

Chapter VI:

Nature Tourism

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Note: It is important to review the resource material in Chapter IV: Tourism Development; Chapter V: Agritourism and Chapter VII: Heritage and Cultural Tourism because some of the material is not repeated in every chapter. Also, contact the local Extension Office and Visitor's Bureau to locate contacts at the local and state level.

Tourism and the Environment: What's the Connection?

By Edward T. McMahon
From the Forum Journal, Summer 1999

Ecotourism Development Manual

Northwest Arkansas RC&D
This publication serves as a workbook to assist in the assessment and development of nature based tourism. The publication also contains several case studies in Arkansas. Available from Northwest Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council
402 N. Walnut, Suite 109
Harrison, AR 72601
Ph: (870) 741-7475

The Business of Ecotourism: The Complete Guide for Nature and Culture-Based Tourism Operations

By Carol Patterson
This is a tool that can be used to establish a viable and sustainable enterprise. It focuses on the planning, marketing, and operational requirements unique to ecotourism and provides practical advice so the new or experienced can succeed in this often challenging field.
Explorer's Guide Publishing
4843 Apperson Drive
Rhineland, WI 54501
Ph: 715-362-6029
Email: explore@newnorth.net
www.desocom.com

Agricultural Tourism Fact Sheets

From A to Z: Potential Enterprises for Agricultural and Nature Tourism.
University of California Small Farm Center
Available at: ww.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/factsheets or
Phone 530-752-7774

Nature Tourism Information

Texas A&M University
This is an example of web sites and information available in universities and state agencies. Contact the local extension office or NRCS office to determine who to contact. For Texas, the web site is:

www.rpts.tamu.edu/tce or contact Andy Skagberg at email a-skagberg@tamu.edu or call 979-845-5330

Center for Nature and Heritage Tourism

This website provides information on nature and heritage tourism. The website also contains a links to additional websites, many of which are about Farm and Ranch tourism.

<http://hidalgo.geo.swt.edu/nht/>

Stories Across America: Opportunities for Rural Tourism

National Trust for Historic Preservation and the American Express Company

This publication includes the stories of rural regions and small communities that have developed successful nature tourism programs. It is designed like a work book listing the names and phone numbers of the people that were involved in developing these success stories. See pages 34-39, "Building Bridges To Success: The Seaway Trail in New York. Available at www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/stories.htm or contacting Jim Maetzold at 202-720-2307 or jim.maetzold@usda.gov for a 4-color copy.

Developing Naturally: An Exploratory Process for Nature-Based Community Tourism

Thomas D. Potts and Allan P.C. Marsinko, Clemson University

This publication presents case studies for South Carolina and provides worksheets for developing nature-based tourism.

Available online at: <http://www.strom.clemson.edu/publications/Potts/index.html#pubs>

Hardcopies available from Martha Morris - Operations Manager and Publications

Coordinator, Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs

Clemson University

Clemson, SC 29643 or call 864-656-0215

Making Nature Your Business, a Guide for Starting a Nature Tourism Business in the Lone Star State

This online publication will help you develop a well-organized business plan. Available at: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/tourism/yourbusiness/>

Nature Tourism Handbook: Income Diversification Through Nature and Heritage Tourism: A Step-wise Guidebook to Evaluate Enterprise Opportunities.

By TAMUS

Chief aim of this resource guide is that it is concise. The guide is designed to lead you through a process in a step-wise fashion so that you will have a clear idea about agritourism and whether the business is for you. A 22 minute video of case studies is also available

Available online at

<http://naturetourism.tamu.edu>

Texas A & M University

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences

College Station, TX 77843

Ph: 979-845-5411

Nature-Based Tourism Enterprises

Thomas D. Potts

Clemson, SC: Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, Clemson University, 1993

NAL Call No. G155A1P68 1993

Contact Operations Manager and Publications Coordinator, Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs

Clemson University

Clemson, SC 29643 or call 864-656-0215

Natural Resources Tourism: Partnerships that Make It Happen

Video, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences

This video presents three RC&D Councils nature-based tourism activities in Pennsylvania, such as biking, hiking and historic natural areas.

Available from James A. Maetzold at (202) 720-2307.

Nature-Oriented Visitors and their Expenditures: Upper San Pedro Valley

Agricultural and Resource Economics

University of Arizona, Tucson Arizona

By Patricia Orr and Dr. Bonnie Colby

February 2002

This is a report based on a survey administered to 843 visitors to key birding sites in the upper San Pedro River Basin. The report summarizes the demographics, travel patterns, and local expenditures of these visitors.

Available online at: http://ag.arizona.edu/AREC/pubs/san_pedro_report.pdf

Establishing a Birding-Related Business: A Resource Guide

By David Scott and Ashley Callahan

Texas Agricultural Extension Service – Texas A&M University

B-6093

The first eight pages provide an overview of birding trends, and the last eight pages provide a guide for establishing a birding business or activity in a community.

Available online at: <http://agpublications.tamu.edu/pubs/rpt/b6093.pdf>

Hardcopies available from (979) 845-5419

Tidelands Birding Festival, February 23-25, 2001

This provides an example of how a community can benefit from its natural resource—birding. Birding festival information is available at: www.scnatureadventures.com.

The publication is available from Miles Phillips (842) 234-1424

The Economic Impact of Birding Ecotourism on Communities Surrounding Eight Wildlife Refuges

By Paul Kerlinger

This is a study sponsored by FWLS that assessed the traveler spending habits of tourists traveling to and from refuge areas.

Available by calling, (212) 691-4910 or (James A. Maetzold) (202) 720-2307

Partners in Flight Program (PIF)

The PIF program is an international cooperative effort to direct resources toward protecting neotropical migratory and land birds and their habitats. Their website provides directories, resources, and membership information.

Website: <http://www.partnersinflight.org>

Email: terry_rich@fws.gov

Agro-Ecology Conference Summary: Eco-tourism on Public and Private Lands in Florida

This 3rd annual conference explored innovative methods to tap Florida's ecological resources to provide a unique, enjoyable and learning experience, while generating a new stream of revenue.

Available from The Florida Center for Environmental Studies, 561-691- 8546 or email jjolley@ces.fau.edu

Florida Eco-Tourism: Guide to References and Resources

By Susan E. Swales, Ph.D.

The 2000 Ecology Conference goal was to offer an exposition of eco-tourism resources and opportunities on public and private lands in the state of Florida. Resources are identified throughout the United States.

Available from Florida Center for Environmental Studies, 561-691- 8546 or email jjolley@ces.fau.edu

Soli's Pembina Gorge Tours

Pembina Gorge Tours offers authentic birding ecotour adventures.

Website: <http://solistours.netfirms.com/>

PO Box 400

Walhalla, North Dakota 58282

Ph: (701) 549-2627

Email: ecotours@utma.com

Developing Trails and Tourism on Private Lands in Texas: Case Studies on Existing Enterprises

By C. Scott Shafer and Virginia Dilworth. The demand for outdoor recreational opportunities is growing rapidly. Texas landowners are discovering that developing trail-type tourism activities can be both profitable and rewarding. This publication features details about seven such enterprises, including tips for getting started, creating a desirable product, and developing partnerships to make such ventures more economical. (40 pp., 22 photos).

Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences. Texas A&M

Email: Sshafer@rpts.tamu.edu or at

http://texaserc.tamu.edu/catalog/topics/Recreation_and_Tourism.html

Rails to Trails Conservancy

Rails to Trails Conservancy works to promote the development of trails. Among other things they provide information, technical assistance and training to local trail builders. Their website has a variety of information related to trail building.

Website: <http://www.railtrails.org/>

1100 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

The Great American Trails Company

Website: <http://www.worldnaturetrails.com/>

American Hiking Society

Website: <http://www.americanhiking.org/>

1422 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring MD 20910
Ph: (301) 565-6704
Fax: (301) 565-6714

Pathways across America: A newsletter for National Scenic and Historic Trails

Published by the American Hiking Society under a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

Pathways across America is a national publication devoted to the news and issues of America's national scenic and historic trails.

Available online from: <http://www.americanhiking.org/news/>

American Hiking Association

PO Box 20160
Washington, DC 20041-2160
Ph: (301) 565-6704
Email: natrails@aol.com

Seaway Trail Inc.

The New York State Seaway Trail is a 454 mile scenic route paralleling Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Seaway Trail, Inc. promotes and advocates the sustained use of the inland corridor as a scenic byway.

Website: http://www.seawaytrail.com/main_frames.htm

P.O. Box 660
Sackets Harbor, NY 13685
Ph: (315) 646-1000 or 1-800-SEAWAY-T
Fax: 315-646-1004
Email: info@seawaytrail.com

The National Council for the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial

The Council promotes educational programs and the sustaining stewardship of natural and historical resources along the route of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Website: <http://www.lewisandclark200.org>
0615 SW Palatine Hill Road
Portland, OR 97219
Ph: (888) 999-1803 (toll free) or (503) 768-7995 or (503) 768-7996
Email address: bicentennial@lewisandclark200.org

Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails and Greenway Corridors: A Resource Book.

Prepared by Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance, National Park Service
This publication addresses property values, resident expenditures, commercial uses, agency costs, tourism, corporate relocation and retention, public cost reduction, and benefit estimation. It also includes data appendices and worksheets. Available online at: http://www.nps.gov/pwro/rtca/econ_index.htm
Hardcopies available by calling, (202) 343-3780

Scenic Byways, Trails, and Corridors and Their Impacts

This publication is a fact sheet produced by the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network, Coastal Land Use Committee. It contains case studies of scenic byways, scenic trail systems, river and canal corridors, and special touring events.

Available online at: <http://www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/modtd/33520714.html>

Hardcopies available from Cornell University at a cost of \$0.50

NY Sea Grant

SUNY Oswego,

Oswego, NY 13126 or call 315-341-3042

National Scenic Byways Resource Center

This is a list of all the current American Roads and Scenic Byways.

Available online at: www.byways.org.

Available by calling 1-800-429-9297

International Selkirk Loop

The Selkirk Loop is a 280 mile, scenic roadway that wanders through two countries, two states, three Indian reservations, and a number of towns and villages.

Website: <http://www.selkirkloop.org/>

PO Box 920

Bonnors Ferry, ID 83805

Ph: (888) 823-2626

Email: info@selkirkloop.org

Hood River Valley Fruit Loop

Hood River Valley Fruit Loop is one of the leaders for agritourism in the state of Oregon. Their 45 mile long trail, takes visitors through the Hood River Valley's orchards, forests, farms and businesses.

Website: <http://www.hoodriverfruitloop.com/>

Ph: (541) 386-5448

Email: jamqueen@aol.com

Hidden America Website

This website provides information on activities and places that lie off the beaten path and beyond the interstate. It also contains a monthly newsletter and links to similar sites.
<http://www.hiddenamerica.com/>

So You Want To Be In the Hunting Business?

By J. Wayne Fears
Progressive Farmer, September 1997

Tourism and Gaming on American Indian Lands

Edited by: Alan A. Lew and George A. VanOtten
Published by: Cognizant Communications Corp.
ISBN: 1882345215

This publication is a collection of 15 pieces written by 18 authors on the topic of reservation-based tourism.

Real Property: Leasing Land for Hunting and Other Recreational Uses

By Thomas Allen, Dennis K. Smith, and Anthony Ferrise
West Virginia University Extension Service
RD Publication no. 726

January 1985, updated August 1997

This publication provides information on key factors to consider before leasing your land for hunting, fishing, and other recreational uses.

Available online at: <http://www.wvu.edu/~exten/infores/pubs/other/rd726.pdf>

Earning Additional Income through Hunt Leases on Private Land

Agricultural Extension Service- University of Tennessee
PB 1627

www.utextension.utk.edu/pbfiles/pb1627.pdf

Tips for Hunting Leases

Prepared by Jeffrey J. Jackson
April 1997

Available online at: <http://www.forestry.uga.edu/warnell/service/library/10397/>

Lease Hunting: Opportunities for Missouri Landowners

By Robert A. Pierce
Agricultural publication G9420
January 15, 1997

Available online at: <http://muextension.missouri.edu/xplor/agguides/wildlife/g09420.htm>

A Sportsman's Guide to Landowner Relations

MontGuide Fact Sheet #9813

By Larry Brence and Jim Knight

Montana State University Extension Service

This publication discusses how sportsmen must work closely with landowners to develop positive relationships and continued access to land for hunting and fishing.
Available online at: <http://www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt9813.html>

Outdoor Recreation MonitorSM

D. K. Shifflet and Associates Ltd

This information helps you understand the profile of visitors to your region.
Available from (703) 536-0933 or jcaldwell@dksa.com

Fermata: The Business of Nature

Fermata Inc offers a variety of services to people in the areas of wildlife watching, conservation programming, and nature tourism development. Their website provides access to economic impact and feasibility studies, and their most recent publications. The website also contains a search function and a comprehensive list of websites related to nature tourism.

Website: <http://www.fermatainc.com/home.html>

P.O. Box 5485

Austin, Texas 78763-5485

Ph: (512) 472-0052

E-mail: info@fermatainc.com

Great Excursions

Great Excursions specializes in the development and marketing of alternative tourism products. Their website provides news and information relating to alternative tourism, and a helpful search option.

Website: <http://www.greatexcursions.com/index.html>

3416 Gordon Road

Regina, Saskatchewan

CANADA S4S 2V4

Recreation.gov

This website provides information on recreation opportunities on federal lands.
<http://www.recreation.gov/>

Sand, Wind & Water: A recreational guide to eastern Lake Ontario's dunes and wetlands

By Earnest G. and D. Kuehn

Produced with the assistance from the Ontario Dune Coalition

This guidebook includes information on Eastern Lake Ontario Dune and Wetland Area trails, boat routes, dune ecology, and wildlife. It is nicely designed for education purposes as well as self guided tours.

Available online at: <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/seagrant/tourism/ecotour.htm>

Hardcopies available from Cornell University

Sharon Mullen

NY Sea Grant, SUNY Oswego

Oswego, NY 13126

How to Create and Nurture a Nature Center in Your Community

By Brent Evans and Carolyn Chipman-Evans

This book describes the steps taken by Cibola Nature Center in Boerne Texas. Order form and additional information available at:

<http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/excerpts/exevahop.html>

NWF Nature Link: Key to Conserving the Earth

National Wildlife Federation

A brochure about nature and education.

Available from

National Wildlife Federation

Outdoor Ethics,

8925 Leesburg Pike

Vienna, VA 22184 or call 800-822-9919

Adventure Travel: Profile of a Growing Market

Travel Industry Association (1994)

This publication discusses the trends and the results of 1,500 adult surveys that focused on outdoor and adventure travel. See Chapter XI for more information.

