCAL
COMMUNITY

TOURISM DOLLARS & EDUCATION

- We are polluting Earth and ignoring our negative actions – destroying planet
- More people now trying to find a solution to this and ways to protect animals and environments
- Ecotourism is the travel of people to natural places around the world, in ways that protect it and improve the lives of the people around it (Ecotourism 2010)

TOURISM DOLLARS AND EDUCATION

- Should tourism dollars go towards preservation of parks and preserves or to the education and development of the local community?
- Side Backed → teach the community
 - Conserving environment is an easier task that can be done by the community
 - Educational development of the people is a more strenuous task that requires sufficient funding to help developing nations

TOURISM DOLLARS & EDUCATION

- Generally find eco-tourist attractions in third world countries
- Depend on ecotourism as an income of money
- Money = crucial aspect
- For example, Indonesia get tourists from all over the world. Raise fees to get more money, but less people and lower income.



- Best to have reasonable fees for both the tourist and for the local communities

TOURISM DOLLARS & EDUCATION

- Another example is in Columbia, a small town in North Carolina
- They planned on building a boardwalk that would be a greenway for many tourist activities like walking, biking, fishing, etc. along the Scuppernong River
- For the wildlife refugees around the town, they also planned on building a learning centre, which was a crucial part of their longing to improve their town and sustain their eco-tourist attraction



TOURISM DOLLARS & EDUCATION

- Sustainability of animals that inhabit the area is also another important part of ecotourism
- Tourism can pose a threat to the animals, if the environment is affected
- Very important to educate local people about animals around them and how to sustain them and their environments

TOURISM DOLLARS & EDUCATION

- In Australia, the whale shark and the bottlenose dolphin are very popular
- Not much is known about them
- “The management of these attractions at each location must be sustainable; their conservation will require financial support at both local and international levels, the education of local people and visitors, and extensive scientific research” (Day 1998)





TOURISM DOLLARS & EDUCATION

- Money is best spent on educating the local populations
- It's like killing two birds with one stone