Hardcopies available by calling (202) 408-8422

The 1997 update of this publication can be ordered online from TIA at:

<http://www.tia.org/Pubs/domestic.asp>

National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NRSE): 2000-2003.

This is taken every five years by an Interagency National Survey Consortium, Coordinated by the USDA Forest Service; Outdoor Recreation, Wilderness and Demographics Trends Research Group, Athens, GA and the Human Dimensions Research Laboratory, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.

For more information go to: www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends

Conservation Directory, 43rd Edition

National Wildlife Foundation

This is a list of organizations, agencies and officials concerned with natural resource use and management. An order form and index of the 2,700 organizations is included in the tool kit. If you need additional information about the catalog, contact Rue Gordon at (703) 790-4468 or gordon@nwf.org.

Oregon Outdoor Recreation: Profile and Economic Impacts

Oregon Tourism Commission

This report focuses on the economic impact of the recreation activities most associated with Oregon's natural resources, in particular the relatively active recreation that draws most directly on resource location in rural areas. See Chapter XI for study summary.

Available from

Dean Runyan Associates

815 SW Second Avenue, Suite 620

Portland, OR 97204 or call 503-226-2973 or www.dra-research.com

Sustaining Western Rural Landscapes, Lifestyles, and Livelihood: West-Wide Conference, Sheridan, Wyoming, 2002 Proceedings

Proceeding contains presentations on hunting, leases, habitat management, watchable wildlife, insurance, and value-added livestock enterprises. See Chapter VIII for copy of topics and speakers.

Available from

Boyd Byelich

USDA/NRCS

8416 Hildreth Road

Cheyenne, WY 82009

Email boyd.byelich@wy.usda.gov or call 307-772-2015

Future Farms 2002, A Supermarket of Ideas Conference and Trade Show

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Proceedings contain information on agritourism, high value crops and livestock, business and finance tips, direct marketing ideas, food businesses, leases for wind, mineral and hunting, cooperatives, organics and value-added agriculture.

Available from

Kerr Center For Sustainable Agriculture

PO Box 588

Poteau, OK 74953

Call 918-647-9123 or www.kerrcenter.com

Ag News: Landowners seek Diversity, Income through Wildlife Management

Texas A&M News and Public Affairs

News article on what landowners are doing in Texas to increase income through wildlife management.

Available in this resource manual at:

www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise or the CD described above by calling Jim Maetzold at 202-720-0132 or email at jim.maetzold@usda.gov

Watchable Wildlife Inc.

Mission is to enhance wildlife viewing and nature appreciation. This accomplished through annual conferences, publications and special project assistance. It is a 39 state member organization.

www.watchablewildlife.org

Watchable Wildlife, Inc

PO Box 319

Marine on ST. Croix, MN 55047

Ph: 651-433-4100

Email info@watchablewildlife.org

www.watchablewildlife.org

Texas Nature Tourism Initiative: Marketing Natural Resources Through Recreation and Tourism Enterprises

TAMUS/Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

It is a two-day seminar facilitator manual on how your natural resources can be used to support nature based income producing enterprises.

Texas A & M University

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences

College Station, TX 77843

Ph: 979-845-5411

www.permissiontohunt.com

Permission To Hunt was created with the hunter in mind; building a strong hunter community to promote the values we all strive to maintain and support local, state, and national wildlife organizations. The online system allows hunters to access a website that stores farmer, rancher and or landowner information. The hunter is able to search for hunting location based upon which species the hunter is interested in. Landowners can register their land online and specify which species are available to hunt.

For more information contact

George Paul

Ph: 320-354-5091

Email: info@permissiontohunt.com

www.permissiontohunt.com

Tourism and the Environment

What's the Connection?

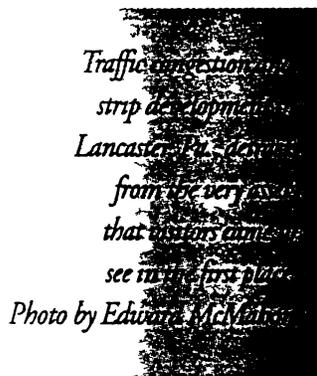
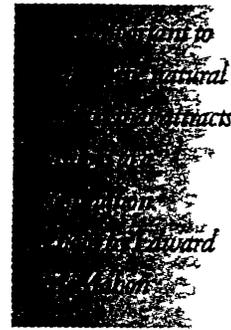
by Edward T McMahon

So what did you do on your summer vacation? Was it rewarding and satisfying? Did the destination meet your expectations? Would you recommend it to a friend? Or were you disappointed? Did dirty air traffic congestion crowded beaches slipshod service or towns awash in tourist schlock leave you feeling frustrated and cheated?

Tourism is the world's largest industry. Today Americans spend more than \$500 billion a year on travel and

recreation away from home. Travel and tourism account for 11.4 percent of employment or one out of every nine jobs in the United States. Tourism is an exciting and dynamic industry. However, tourism is a two-edged sword and in many parts of America haphazard development is harming the very assets that attracted tourists in the first place.

We are all familiar with the colorful ads that American communities use to pro-



mote their charms. They are always filled with attractive scenes: sunsets, azaleas in bloom, historic house museums beautifully photographed. But the reality is often not so lovely. Back away from the columned house and you'll find as likely as not a fast-food restaurant with a screaming red roof to one side and to the other a parking lot that is barren except for a flashing portable sign or a towering billboard. The advertisement is handsome; the city is not.

I'll never forget our family vacation to Pennsylvania Dutch Country. Expecting to see bucolic countryside where every farm is prosperous

and every town is quaint (thanks to the Amish and Mennonites who settled there in the 18th century) we were disappointed to find a sprawling suburb dominated by traffic congestion and strip development. My most vivid memory is of our daughter saying, "Daddy, I didn't know the Amish lived in castles" as we sat stuck in traffic near the Dutch Wonderland theme park.

There is an immense but too often ignored relationship between tourism and the environment. Unfortunately, many tourism officials are far more concerned with marketing and promotions, creating fancy

brochures and compelling ads --than they are with protecting and enhancing the product they are trying to sell.

Tourism involves more than marketing. It also involves making destinations more appealing. This means conserving and enhancing a destination's natural tourism assets. In other words, protecting the environment. It is, after all, the unique heritage, culture, wildlife, or natural beauty of a community or region that attracts tourists in the first place.

Clearly, certain places have more appeal than others. But no place will retain its special appeal by accident. If the destination is too crowded, too commercial, or too much like every place else, then why go? The truth is, the more American communities do to conserve their unique resources, whether natural or man-made, the more tourists they will attract. On the other hand, the more a community comes to resemble "Anyplace, USA," the less reason there will be to visit. This is why local planning, zoning, and urban design standards are so important to communities with tourism resources.

Studies reveal significant differences between tourist and resident perceptions of a community. Tourists are open

and receptive to everything they see, while residents tend to tune out the familiar environment along the roads they travel day in and day out. This suggests that local officials need to become much more aware of the overall character of their community. This is particularly true because many tourists decide to spend time and money at a location before they actually see the place. If the character of your community is at odds with its description in advertising and promotional literature, the tourist will feel cheated. Creation of a false image can spoil a vacation. What's more, it can reduce repeat visitation: tourists may come once but they won't come back. Alternatively, happy memories

and word of mouth are the best public relations a destination can have.

Tourism is a voluntary activity, which means that tourists have a choice among competing destinations. Given a choice, where will they go? Virtually every study of traveler motivations has shown that, along with rest and recreation, visiting scenic areas and historic sites are two of the top reasons why people travel. Travel writer Arthur Frommer says that, "Among cities with no particular recreational appeal, those that have preserved their past continue to enjoy tourism. Those that haven't receive almost no tourism at all. Tourism simply doesn't go to a city that has lost its soul."

So how can a community attract tourists and their dollars without losing its soul? First, recognize that sustainable tourism is a long-term strategy, not a quick fix. Second, understand that people are tourists in order to visit a place. As economic development expert Don Rypkema says, "Nobody goes anywhere to go down a water slide or buy a tee-shirt. They may do both these things, but that isn't the reason they went there." People travel to see "places," especially places that are special, unusual, and

unique. Put another way, any place can create a tourist attraction, but it is those places that are attractions in and of themselves that people most want to visit.

Preservation-minded cities like Miami Beach, Fla.; Annapolis, Md.; Savannah, Ga.; Charleston, S.C.; Santa Fe, N.M.; Victoria, British Columbia; and Quebec City, Canada, are among North America's leading tourism destinations precisely because they have protected their unique architectural heritage. By contrast, cities that have obliterated their past attract hardly any tourists at all, except for the highly competitive and notoriously fickle convention business.

Not every community is blessed with a great natural wonder or a rich legacy of historic buildings, but most communities have tourism potential. Realizing this potential begins by inventorying assets--both existing and potential. What natural, cultural, or historic resources does the community have to offer? What features give the community its special character and identity? To preserve and enhance the resources that make a community interesting, memorable, and unique, local communities and the tourism

industry should adhere to the following standards and recommendations

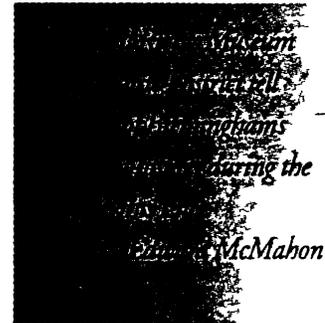
Focus on the authentic

Make every effort to preserve the authentic aspects of local heritage and culture including handicrafts art music language architecture landscape traditions and history Sustainable tourism emphasizes the real over the artificial It recognizes that the true story of an area is worth telling even if it's painful or disturbing In Birmingham Ala for example the Civil Rights Museum and Historic District tell the story of Birmingham's turbulent history during the Civil Rights Era The authentic representation of the city's past adds value and appeal to Birmingham as a destination and the museum and adjacent historic district have proved enormously popular with visitors from all over the world By contrast many tourist attractions near the Smoky Mountains National Park portray Cherokee Indians as using tepees totem poles and feather war bonnets even though this was never part of their culture This commercialization of a stereotype Indian has caused anger towards the tourism industry and devalued the area as a destination

Recognize that tourism has limits Savvy communi-



ties always ask how many tourists are too many? Tourism development that exceeds the carrying capacity of the ecosystem or fails to respect a community's sense of place will result in resentment and the eventual destruction of the very attributes that tourists come to enjoy Too many cars boats tour buses condominiums or people can overwhelm a community and harm fragile resources A few communities have found ways to balance nature and commerce in ways that benefit both One of them is Sanibel Island Fla A popular Gulf Coast resort Sanibel is one of the world's premier places to collect seashells and see sub-tropical birds To protect its abundant wildlife white sand beaches and quiet charm Sanibel developed a master plan based



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on an analysis of what was needed to protect the island's natural systems. The plan set a limit on the island population consistent with its drinking water supply, the habitat needs of wildlife, the need to evacuate the island before hurricanes and other considerations. By establishing development standards based on ecological constants, Sanibel has managed to preserve one of America's most exceptional sub-tropical environments while also accommodating a high level of visitation.

Insure that tourism support facilities--hotels, motels, restaurants and shops--are architecturally and environmentally compatible with their surroundings. Tourists

need places to eat and sleep. They also appreciate the dependable levels of service and accommodation one usually finds in American hotels and motels, but people crave integrity of place wherever they go, and homogeneous, "off-the-shelf" corporate chain and franchise architecture work against integrity of place. I remember how charmed I was, many years ago, on my first visit to New Orleans' French Quarter. Nor will I forget how offended I was on a later visit when I found a phalanx of enormous 50-story hotels overshadowing the area's historic buildings. By contrast, the new hotels in the nearby warehouse district are located in restored 19th-century buildings or new structures that respect the height and scale of the old.

Every development should have a harmonious relationship with its setting. Tourism support facilities should reflect the broader environmental context of the community and should respect the specific size, character, and functional factors of their site within the surrounding landscape. A community's food and lodging establishments are part of the total tourism package. Shouldn't hotels in Missouri be different in style than those

in Maine, Maryland, Montana, Malaysia, or Morocco? It is this search for something different that has given rise to the booming bed and breakfast, adventure travel, and heritage tourism industries.

Interpret the resource.

Education and interpretation are another key to sustainable tourism. Visitors want information about what they are seeing. Interpretation can also be a powerful story-telling tool which can make an attraction, even an entire community, come alive. For example, most tourists used to avoid downtown Gettysburg, Pa., instead spending their time at the battlefield or on the commercial strip outside of town. Then Gettysburg developed a comprehensive interpretation plan that uses interpretive markers, wall murals and outdoor sculpture to interpret the role of the town in the battle. As a result, downtown now attracts many more visitors who stay longer and spend more.

Interpretation can also result in better managed resources by explaining why the resources are important. Interpretation instills respect and fosters stewardship in both visitors and residents. Education about natural and cultural resources can instill community pride and strengthen sense of place.

“Watchable wildlife” sites, for example, include displays that help visitors to understand that without “habitat” there would be no wildlife to watch.

Consider aesthetics and ecology.

Clean air, clean water, and healthy natural systems are fundamentally important to sustainable tourism, but as Mark Twain once said, “We take stock of a city like we take stock of a man. The clothes or appearance are the externals by which we judge.” In other words, aesthetics is also important. Many cities have gotten used to ugliness, accepting it as inevitable to progress. However, other more enlightened communities recognize that the way a community looks affects its image and its eco-

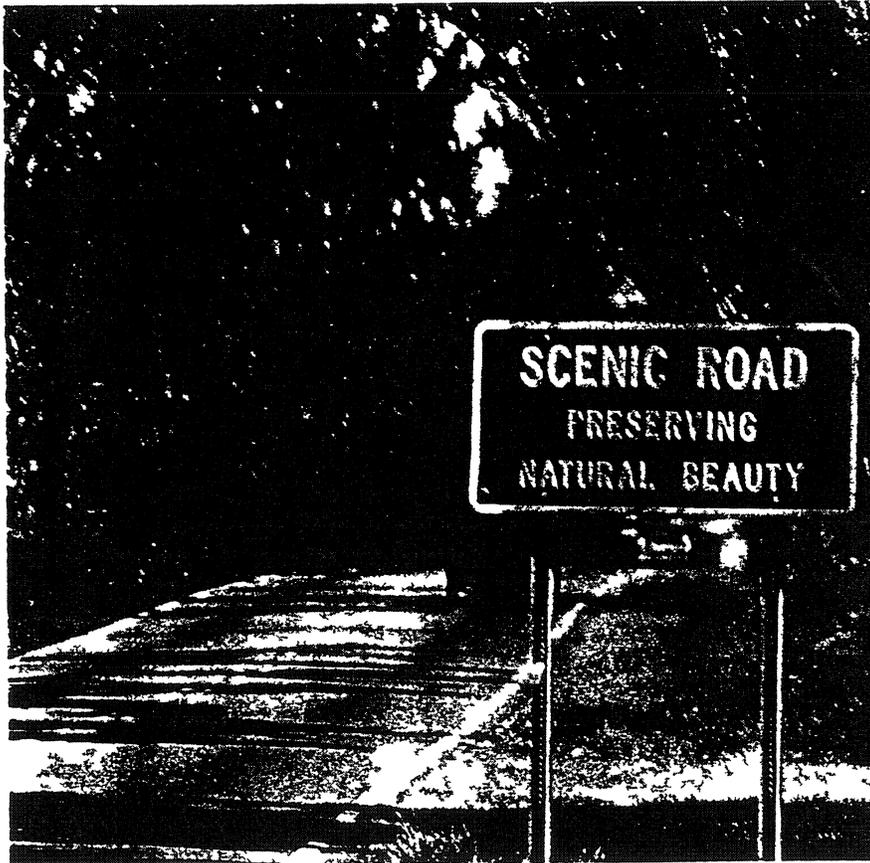
economic well being Protecting scenic views and vistas planting trees landscaping parking lots and controlling signs are all fundamentally important to the economic health of a community

Enhance the journey as well as the destination Tourism is the sum total of the travel experience It is not just what happens at the destination It involves everything that a person sees and does from the time he or she leaves home until the vacation is over Getting there can be half the fun but frequently it is not There are many great destinations in America but unfortu-

nately there are very few great journeys left which is why it is in the interest of the tourism industry to encourage the development of greenways heritage corridors bike paths hiking trails, and other forms of alternative transportation This is also why local and state governments should designate scenic byways and protect roads with unique scenic or historic character

In recent years American tourism has had less and less to do with America and more and more to do with mass marketing As open land decreases tourism advertising dollars increase As historic buildings disappear theme parks proliferate Unless the tourist industry thinks it can continue to sell trips to communities clogged with look alike motels polluted streams traffic jams and cluttered commercial strips it ought to join in an agenda to protect the natural cultural and scenic resources on which it relies

Getting there should be part of the journey. State and local governments should designate scenic byways and protect roads with unique scenic or historic character.
 Photo by Edward McMahon



Edward McMahon is a community planner attorney, and director of The Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program. His book Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities Island Press 1998 discusses how to manage tourism in America's special places. He serves on the National Trust Board of Advisors.

Ecotourism Development Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE: The Nature of Ecotourism

Background	1
This Manual's Purpose	1
A Brief Perspective	2
The U.S. and Global Ecotourism	3
Ecotourism	3
Ecotourism and Cultural Tourism	4
Ecotourism and Nature Tourism	7
Ecotourism's Ethics	8
The Ecotourist and the Market	11
Three Ecotourist Profiles	11
The Ecotourist and Quality of Service	14
Arkansas' Ecotourism "Niche"	14
Case Study No. 1: Ozark Ecotours	15
Tour Development/Scheduling	18
Booking/Payment	18
Tour Procedures	19
Custom Tour	19
Office Procedures	19
Site Monitoring	19
Organizational Policies	19
Training of Personnel	19
History of Ecotourism in Newton County	21
Financial Feasibility of Ozark Ecotours	29

PART TWO: Community-Based Ecotourism Development

Ecotourism Planning	33
Ecotourism Development Program	35
Ecotour Preparation	35
Cooperative Agreements	35
Natural and Cultural Attractions Inventory	35
Ecology/Existing Lodging and Services	41
Local Businesses/Vendors Survey	41
Site Monitoring and Evaluation	42
Cultural Tourism/Ecotourism Impact Assessment	42
Cooperation with Public Lands Management Agencies	43
Cooperation with Private Landowners	43
Site Planning	44
The Ecotour Schedule	44
Designing Ecotours	44
A Word on Custom Ecotours	45
Ecotour Logistics	46
Pre-Departure	46
During ecotours	52
Culmination and Farewells	56
Program Evaluation	57
Ecotourism Questionnaires	57
Programmatic Change	57
Community Employment	60
Ecotour Guides/Interpretive Program Quality	60
Selection	61
Training	61
Additional Points of Importance	65

Excerpt from Ozark Ecotour's Ecotour Guide Handbook	66	Environmental Codes of Conduct for Host Communities	103
Additional Suggested Guide Responsibilities	77	The Ecotourism Society	105
Auxiliary Business Opportunities	78	Travel Industry Association of America	115
Administering Agency	79	International Chamber of Commerce	117
Ecotourism Advisory Group	79	American Society of Travel Agents	120
Ecotourism Resource Room	80	The Benefits of Voluntary Codes of Conduct for Tourism	121
Marketing Plan/Product Positioning	80		
The Feasibility Study	81		
Funding	82		
Excerpt from Rural Tourism Handbook	83		

PART THREE: National Case Studies

Alaska (Case Study No. 2)	95	Notes	123
Pennsylvania (Case Study No. 3)	97	Bibliography	125
Vermont (Case Study No. 4)	99	Glossary	129
		Resource List	135

PART FOUR: Environmental Codes of Conduct

Environmental Codes of Conduct for Tourism	103	Sustainable Tourism Practices – Business Assessment	143
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University of California
Small Farm Center

Fact Sheets for Managing Agri- and Nature-Tourism Operations

From A to Z: Potential Enterprises for Agricultural and Nature Tourism



Here is a listing of potential activities to get you thinking about how your current operation and assets may be augmented with a recreational enterprise. The options are limited only by your imagination and, in some instance, regulations. Other fact sheets in this series will help you assess factors that will help you decide what will work for you, including liability issues, financing, marketing, etc.

Agriculture Food & Craft Shows	Habitat Improvement Projects
Animal Feeding	Harvest Festivals
Archery Range	Hay Rides / Sleigh Rides
Arrowhead Hunting / Rock Collecting	Hiking / Cave Exploring
Barn Dances (Square Dancing, etc.)	Historical Museums and Displays (Ag History, Machinery, etc.)
Bed & Breakfast (Rural & Historical)	Horseback Riding
Bird Watching & Wildlife Viewing	Hunting Dog Training & Competition
Boating & Canoeing	Off-Road Motorcycling, ATV, Mountain Biking
Camping / Picnicking	Pack Trips
Children's Camp (Summer or Winter)	Petting Zoo
Corporate picnics	Photography / Painting

Cross-country Skiing	Ranch Skills (horseshoeing, leatherwork, camp cooking, horse training, etc.)
Educational or Technical Tours	Roadside Stands & Markets
Elder Hostel	Rock Climbing
Family Reunions	Rodeo
Farm or Ranch Work Experience (roundup, haying, fencing, calving, cutting wood etc.)	Self-Guided Driving Tours
Fee-Hunting	School & Educational Tours and Activities
Fee-Fishing (Ice Fishing in Winter)	Snowmobiling
Floral Arrangements	Swimming
Flower Shows or Festivals	Tee Pee Building
Fly Fishing and Tying Clinics	Trap & Skeet Shooting
Food Festivals	Tubing & Rafting
Gardens (flowers, greenery, herbs, dried flowers)	U-Pick Operations
Guided Crop Tours	Wagon Trains
Guiding and Outfitting	Wilderness Experiences

This Fact Sheet was adapted by Desmond Jolly, Cooperative Extension agricultural economist and director, UC Small Farm Program, from the Agri-tourism Workgroup and Resources, Oregon Department of Agriculture.

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Program Areas

Community Recreation & Parks
Community Tourism
Event Leadership Program
Hospitality/ Texas Friendly
Nature Tourism

Welcome the Nature Tourism Information Web site in the Dept. of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University

This Web site provides access to numerous e-tools, publications and resources nature/eco-tourism. Our goal is to assist people who are interested in nature tourism potential business enterprise, while at the same time creating the Premier source information on these topics. It is also for people who are doing research or who want where they can go to find a nature, heritage or ranch/farm recreational experience

Check out the **New Newsletter "Texas Nature Net News"**—to sign up for our list serve, send an email a-skadberg@tamu.edu



We welcome your Comments Suggestions!

Online Databases

[Details about Databases](#)



Use Texas INFRONT to promote your tourism business or find other businesses.

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- * [Texas Tourism Laws](#)
- * [Publications & Events](#)

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- [Web Site Development](#)
- [Links to Nature Tourism Businesses](#)
- [Answers to Business Questions](#)
- ["Tell Your Story" with Interpretation](#)
- [Liability/Insurance](#)

[Nature & Heritage Tourism Evaluate Enterprise](#)

Our "Nature Tourism people who are conservation/recreation

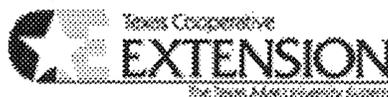
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[Texas Department of Transportation](#)
[U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service](#)
[Center for Nature & Heritage Tourism--SWT](#)



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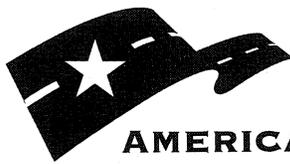
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BUILDING BRIDGES TO SUCCESS: THE SEAWAY TRAIL IN NEW YORK

THE PARTNERS

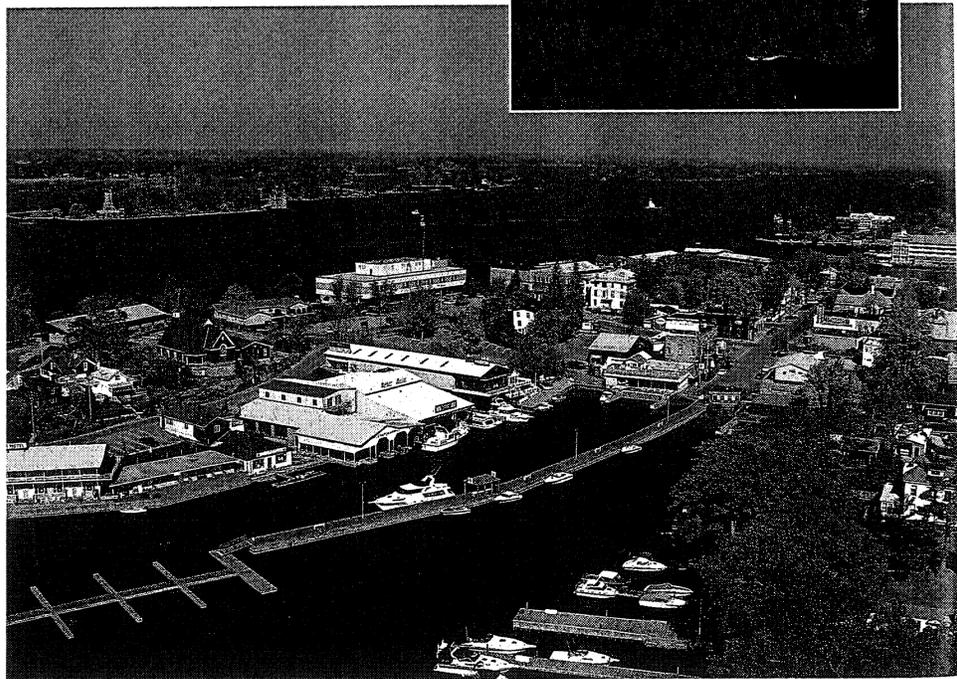
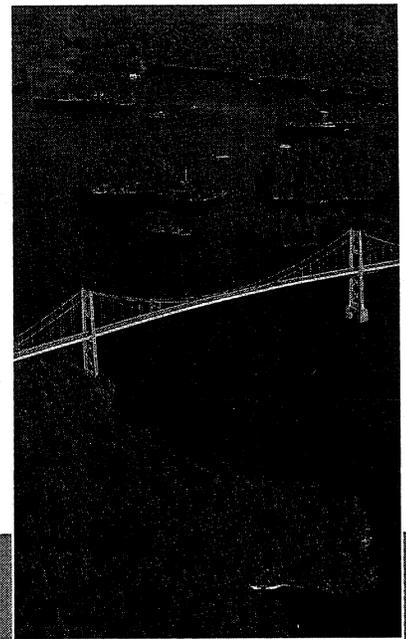
- > Seaway Trail, Inc., and Seaway Trail Foundation Sackets Harbor, NY
www.seawaytrail.com
- > Black River-St. Lawrence Resource Conservation and Development Project, Inc.
www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/directory/watertown-rc&d.html
- > American Automobile Association
Heathrow, FL
www.aaa.com
- > Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, DC
www.epa.gov
- > Federal Highway Administration
Washington, DC
www.fhwa.dot.gov/
National Scenic Byways Program
www.byways.org
Transportation Enhancements Funding Program
www.enhancements.org
- > 77 municipalities along the Seaway Trail
- > National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
Washington, DC
www.nrc.nps.gov/rtca
- > New York State Department of Transportation Albany, NY
www.dot.state.ny.us
- > New York State Legislature, Tourism Committee Chairs
- > U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Washington, DC
www.fws.gov



AMERICA'S BYWAYS

"A byway designation is as important as you want to make it. The more you use it, the more it benefits your organization."

— Teresa Mitchell, Seaway Trail Director



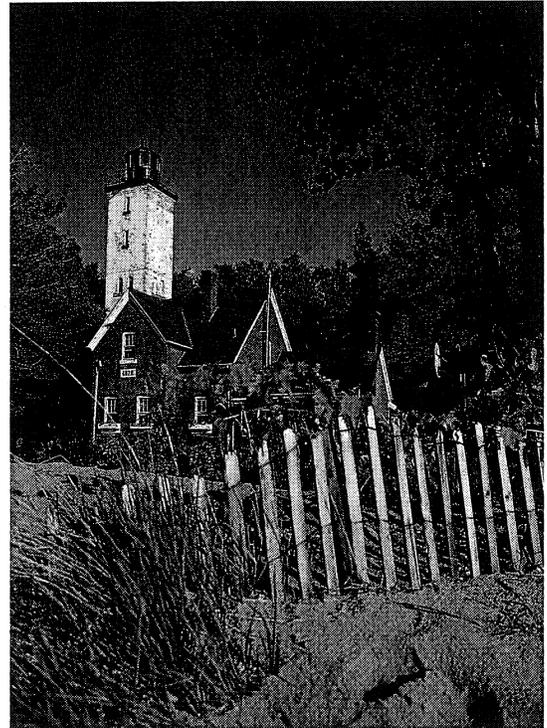
The Setting

MOST RURAL COMMUNITIES LACK LARGE-SCALE, MARQUEE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS. INSTEAD, RURAL AREAS TEND TO BE DOTTED WITH SMALL, DISPERSED SITES THAT OFFER VARYING DEGREES OF INFORMATION,

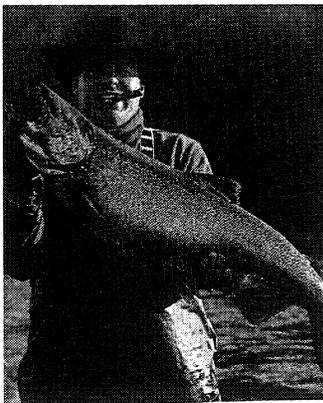
ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES. HOW CAN YOU PACKAGE YOUR SCATTERED ATTRACTIONS INTO A VIABLE DESTINATION THAT HAS REAL ECONOMIC AND CIVIC IMPACTS? THE SEAWAY TRAIL IN NEW YORK IS ONE OF THE NATION'S MOST SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS THANKS TO ITS DEVELOPMENT AS A DESTINATION TRAVEL CORRIDOR.

The Seaway Trail, New York State's National Scenic Byway, is 454 miles of scenic driving along Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Lighthouses have guided voyagers through these waters for hundreds of years. And now, through the broad marketing spectrum of the Seaway Trail, these sentinels of safety have served as another type of beacon—attracting travelers in search of history, recreation, relaxation, and scenic touring to their communities. And when travelers come, economic development follows.

But the real picture of economic development along the Seaway Trail is broader than heritage tourism alone. Over the last two decades since its dedication in 1978, the Seaway Trail has provided the foundation for a strong rural development strategy that encompasses eight major resource themes: coastal recreation, natural resources, history of the coast, peoples of the coast, coastal agriculture, international coastline, water-related industry, and commercial shipping. By partnering with U.S. federal agencies and departments, Seaway Trail has evolved into a long-term tool for economic growth through rural tourism.



For over 500 miles through New York and Pennsylvania, the Seaway Trail guides travelers past the signature elements of the region: its lighthouses (such as the 1872 Presque Isle Light Station pictured above), its lakes, and its wildlife.



The Eisenhower Locks along the Seaway Trail on the St. Lawrence River have 110-foot-deep locks that can accommodate ships up to 740 feet in length from around the globe.



"The mission of Seaway Trail, Inc., is to increase tourism revenues and to enhance the economic well-being and quality of life in New York State's Seaway Trail corridor by managing and marketing it as a leading scenic byway."

— Seaway Trail Mission Statement

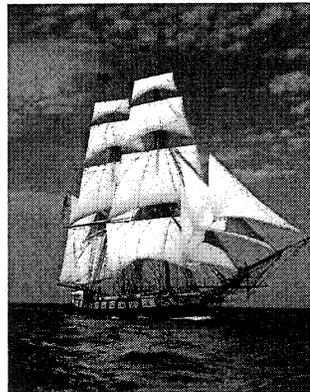
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

It was the bridge that started it all. The seven-mile Thousand Islands Bridge, dubbed "the bridge from nowhere to nowhere," was built in 1938 to connect Canada and the United States along the most direct land-travel route between Washington, D.C. and Ottawa. Planned as a device to raise revenues through tolls and to increase tourism to the largely unknown Thousand Islands, the bridge put the region on the map and provided a reason for people to pass through the area.

Watching this progress with a keen eye was Vince Dee, a restaurateur in the St. Lawrence Seaway region. Dee recognized an opportunity to capitalize on the tour buses that now plied the route from New York City to Canada along the bustling Thousand Islands Bridge. He was the first person in upstate New York to tap the group tour market out of the city and it led to financial success for his business.

It was many years in the making, but Vince Dee developed first his own tourism trade and then turned his attention to his neighbors and the region. Looking across the St. Lawrence River for inspiration, Dee found a great tourism model to emulate: the Canadian Heritage Highway, a travel route stretching from Windsor, Ontario, to the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec. Dee worked with area business owners to establish, in 1978, the 80-mile-long Seaway Trail and

its nonprofit arm, the Seaway Trail Foundation, a 501(c)(3). Dee, who was the trail's acknowledged visionary and its president until his death in 1995, called the Seaway Trail, "A string of jewels showcasing the communities close to the shoreline." Soon after its establishment, wayfinding signs placed by the New York State Department of Transportation marked the route for travelers.



In the War of 1812, Oliver Hazard Perry unfurled the famous battle flag, "don't give up the ship" from the deck of this historic sailing ship, the brig Niagara. Today, the Niagara is the centerpiece of the Erie Maritime Museum in its home port of Erie, PA.

In the early 1980s, the Seaway Trail conducted resource inventories. Through these efforts came the realization that the route contained 27 historic lighthouses, which in turn, caused the trail's marketers to sit up with interest. Brochures were produced to help visitors find and enjoy the lighthouses and, as people began visiting them, the lighthouse managers realized they were part of a dispersed, regional tourism

product. In 1980, Seaway Trail published a guidebook to the lighthouses, the first in a series. Since then, the trail has developed guidebooks to sites pertaining to the War of 1812, a *Wildguide to Natural History* that illustrates the area's flora, fauna, and natural lands; *Along the Trail and Into the Past*, detailing architecture and history along the trail; and trail bicycling adventures. The Black River-St. Lawrence Resource Conservation and Development Project and others contracted with the Natural Resources Conservation Service for assistance in publishing *The Nautical Seaway Trail*, a boater's atlas and guide to waterfront services as well as several agritourism guides. The original vision of the Seaway Trail as a multimodal corridor was coming to fruition as these brochures emphasized walking, biking, driving and boating.

A new era for the Seaway Trail began in 1983 when it was accorded National Recreational Trail status by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The following year, the trail was extended to Niagara Falls and then, in 1986, it was extended to the Pennsylvania border, bringing it to a total of 454 miles. For each of these incremental extensions, all the communities had to participate. This required hours and hours of meetings and presentations by the board of directors and the planning staff.

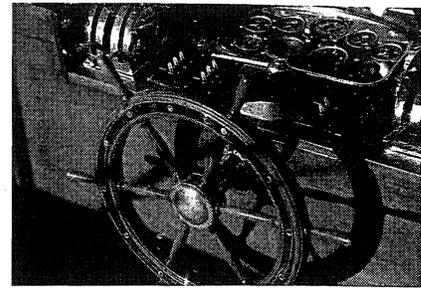
As successful as that effort was, it still did not answer the Seaway Trail's problem of a lack of budget. In 1985, the state legisla-

ture was creating new tourism committees in the senate and assembly. The chairs of these committees were representatives from the St. Lawrence corridor: Matt Murphy, a Democrat from Lockport, and John McHugh, a Republican from Watertown. Vince Dee knew both men. With their support, the Seaway Trail garnered \$250,000 in 1986 from the state. The trail hired staff, including Director Teresa Mitchell, and embarked on an aggressive marketing and development campaign.

From there, the Seaway Trail hit a steady stream of home runs, including 1987's I Love NY summer festival, which the trail sponsored, proving to residents and travelers alike that the region had reached legitimate status as a tourism destination. In preparation for that festival, the town of Oswego, which housed the trail's office at the time, came to the realization that it had no tourism events with which to attract anticipated travelers. The town, rallied by Mayor John Sullivan, his wife Charlotte Sullivan, and community historian Rosemary Nesbitt, went to work and created Harborfest to celebrate its waterfront heritage. More than a decade later, the four-day Harborfest is featured as one of the top New York State events by the American Bus Association with annual attendance in the tens of thousands.

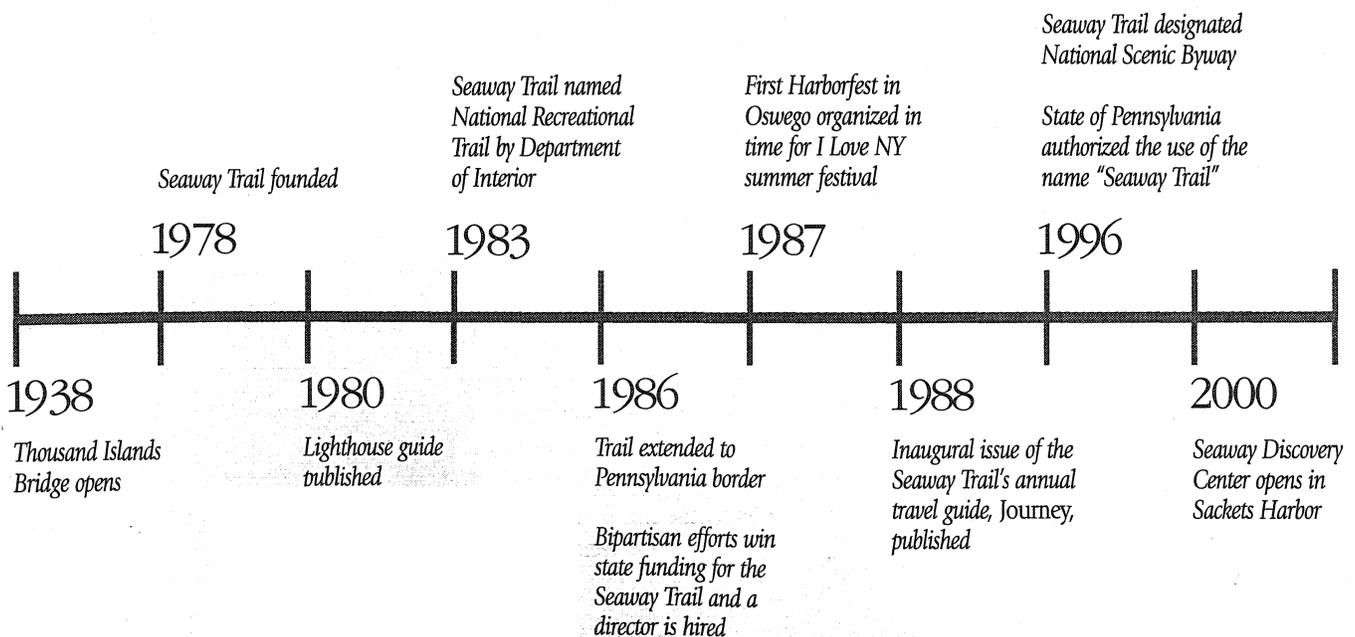
While attending a conference on outdoor recreation in 1989 in Washington, D.C., Mitchell became aware that while the trail was accomplishing much on its own, it had failed to take advantage of potential federal funding sources. She got busy networking and eventually hooked up with officials at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) who were crafting legislation for the new National Scenic Byways Program. Going back home, Mitchell prompted the Seaway Trail to lobby the New York legislature for a state-authorized byway designation, which then opened the door for federal recognition and a portion of the millions of dollars of available funding.

In 1996, the Seaway Trail was one of the first 20 roads designated as a National Scenic Byway or an All American Road. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes roads for their outstanding qualities. The corridor must possess distinctive archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational or scenic qualities.



Views of historic boats such as this one can be found at the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton, NY. The museum, which has one of the finest collections of antique boats in the world, has received support from a variety of sources including the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Since that time, the Seaway Trail has garnered \$1.9 million in grant funds from the National Scenic Byways program. But, funding isn't the only reason an organization should seek federal designation, according to Mitchell. "A byway designation is as important as you want to make it. The more you use it, the more it benefits your organization. We have been able to make good use of the money that is available through the designation, but just as importantly, we have won recognition as being part of a larger, federally sanctioned program. It brings prestige to your organization and helps it build important partnerships."

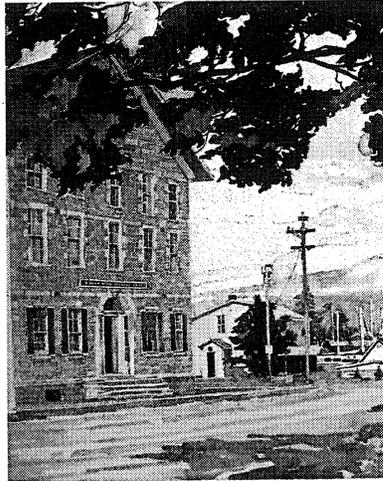


MAKING THE MOST OF OPPORTUNITIES

Collaborate: The only way that the original trail succeeded was through the collaboration of multiple jurisdictions, organizations, and individuals. As the Seaway Trail has expanded to its full 500-mile length across New York and Pennsylvania, collaborations have developed between the two states, among various public and private entities, and with several federal agencies and departments. Overall success has come about largely through these cooperative efforts.

Find the Fit between the Community and Tourism: Towns and hamlets all along the Seaway Trail embraced tourism from both pride and economic standpoints. For communities that thought they had nothing to offer visitors, the trail emboldened them to turn to their natural and manmade histories and develop tourism infrastructure as well as attractions. In Sackets Harbor, new restaurants and shops handle the influx of visitors.

Make Sites and Programs Come Alive: Activities that celebrate the trail's natural wonders, such as fishing, boating, agritourism and bird watching, are enhanced by Seaway Trail guidebooks. While at the many historic sites along the route, interpreters and reenactors demonstrate 18th- and 19th-century ways of life, ranging from Colonial infantry drills to 19th-century-style gardening.



The Seaway Trail's restoration of the 1817 Union Hotel in Sackets Harbor resulted in the Seaway Trail Discovery Center.

Focus on Quality and Authenticity: The Seaway Trail contains myriad authentic resources from coastal wildlife habitats to scenic vistas, forests to farms, and historic architecture to cultural activities from a diverse international population. From marketing materials and trailblazing signs to official guidebooks and *Journey*, the trail's annual periodical, the Seaway Trail's assets are represented to the public with excellence.

Preserve and Protect Resources: By drawing attention to the area's vast natural and manmade resources, Seaway Trail has urged and promoted their preservation. Public and private organizations and individual citizens all along the 454-mile trail in New York have taken measures to preserve and protect resources ranging from lighthouses to wildlife refuges, and War of 1812 forts to swamps and wetlands. Leading by example, the Seaway Trail undertook the rehabilitation of the 1817 Union Hotel in Sackets Harbor's main square for use as offices and an information center.

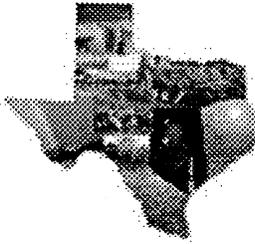
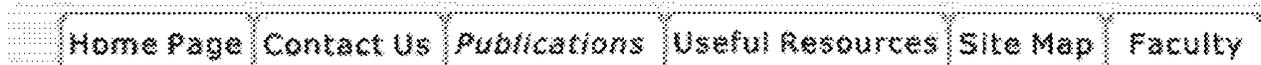
RESULTS

- > The Seaway Discovery Center, which opened in July 2000, attracted 3,000 visitors in its first half year, raising \$7,000 in admissions and \$27,000 in gift shop revenues.
- > The bipartisan support that created the Seaway Trail line item in the state budget has continued since 1986 to the present because the trail is seen by legislators as one of the state's major tourism success stories.
- > Partnerships with renowned national organizations have helped Seaway Trail develop sought-after tourism programs. Working with the American Automobile Association, the trail has developed a "participating retailer" effort that offers discounts at trail sites for card-carrying AAA members. Pairing with Elderhostel, the Seaway Trail is sponsoring a variety of travel programs aimed at that organization's members, who are all 55 years of age or older. In return, Seaway Trail is able to market to Elderhostel's membership of 175,000.

> An agreement in 1996 with the State of Pennsylvania authorized use of the name 'Seaway Trail' through the 50-mile route along Lake Erie to the Ohio border. In December 2000, representatives from convention and visitors bureaus in Ohio approached the folks at the Seaway Trail for advice on creating or extending the trail through their state along Lake Erie. Mitchell says it is not inconceivable that in the not-too-distant future a trail may extend all the way around the Great Lake shores to Duluth, Minnesota. All participating states and trails could take advantage of the important Scenic Byways designation and work on cross-promotions of their subsections of the trail.

> Agritourism along the trail is a growing industry. It promotes tourism to farms, festivals, historic farm sites, museums, and agricultural gift shops.





Publications

A variety of publications, Web-based resources and Web sites produced in states leading efforts for community, farm/ranch and nature tourism.

Below are links to publications about tourism and nature tourism and their hosting Web sites. The first list is publications written by the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, and Texas Cooperative Extension at Texas A&M University. Links to other pertinent publications by other organizations are listed below.

Note: Choosing a link to another Web site will open a new browser window.

Programs and Services

Texas Friendly/Hospitality Program

Parks and Recreation Resources

Tourism & Nature Tourism

Texas Event Leadership Program



Publications of Texas Cooperative Extension

Developing Trails & Tourism on Private Lands in Texas (PDF format) (B-6103; \$12.00 - Order print version)

By C. Scott Shafer and Virginia Dilworth. The demand for outdoor recreational opportunities is growing rapidly. Texas landowners are discovering that developing trail-type tourism activities can be both profitable and rewarding. This publication features details about seven such enterprises, including tips for getting started, creating a desirable product, and developing partnerships to make such ventures more economical. (40 pp., 22 photos).

Establishing a Birding-Related Business (PDF format) (B-6093; \$5.00 - Order print version)

By: David Scott and Ashley Callahan. This document summarizes research that has been conducted about birdwatching impacts on communities. It then provides guidance about considerations for the development of a birding nature tourism business.

So You Want to Start a Home-Based Business in Texas (PDF format) (B-1634; \$2.00 - Order print version)

By Pam Brown, Greg Clary and Lynn White. Home-based businesses are very popular, but many fail because of a lack of planning and little knowledge about how to ensure success. This publication contains information on business management and legal matters, as well as detailed instructions for writing a business plan. (12 pp.)

The Hunter Skills Trail (B-6086; \$2.00 Order print version)

By Tamara Trail, Larry Hysmith and Denise Harmel-Garza. Hunter education is most successful when it includes hands-on teaching about hunting and firearms safety. The Hunter Skills Trail is a proven technique for training both adults and young people, and this guide explains how to set up and conduct such a program. (12 pp., 17 photos)

Marketing the Hunting Experience (not available in PDF format) (B-1694; \$1.00 - Order)

By Jack Thigpen. Marketing matches the resources of an operation with the needs of the clientele. Marketing tools farmers can use are fully explained along with results of various studies of the hunting market. Ways to use advertising effectively are included.

Hunter Expenditures to Rural Communities and Landowners (not available in PDF format) (B-5027; \$1.00 - Order) By Jack Thigpen. Gillespie County was chosen as a pilot test site for a hunter expenditure survey. Results showed that almost \$7 million was spent by hunters in the county during 1989. The economic impact of these expenditures, the characteristics of hunters, the types of game hunted and various factors which influence the amount of money hunters spend are all discussed in detail in this 8-page publication.

Texas Deer Management Calendar (not available in PDF format) (L-2376; \$0.75 Order)
This 2-page leaflet provides a description of month-by-month deer management activities.

Other Publications and Programs in Texas

Wetland and Coastal Resources Information Manual for Texas, 2nd edition. This comprehensive manual was developed to help individuals, agencies and organizations that manage wetlands. (2000 pp.).

Master Naturalist Program Dedicated to providing instruction and volunteer opportunities for adults who wish to educate their community and demonstrate beneficial management of natural resources in Texas.

Texas Hospitality Program is a statewide service training program designed to teach employees and managers the fundamental skills and management concepts needed for achieving satisfied and repeat customers, visitors, guests...Quality service not only favors repeat business and loyalty, but it can also improve employee morale and attitude, and reduce turnover in personnel.

Texas Natural Resource Web This web site's primary purpose is to serve as an information database for those individuals interested in natural resource management of Texas rangelands.

Making Nature Your Business (Web based format)

Nature Tourism (PDF Format) - Texas Department of Agriculture/Texas Agricultural Finance Authority

Tourism Programs and Publications in Other States

California--University of California at Davis Agricultural Tourism Operation Fact Sheets Developed by the Small Farm Center at the University of California at Davis. These publications focus on Agri-tourism, but the issues covered are very similar to those associated with nature tourism.

Conducting Farm and Ranch Tours

On-Farm Customer Relations

Safety and Risk Management

What is Agri-tourism?

Assessing Your Assets

Why People Vacation

Assessing Your Preferences, Options, and Goals

Adding Value and Personalizing Your Services

Creating a Business Plan

From A to Z: Potential Enterprises for Agricultural and Nature Tourism

Marketing Your Enterprise

Marketing Equals the Four Ps

Tips for Building Marketing and Community Partnerships

Top Marketing Ideas for Agri-tourism Operations

Michigan--Michigan State University Extension Service

National Tourism Database provides a comprehensive inventory of Extension resource materials related to tourism education and to make this information conveniently available. Currently the database contains over 250 Extension resource materials including bulletins, reserach reports, videos, and training programs.

Minnesota--University of Minnesota, Extension Service--Tourism Center is a valuable resource for tourism development. The Center has developed many resources and publications related to tourism.

Motel & Restaurant Family Businesses--Summary of Research (PDF format)

South Carolina--The Strom Thurmond Institute--Developing Naturally The Goal of the Developing Naturally home page is to provide field tested resources that will enhance communities throughout the world. The materials provided here have been developed around the concepts of: Discovery, Mutuality, Locality, Historicity, Potentiality, and Enhancement. Included for downloading at no fee are "How to" guides on Nature-based Community Development, Bed and Breakfast Development, and Recycling.

Developing Naturally: an Exploratory Process for Nature-based Community Tourism is a useful document about establishing nature based businesses in communities.

Nature-based Tourism Enterprises: Guidelines for Success is a concise document with a suprising wealth of well organized and useful information about nature tourism business development.

Utah--Utah State University, Extension Service Western Rural Development Center

The purpose of the Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is to strengthen rural families, communities, and businesses by facilitating rural development research and extension (outreach) projects cooperatively with universities and communities throughout the West.

Community Tourism Assessment Handbook a nine-step guide to designed to facilitate the process of determining whether tourism development is right for your community. The purpose of the handbook is to help communities determine their actual tourism potential, but also requires an estimation of cost and benefits of tourism before developing a strategy.

The Economic Impact of Visitors to Your Community a tool for a community to use in working our the most economically effective strategies considering goals for family income, distribution of benefits and consts, fiscal impacts, benefits over time, etc.

Wyoming--University of Wyoming, Farm and Ranch Recreation This web site is designed to provide operators with education, marketing ideas, and a way to communicate with each other.

Farm and Ranch Recreation Handbook a comprehensive guide for considering and developing ranch-based recreational activites.

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*Developing
Naturally:
An
Exploratory
Process
for
Nature-Based
Community
Tourism*



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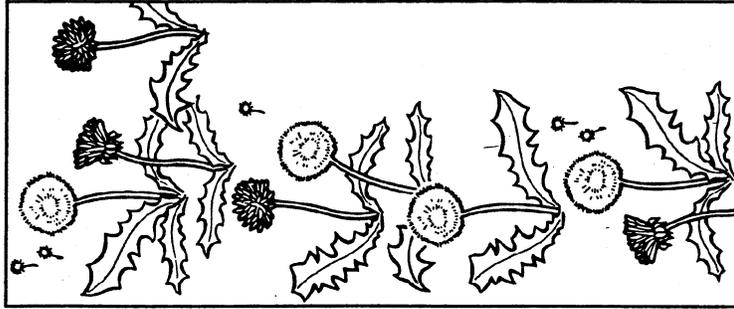


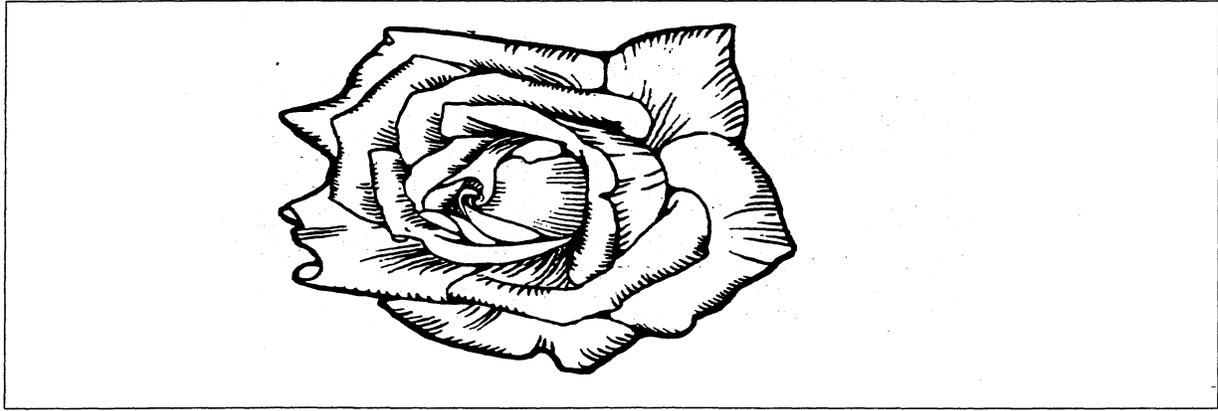
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

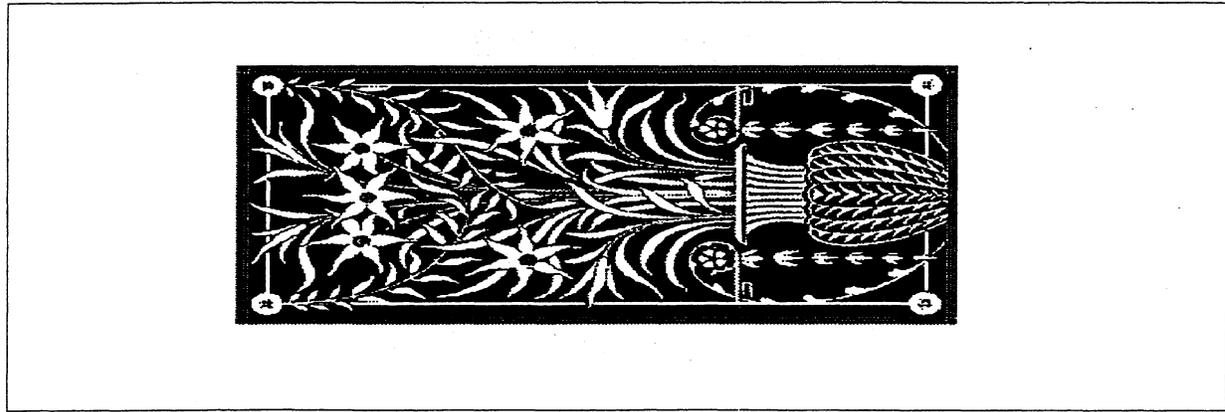
Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
CHAPTER	
I. WHY DO WE WANT TO DEVELOP NATURE-BASED TOURISM	1
II. TAKING OUR INVENTORY	7
What Will We Need	9
Background Information and Human Resources	9
Facilitator	10
Committee	11
Resource Team	13
Objective	15
What Are the Attractions of the Area	17
Natural Attractions	17
Rare and Endangered Species	20
Man-Enhanced Attractions	21
Section Summary	23
Festivals and Events	24
What Is a Nature-Related Theme	26
Section Summary	26
Recreational Activities	27
Section Summary	28
Nature-Based Traditions	28
What Are Our Human Resources	30
Section Summary	31
Services and Infrastructure	32

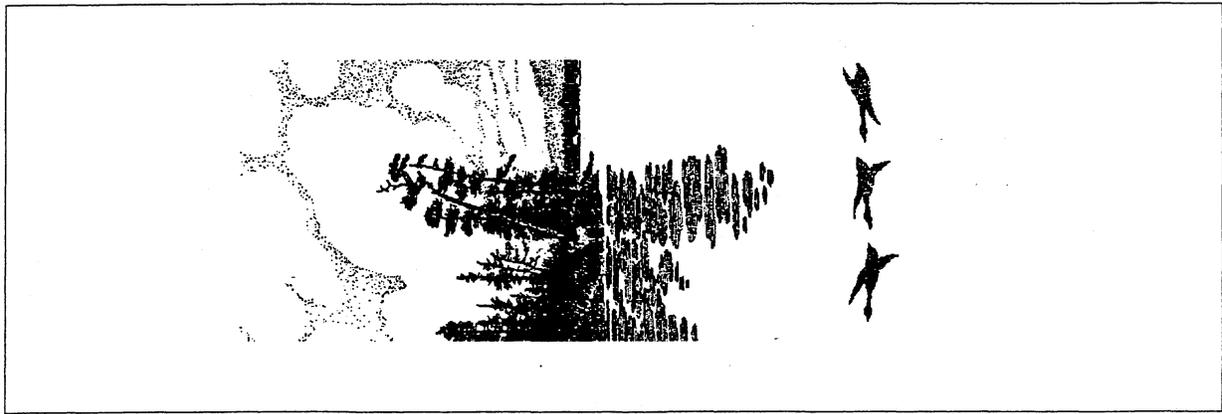




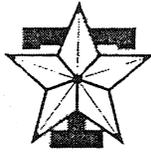
	Page
Facilities	32
Section Summary	33
How Does Our Transportation System Rate	34
Highways and Other Access Roads	34
Loop Roads	36
Airports	37
Other Transportation	38
Section Summary	39
Health-Related Services and Facilities	40
Section Summary	42
III. FINANCING AND MARKET IDENTIFICATION	43
What About Financing	43
Current Market Conditions	44
Section Summary	46
Targeting Your Customer	46
Developing a Nature-Based Tourism Calendar	49
Communications	52
Section Summary	56
Visitation Trends	56
Competition	59
IV. MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES	63
Maintaining the Resource Quality	63
Land Ownership and Tourism Planning	64
Protecting Ecosystems for Nature-Based Tourism	65
Swamps, Marshes and Estuaries	65
Riverine Systems	67
Bottom Land Forests	68
Upland Forests	69



	Page
Mountainous/Alpine Systems	71
Management Areas	73
Parks	73
Resource Conservation Districts	74
Game Preserves	75
Wildlife Corridors	76
Preservation Options	77
Summary	82
V. GOAL SETTING AND DEVELOPING A PLAN OF ACTION	83
Putting It All Together	83
Using Your Ratings	83
Using Your Maps	84
Analyzing Your Information	85
Setting Goals	86
Developing Your Theme	87
Natural Beauty	89
Unique Habitats	89
Nature-Based Traditions	90
Festivals and Events	90
Recreation and Leisure Programs	90
Specialty Camps and Programs	91
Interpretative Visitor Center	91
Action Steps	91
Natural Attractions	91
Man-Enhanced Attractions	92
Festivals/Events	92
Recreational Activities	92
Nature-Based Traditions	93
Services	93
Transportation	94



	Page
Public Health and Safety	94
Market	94
Communications	95
Competitive Standing	95
Natural Resource Management	95
Ideas for Increasing Tourism	96
Hospitality Training—A Key Ingredient for Success	97
VI. MARKETING YOUR NATURE-BASED ATTRACTIONS	99
Identifying Your Potential Nature Visitors	99
Who Are They	99
Where Do They Come From	99
A Marketing Plan	101
Sample Nature-Based Marketing Plan	102
Marketing Tools	104
Brochures/Visitors' Guides	104
Free and Low-Cost Publicity	107
Press Kit	108
Sell Your Region	108
Sell Yourself	108
Newsletters	109
Your Tourism Division	109
Familiarization Tours	109
Community Events	110
Special Promotions	110
Paid Advertising	111
Inquiries	112
Group Ecotours	113
Nature Vacation Packages	115
BIBLIOGRAPHY	117



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THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Establishing a Birding-Related Business

A Resource Guide



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This report was funded in part by grants from the Renewable Resources Extension Act and the Trull Foundation. We would like to express our gratitude to the many individuals who were interviewed for this report. Their insights will help others who are considering developing birding-related businesses.

Many of the photos in this publication were taken by Bert Frenz. The authors are grateful for his permission to use them.

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Birdwatching is the fastest growing outdoor recreation activity in the United States (Outdoor Recreation Coalition of America, 1996). Many communities are enjoying substantial economic benefits from visiting birders. This has led many landowners and communities to consider establishing birding and wildlife watching enterprises and events as a means of generating income. Attracting birders and nature tourists is one way to diversify a landowner's income and a community's economic base.

Birding and nature tourism are also compatible with environmental preservation. They take advantage of natural scenic areas and habitats that attract specific bird species.

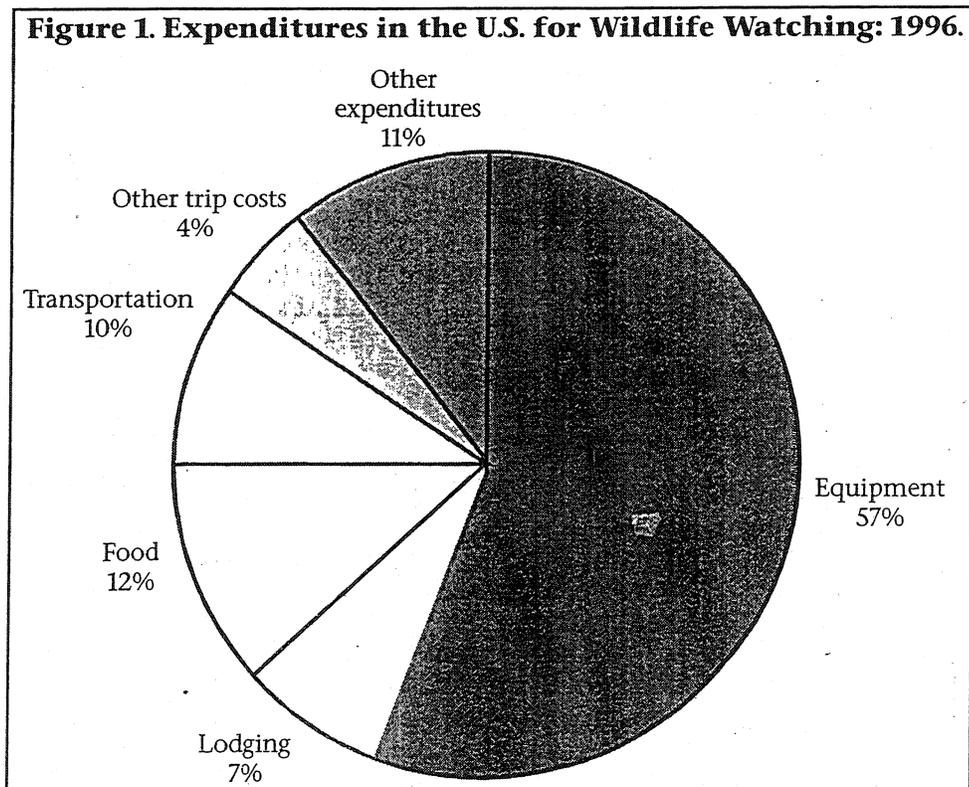
As with any business, success depends on understanding the industry and the customers one is trying to reach. The purpose of this guide is to present current information about the birding industry and birders themselves, and to help those who may want to establish birding-related enterprises.

Information in this publication came from several studies, including the *1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* (referred to as the National Survey), and the *1993-1994 National Survey of Recreation and the Environment* (referred to as NSRE).

Understanding the Birding Market

Economics

The *National Survey* reported that, in 1996, Americans spent approximately \$31 billion on observing, feeding and photographing wildlife. Trip-related expenditures accounted for more than \$9 billion (33 percent) of that total. Figure 1 shows a detailed breakdown of how wildlife watchers spent their money. "Other trip costs" includes such things as guide fees and public land use fees. "Other expenditures" includes magazines and books, membership dues, contributions, land leasing and ownership, and plantings.



Source: 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

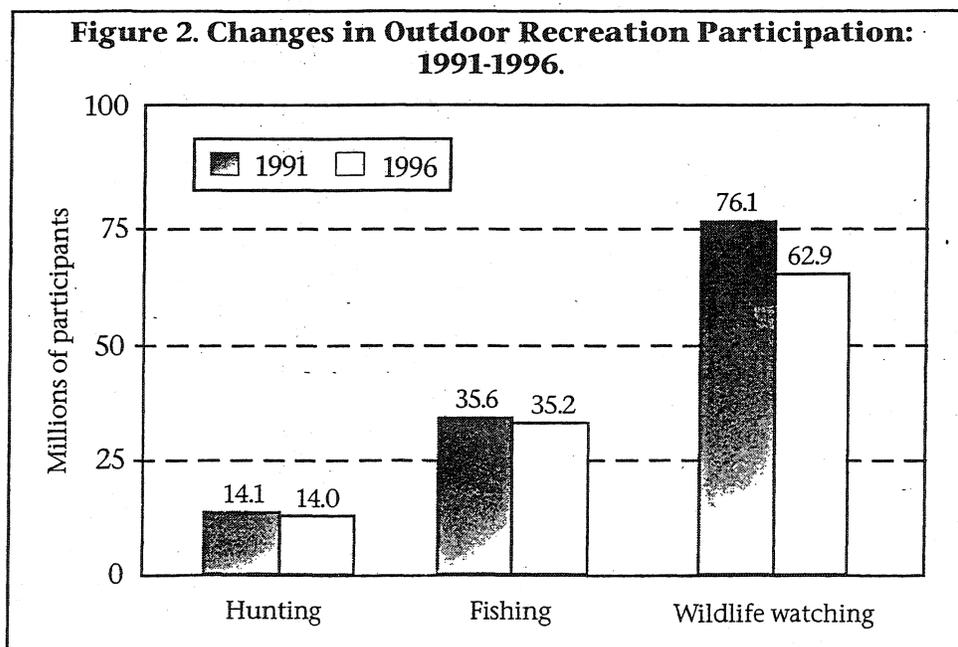
Wildlife watchers spent an average of \$554 per person for these activities in 1996, far less than the average amounts spent by hunters (\$1,497) or anglers (\$1,112). Still, wildlife watchers, particularly birders, generate substantial income for some communities and landowners.

For example:

- The annual Hummer/Bird Celebration in Rockport/Fulton, Texas, attracted 4,500 visitors in 1995. They spent more than \$1.1 million during the 4-day event (an average of \$345 each). Of this amount, \$316,000 was spent on lodging, \$237,000 on meals in restaurants, and \$278,000 on shopping.
- An estimated 20,000 birders spent \$3.8 million at Point Pelee National Park in Ontario during May 1987.
- Approximately 38,000 people visited two birding "hot spots" in southeast Arizona (Ramsey Canyon and San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area) from July 1991 to June 1992 and spent about \$1.6 million.
- Roughly 100,000 birders visited Cape May, New Jersey in 1993 and spent \$10 million.
- About 6,000 birders traveled to the High Island area of Texas during April and May of 1992 and spent more than \$2.5 million for lodging and other activities.
- The Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge near McAllen, Texas attracted some 100,000 birders from November 1993 to October 1994. These visitors spent \$14 million in the area.
- About \$5.6 million was spent by the 48,000 people who visited Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in south Texas from November 1993 to October 1994.

Participation Trends

The National Survey reported that 63 million Americans over the age of 16 participated in wildlife watching in 1996. Although this is 17 percent fewer people than was reported in 1991, the number of Americans who said they watched wildlife far outnumbered those who said they hunted or fished (Fig. 2).



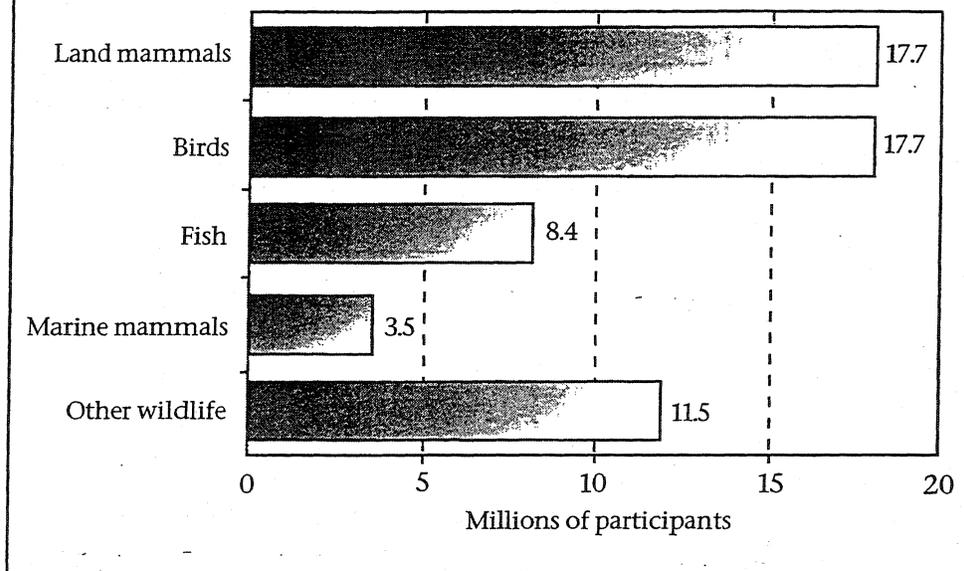
Source: 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

Of these 63 million Americans, 23.7 million said they traveled more than 1 mile from home to observe, photograph or feed wildlife. These are considered non-residential wildlife watchers. Residential wildlife watchers (some 61 million) are those who enjoyed wildlife watching within a mile of their homes.

The residential wildlife watchers said they fed birds or other wildlife (54 million), observed wildlife (44 million), photographed wildlife (16 million), maintained special plantings or natural areas for wildlife (13 million), and visited public parks (11 million). Almost all the residential wildlife watchers (96 percent) said they observed birds; many (87 percent) also like to observe mammals.

The non-residential wildlife watchers reported feeding wildlife (10 million), observing birds (18 million), and photographing wildlife (12 million). During their trips to observe wildlife, an equal number were interested in birds and land mammals (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Types of Wildlife Observed During Non-residential Trips: 1996.



Source: 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

Only 25 percent of Texans said they engaged in wildlife watching in 1996, and the number of Texans who were non-residential wildlife watchers had decreased from 1.5 million to 1.3 million since 1991. However, Texas is a prime **destination** for wildlife watchers from across the country and around the world. About 1.4 million Americans said they traveled to Texas to observe wildlife (primarily birds). Only California, Pennsylvania and Florida attract more wildlife watchers. These visitors spent about \$1.2 billion on wildlife watching in Texas.

Table 1 shows the rates of participation in wildlife watching among the U.S. population in 1996 (National Survey).

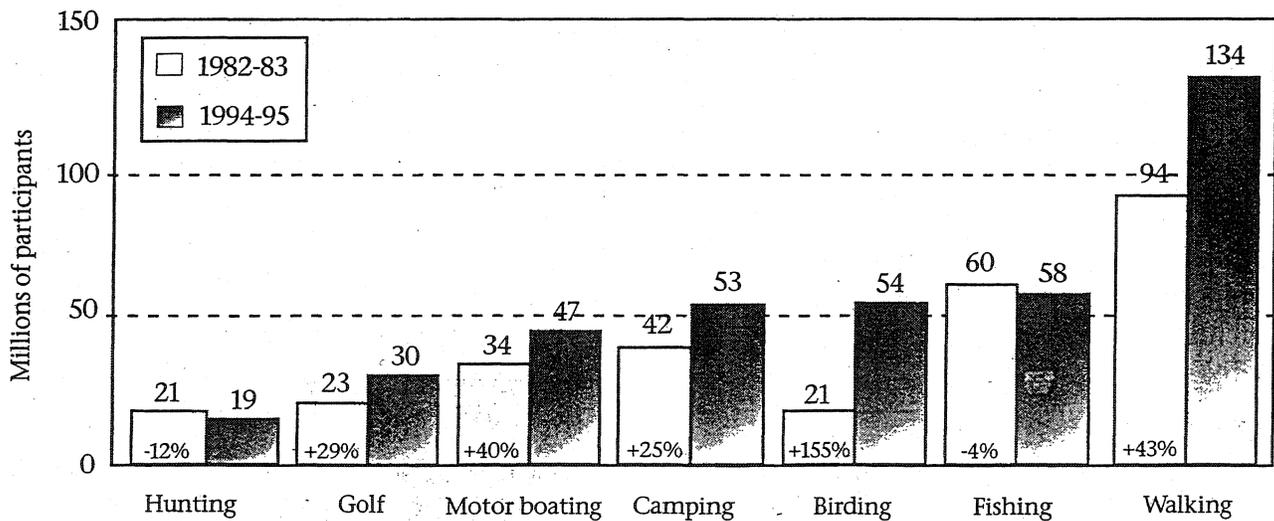
Birdwatching Trends

The number of Americans 16 years of age and older who watch birds grew from 21 million in 1982 to more than 54 million in 1994—a 155 percent increase (Fig. 4). However, it is important to keep these figures in perspective.

Table 1. Rates of Participation in Wildlife Watching.

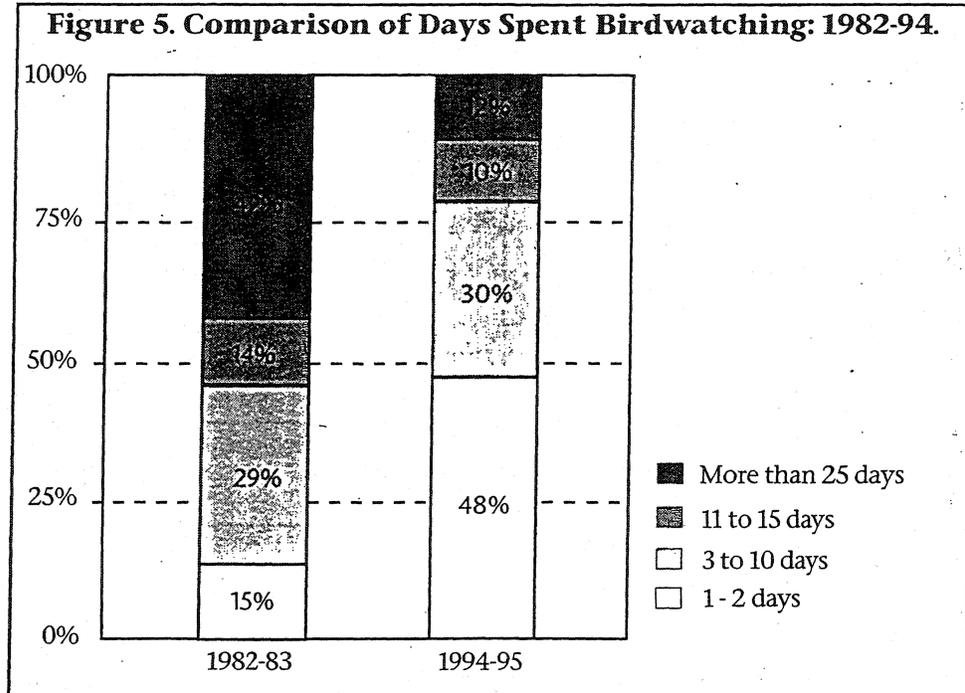
Characteristics	% Engaging in residential wildlife watching	% Engaging in non-residential wildlife watching
Total U.S. population	30.1	11.7
Gender		
Male	29.0	12.1
Female	31.2	11.4
Race/Ethnicity		
Anglo-American	33.8	13.2
African-American	10.3	2.5
All others	14.7	7.3
Age		
16 to 17 years	17.6	8.6
18 to 24 years	14.6	8.5
25 to 34 years	26.4	13.0
35 to 44 years	34.4	15.5
45 to 54 years	34.4	14.8
55 to 64 years	35.5	10.6
65 years and older	32.2	6.0
Level of education		
11 years or less	20.6	5.4
12 years	27.2	8.9
1 to 3 years college	32.3	13.2
4 years college	35.1	15.6
5 years or more college	43.2	22.0
Annual household income		
Less than \$10,000	22.1	5.8
\$10,000 to \$19,000	25.7	9.7
\$20,000 to \$29,999	29.6	11.7
\$30,000 to \$39,999	32.3	13.1
\$40,000 to 49,999	36.1	14.4
\$50,000 to \$99,999	36.0	16.2
\$100,000 or more	37.4	17.0

Figure 4. Changes in Participation in Selected Outdoor Recreation Activities: 1982-1994.



Source: 1994-95 National Survey of Recreation and the Environment

While the overall number of birders has increased, the average number of days per year they spend birdwatching may have decreased (Fig. 5). According to the NSRE, 42 percent of those who said they birdwatched in 1982 reported doing so on 25 or more days that year. Only 15 percent said they observed birds on just one or two occasions. In 1993 the percentages were very different—only 12 percent of birders reported spending 25 or more days on the activity and nearly 50 percent said they went bird watching on only one or two days.



Also, these data from the NSRE don't reveal whether people were residential or non-residential bird watchers. There are far more bird watchers who do so close to home than who travel to watch birds (*National Survey*).

Finally, there is wide variation in the skills and commitments of birders. A national study of birders reported that 60 percent of those who had gone birding in the last 2 years said they could identify ten or fewer species of birds (Fig. 6). Only 3.2 percent could identify more than 40 birds; only 30 percent said they used binoculars; and only 4 percent said they used a field guide.

So it is important for landowners and communities to be realistic about the birdwatching market. Despite the fact that a large number of Americans say they birdwatch, only a small percentage of them is committed to the activity in a serious way.

Characteristics of Wildlife Watchers and Birders

In Table 2, the demographic characteristics of residential and non-residential wildlife watchers are shown (*National Survey*). This is a breakdown of the data in Table 1 for the 41.8 percent of the U.S. population who said they participated in either residential or non-residential wildlife watching. Characteristics of these groups are compared to characteristics of members of the American Birding Association. ABA members are generally serious birders, almost all of whom could be expected to travel away from home to watch birds.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Wildlife Watchers and ABA Members.

Characteristics	Unites States population %	Residential participants %	Non-residential participants %	ABA members %
Gender				
Male	48.0	46.2	50.0	65.9
Female	52.0	53.8	50.0	34.1
Race/Ethnicity				
Anglo-American	83.1	93.1	93.3	98.3
African-American	9.3	3.2	1.9	0.0
All others	7.6	3.7	4.7	1.7
Age				
16 to 17 years	3.5	2.1	2.6	0.0
18 to 24 years	10.1	4.9	7.3	0.4
25 to 34 years	17.4	15.2	19.3	5.6
35 to 44 years	22.0	25.2	29.1	20.1
45 to 54 years	17.8	20.3	29.1	30.4
55 to 64 years	11.6	11.5	7.7	18.2
65 years and older	17.6	18.8	8.9	25.0
Level of education				
11 years or less	16.8	11.5	7.7	0.5
12 years	35.3	31.8	26.9	4.0
1 to 3 years college	22.3	24.2	25.5	18.6
4 years college	13.9	16.2	18.4	34.4
5 years or more college	11.4	16.4	21.5	42.5
Annual household income				
Less than \$10,000	9.2	6.4	4.1	1.6
\$10,000 to \$19,000	12.1	9.7	8.9	1.2
\$20,000 to \$29,999	15.6	14.4	13.9	8.9
\$30,000 to \$39,999	14.3	14.4	14.2	10.9
\$40,000 to 49,999	11.2	12.6	12.3	11.9
\$50,000 to \$99,999	29.1	32.7	35.7	38.5
\$100,000 or more	8.5	9.9	10.9	26.9

tained lists of birds they had identified. However, 41 percent had participated in organized bird censuses.

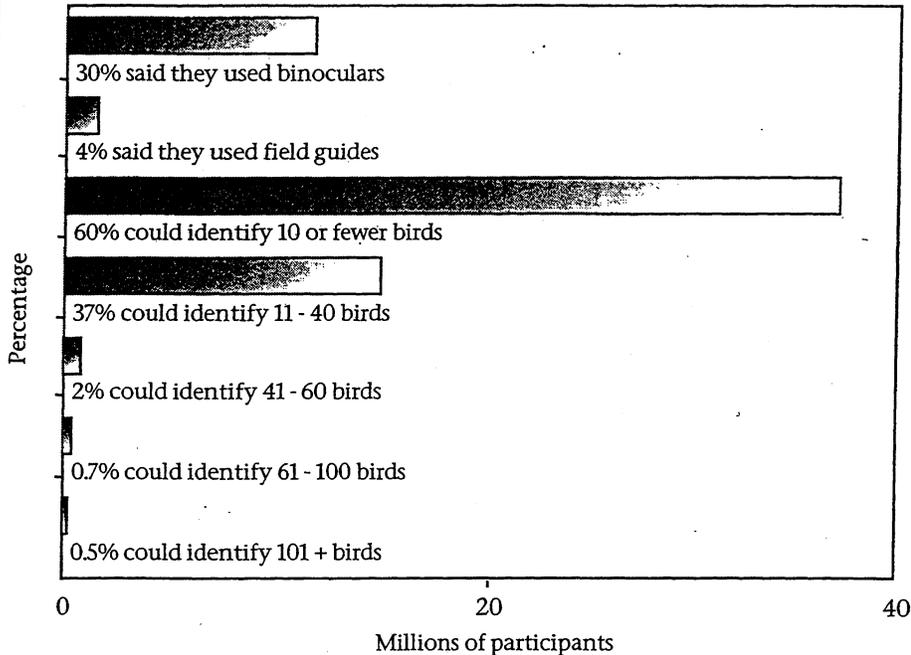
Thirty-eight percent of respondents were **novice birders**. They had greater skill and commitment than the casual birders. Their motivations were: learning about and conserving the environment (46 percent); appreciation for birds and nature (28 percent); and improving their birdwatching skills (25 percent). Fifty-six percent kept lists of birds and had participated in bird censuses.

Intermediate birders made up 12 percent of the people in the study. They were more skilled and committed than both casual and novice birders. Like novice birders, they were motivated primarily by conservation (40 percent). However, many also wanted to improve their birding skills and see new or rare species (37 percent). About 23 percent were motivated by an appreciation of birds and nature. Three out of four said they listed birds, and seven out of ten had participated in bird censuses.

Advanced birders comprised only 7 percent of respondents. They had the highest skill and experience levels. More than half were motivated by a desire to improve their skills and see new or rare species (55 percent). One-third wanted to learn about and conserve the environment. A large percentage of them (91 percent) kept lists of birds they had seen. Nearly eight out of ten had participated in bird censuses; in addition, many of them had led bird walks and made presentations.

Figure 6. Characteristics of Birders.

"Of the 43 million Americans who said they birdwatched during the last two years . . ."



Source: Kellert, 1985

From this table we can see that those who travel away from home to watch wildlife tend to be Anglo-American, 25 to 54 years old, have at least a high school education, and have incomes of about \$40,000 or more

Among the ABA members, 66 percent are male, 25 percent are 65 or older, most have a college degree or graduate degree, and 27 percent have annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more.

Kinds of Birdwatchers

Birdwatchers are not all alike. Knowing the different segments of the birdwatching population can help landowners and communities create and promote attractions for particular segments of the market. The two studies discussed below shed light on the various kinds of birdwatchers.

1994 Study of Birders in Alberta, Canada (McFarlane, 1994)

Birders were asked about their birding habits, perceived skill levels, number of species on their life lists, number of birding magazines to which they subscribed, and the total value of their birdwatching equipment. From this data, the researcher identified four distinct groups of birders: casual birders; novice birders; intermediate birders; and advanced birders (Table 3).

Casual birders comprised 43 percent of the respondents. They had the lowest level of skill and experience, and had invested the least in equipment. They were motivated by an appreciation for birds and nature (43 percent), their desire to learn about and conserve the environment (39 percent), and their desire to improve their birdwatching skills (17 percent). Only 33 percent of them main-

Table 3. Characteristics of Birder Groups Identified by McFarland.

Characteristic	Casual birders	Novice birders	Intermediate birders	Advanced birders
Days on birding trips in 1991 (<i>M</i>)	0.98	8.60	48.03	96.47
Perceived skill level (4-point scale from casual to advanced) (<i>M</i>)	1.90	2.72	3.17	3.38
Number of species on life list (<i>M</i>)	3.29	33.95	65.46	362.82
Number of birding magazine subscriptions (<i>M</i>)	0.04	0.16	0.39	2.32
Replacement value of equipment (9 categories from \$0 to >\$5000) (<i>M</i>)	1.32	3.05	3.03	5.07
Farthest distance traveled to go birding in 1991 (6 categories from 0 to >500 km) (<i>M</i>)	0.55	2.16	3.87	3.95

Adapted from McFarland, 1996

 **1996 Study of Visitors to the Annual Hummer/Bird Celebration in Rockport/Fulton, Texas (Scott, et al., 1996)**

Based on answers to a survey, visitors to this event were categorized into four groups (Table 4).

Twenty-one percent of survey respondents were **generalists and water seekers**. They are not highly skilled birders, take relatively few birding trips, and do not spend a great deal of money on birding. They are attracted to places where they can enjoy water activities such as fishing and marine life tours, as well as nice lodging and restaurants. They like to combine birding with shopping, visiting small towns and historic sites, and other outdoor recreation. They especially like coastal areas.

Heritage recreationists and comfort seekers also are not highly skilled or committed birders. They made up about 40 percent of those surveyed. This group is attracted to communities that can provide heritage tours or historical sites, as well as birding opportunities, along with a restful environment and comfortable amenities. They are not interested in other outdoor activities. These individuals spend more money on trips than other groups.

Outdoor recreationists are relatively skilled birders. Twenty-five percent of the visitors in the survey were in this group. They are more likely than other birders to make trip decisions on the basis of other outdoor recreation available nearby. That is, outdoor recreationists are likely to birdwatch while involved in other activities such as canoeing, hiking, camping and biking. These individuals have little interest in shopping, visiting historic sites or seeking comfortable amenities.

The fourth group was the **serious birders**, who made up 14 percent of the festival visitors. They are the most skilled and the most involved in birdwatching, and travel approximately 1,975 miles per year to pursue their hobby. Their inter-

Table 4. Characteristics of Birder Groups Surveyed at Hummer/Bird Celebration.

Characteristics	Generalists and water seekers	Heritage recreationists and comfort seekers	Outdoor recreationists	Serious birders
Number of birding trips taken last year (<i>M</i>)	6	9	14	28
Miles traveled last year to go birding (<i>M</i>)	667	1,415	1,930	1,976
Money spent last year on birding (<i>M</i>)	\$335	\$778	\$1,134	\$1,727
Number of field guides owned (<i>M</i>)	2.2	3.8	3.8	7.9
Number of organizational memberships (<i>M</i>)	0.6	1.4	1.4	1.8
Percent who keep a life list	15%	31%	37%	50%
Species able to identify by sight (<i>M</i>)	37	60	119	150
Total expenses at H/B Celebration (<i>M</i>)	\$254	\$353	\$242	\$289

M = Mean

Source: Scott et al, 19

ests are highly specialized. In short, they want to observe either new, rare, or a variety of birds, and are not overly concerned with lodging and food accommodations, shopping, or non-birding activities. While serious birders spend the most money overall for birding equipment and travel, it is interesting to note that the heritage recreationists and comfort seekers spent the most at the Hummer/Bird Celebration.

The popular media may portray all birdwatchers as being alike, but as these two studies show, there are many differences among them. Understanding the diversity among birdwatchers is helpful when developing a birding-related enterprise.

Beginning the Business

To establish any successful business you must first think about your personal motivations for starting the business. Then you should study the industry, determine the market segment you want to reach, and strategies for doing so. Deciding how to package, price and promote your product are other important decisions. The insights and experiences of people who operate birding-related businesses can be very helpful. Ideas in the following section were generated during interviews with seventeen such individuals. Five of them are birding tour guides, five own/operate birding locations and/or lodging, three are birding festival coordinators, and four own businesses that sell birding products (field guides, binoculars, birdhouses, artwork, etc.).

Recognize Your Motivations

Among the people interviewed, the most common reason for starting a birding-related business was a personal interest in nature,

particularly birding. They wanted to transform a hobby into a money-making business. A second reason, mentioned primarily by landowners, was the need to diversify economically.

While a personal interest in nature and birding is important, it is not sufficient to ensure business success. Those who cater to the public, in any business, must have a strong customer orientation. That means enjoying dealing with all kinds of people, being enthusiastic about entertaining and serving guests, having public relations skills, and having the stamina to work long hours. It is also important to be familiar with finance, accounting, business operations and marketing. Expertise at birdwatching may also be very important, depending on the product or service you offer.

It is important to realize that a birding-related business is not likely to generate a huge profit. Business owners interviewed said they typically did not turn a profit for 3 years, and often their businesses are not fully self-supporting. One owner said his business simply allows him to pursue his birding hobby: "I'm thrilled if I make enough money at these festivals to cover my expenses. Having a booth at birding festivals allows me to travel to some of the best birding spots in the state and helps pay for my associated costs." Some owners said they probably would not attempt to make their birding businesses their main sources of income, especially if their businesses were rather small-scale.

Research the Industry and Determine Marketing Strategies

An owner of a birding enterprise made the following observation: "One thing I wish I had done to prepare myself for opening this type of business was to read up on it more. I could have saved myself a lot of time, money and energy if I hadn't learned about this market the hard way."

One way to learn about the market is to study the kinds of information presented earlier in this publication. Knowing the preferences, characteristics, and demographics of the individuals who might be attracted to your product or service will help you make crucial business decisions.

Subscribe to birding magazines and analyze articles about birdwatching. Ads in magazines can provide information about products and services with which you will be in competition. Also attend birding festivals to find out about the competition and meet others who are in the birding business.

Academic or professional journals such as the *Journal of Wildlife Management* and *Human Dimensions in Wildlife* can be helpful. These journals usually can be found in libraries at large universities.

A few national and state birding organizations provide information about their members and about birders in general. The American Birding Association and the National Audubon Society publish magazines and newsletters and have Web sites with information about the latest trends in birding.

State tourism, wildlife, and economic development agencies are another good source of information. In addition to distributing publications, they may also organize educational seminars or conferences or have experts who will consult with you. Local and regional information can be obtained through chambers of commerce and convention and visitors' bureaus.

Once you understand the birding market you can decide which segment of that market you will try to reach with your product or service. The birding market may be segmented by geographic area, demographics, skill level and commitment, or interest in particular products. Or, you may choose to market to more than one segment by developing two or more products, each with its own marketing strategy.

For example, a ranch might be habitat for a number of rare species, and have easy access to an international airport. The ranch owner might decide to pursue serious European birders as his desired market. His marketing strategy might be to advertise in European birding magazines aimed at serious birders.

Or, like the King Ranch in Texas, you might want to attract more than one market segment by offering different services for each. The ranch offers several different birding tours, from a 1-day tour for novice and intermediate birders in which the object is to see many different species, to a specialized tour for serious birders who want to see only rare species.

Develop the Product “Package”

Many birding enterprises rely on partnerships between two or more individuals or businesses. Small businesses that pool their resources often can create a more attractive product together than they could individually. Tour packages are a good example. A tour package groups several products and services to attract customers. The package might include lodging at a good birding location, meals, guided tours, etc. Some tour packages allow birders to visit areas, both public and private lands, to which they would not otherwise have access. Tour packages are attractive to customers because they include all necessary arrangements and services.

Birding festivals and events are also examples of partnerships in packaging products and services. Communities team up with members of the birding industry. The community provides the location, facilities, advertising, planning and event coordination. Members of the birding industry provide guide services, expert speakers for workshops, and products to purchase. Restaurants, hotels and non-birding businesses also can be part of these cooperative events.

The product “package” also can be quite simple; for example, a landowner might offer access to good birding habitat on a day-fee basis.

Determine the Price

Whatever the product, its price is important to potential customers. It can be complicated to set a price that strikes a balance between what the customer is willing to pay and what the business needs to charge in order to be profitable. One business owner gives this advice: “People won’t always like, value or appreciate the same things you do. Just because you would be willing to pay a certain price for something doesn’t mean your customers will. Check out what the competition is offering its customers and what they are charging. How does your product compare? Then price accordingly. If your price seems particularly high, make sure to point out the differences between your product and everyone else’s.”

Promote Your Business

Promotion helps you gain the attention of potential customers. In the birding industry, a good promotional mix includes advertising, publicity and marketing to industry insiders.

Advertising is any paid communication about a product or service through the mass media. It can be a good way to reach a wide audience. Ads should be timely, and they should be placed in media that reach the business's intended audience. The King Ranch advertises its tours in birding magazines and newsletters, and reports good response.

Karankawa Plains Outfitting Company, Prude Ranch, B-Bar-B Ranch and other businesses have developed Web pages to reach birders who are scouring the Internet for information on new birding locations. To increase their site hits, these businesses have made an effort to link their sites to different search engines that provide information on birding. Such directories are often regional in nature, and are sponsored both by individuals and by organizations such as the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Birding festival organizers and large-scale tour operators often use direct mail to advertise. Costs of direct mail include purchasing mailing lists, postage and printing, but this can be an effective way to reach people in a given market segment.

Favorable **publicity** can be a powerful promotional tool for any business. An example is an article about a product or service, such as the opening of a new birding/wildlife watching business, in the state's fish and wildlife magazine or in a newspaper. News publicity has two advantages over other forms of promotion—it may influence people who are skeptical about advertisements, and it has the credibility of an unbiased news source.

Satisfying customers and gaining the acceptance of other birding business owners can be the most important way to promote your business. These **industry insiders** have information, contacts and influence that can help you succeed. An excellent way to meet and establish business relationships with others in the industry is to attend birding festivals and other events. You can also invite industry representatives to tour your location, or send them product samples, to gain their opinions and familiarize them with what you have to offer. They may then help spread the word to others.

Networking with nature tourism/birding associations, chambers of commerce, and visitors' bureaus will establish relationships that can help your business.

Birders are being bombarded with information from the many new businesses established in recent years. With so many choices, they are influenced by what they hear from other birders. Positive word-of-mouth promotion may be the most effective kind of all.

One owner of a birding location/accommodation explained how customer references and her association both with industry insiders and local organizations helped her business succeed: "An individual from Texas and Parks and Wildlife explained to us that the diversity of birds and wildlife on our ranch would be attractive to birders from around the country. From there, word got around that we had sort of a birding spectacle, which resulted in visitors coming to our ranch. Because of all the interest, we looked into building an observation room and a bed and breakfast. Now we place ads in various birding magazines, which brings us a lot of customers; but many of our guests are not heavy bird-

ers. The local visitors' bureau directs many tour groups to us for general interest tours. By far, I believe that guests who told others about their positive experiences are our greatest source of advertisement."

Developing Your Unique Product

Deciding what your product will be, and then developing it, requires some research and forethought. The steps in this process are:

- Identifying your resources.
- Understanding what the true product is.
- Molding resources and experiences to meet customers' demands.

Identifying your resources means determining what it is you have to work with. To do this, list all possible resources, such as: indigenous birds on your land; facilities; business knowledge; familiarity with the outdoors; birding expertise; high quality optics; and business contacts. If you need help identifying resources, you might want to hire a wildlife biologist, wildlife consultant or expert birder to help you analyze your habitat, list the species, and evaluate your land for "birder appeal." A business consultant can help determine other resources.

Although they might not recognize it, customers of birdwatching and other nature-based recreational activities are looking for a mix of things that offers a total experience. For birders, this experience might include seeing a life bird, relaxing, enjoying beautiful surroundings, seeing new places, socializing with travel companions, and making new acquaintances. For some market segments, these and other benefits have a greater effect on customer satisfaction than the number or species of birds seen. For this reason, prospective business owners should be careful to adopt a benefits rather than a product perspective. In other words, what you have to offer is more than a product; it is an experience.

Some aspects of a birding business may be beyond human control. Weather isn't always predictable; rare and indigenous bird species may be present but not always seen; migration timing can vary. It's important to remember that while you may offer an exceptional product or service, these other factors may sometimes cause customers to have unsatisfactory experiences.

The ultimate success of a business often depends on identifying what it has to offer that meets customer demands. This seems to be especially true for the birding industry. To attract birders and their dollars, you need a rare species (or an abundance of species), a desirable atmosphere, or a special method of viewing. Your goal is to mold the resources you have with the experiences you can provide to deliver what customers want. Because not all birders are alike, your product or service may not be appealing to all birders. For examples of this, we can look again at the King Ranch and the B-Bar-B Ranch near Kingsville, Texas. The King Ranch offers a special guided tour for serious birders who want to see two rare Texas specialities—the Ferruginous pygmy owl and the Tropical parula. The tour guide concentrates on helping birders see just these two species in a minimum amount of time.

There are no rare birds to attract serious birders to the B-Bar-B, but the owners capitalize on their location along the route to South Texas and offer a wide range of accommodations for less devoted birders who may want a different level of experience. Birders make up just one segment of the business's clientele. Owners recognize that their product consists of an opportunity to socialize in comfortable surroundings, in addition to the birds that may be seen. Both the King Ranch and the B-Bar-B illustrate the way in which products should be molded from the resources and benefits you have to offer in light of the experiences customers seek.

Summary

Texas' diverse landscape and large number of bird species draw tourists and birders from all over the world. Many individuals and communities are looking for ways to profit from these visitors. Developing a birding-related business requires research, planning, business sense, personal commitment, customer relations skills, and patience. Those who succeed will recognize that this is a customer service industry; the goal is to provide an enjoyable experience for one's guests.

Sources of Information

For information on bird censuses and natural resource evaluation:

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Wildlife Diversity Branch
4200 Smith School Rd.
Austin, TX 78744
(512) 389-4800
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us>

Gulf Coast Birding Observatory

9800 Richmond Ave., Suite 150
Houston, TX 77042
(713) 789-GCBO
<http://www.nol.net/~criley>

The Nature Conservancy of Texas

P.O. Box 1440
San Antonio, TX 78295-1440
(210) 224-8774
<http://www.tnc.org>

For information on birding clubs:

Texas Audubon Society

2525 Wallingwood Dr., Suite 301
Austin, TX 78746-6922
(512) 306-0225
<http://www.audubon.org>

American Birding Association

P.O. Box 6599
Colorado Springs, CO 80934
(719) 578-1614
<http://www.americanbirding.org>

For information about how to develop lodging for guests:

Historic & Hospitality Accommodations of Texas

P.O. Box 1399
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
(800) 428-0368
<http://www.hat.org>

Texas Hotel & Motel Association

900 Congress, #201
Austin, TX 78701
1-800-856-4328

<http://texaslodging.com/index.phtml>

For information on the nature tourism industry:

Texas Department of Economic Development

Tourism Division
P.O. Box 12728
Austin, TX 78711-2728
(512) 462-9191

<http://research.travel.state.tx.us>

Texas Nature Tourism Association

812 San Antonio, Suite 401
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 476-4483

<http://www.tourtexas.com/tnta>

Texas Agricultural Extension Service

Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University
2261 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-2261
(979) 845-5419
<http://agextension.tamu.edu>

Other helpful organizations:

National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

1120 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 857-0166
<http://www.nfwf.org>

National Wildlife Federation

8925 Leesburg Pike
Vienna, VA 22184
(703) 790-4000
<http://nwf.org>

United States Small Business Administration

Office of Marketing and Customer Service
409 Third Street SW, Suite 7600
Washington, D.C. 20416
(202) 205-6744
<http://www.sbaonline.sba.gov>

U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Ecological Services Field Office
Hartland Bank Building
10711 Burnet Rd., Suite 200
Austin, TX 78758
(512) 490-0057

<http://afw2es.fws.gov/AustinTexas>

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**The Economic Impact of Birding Ecotourism On
Communities Surrounding Eight National Wildlife Refuges**

By

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The Economic Impact of Birding Ecotourism On Communities Surrounding Eight National Wildlife Refuges

Executive Summary

The economic impact of birding ecotourism on communities surrounding eight U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) was studied in 1993 and 1994 as part of a larger study of ecotourism. In addition, the demographics of these visitors was determined. The Refuges were located in California (Salton Sea NWR), Kansas (Quivira NWR), New Mexico (Bosque del Apache NWR), New Jersey (E. Forsythe NWR), Ohio (Ottawa NWR), Texas (Santa Ana and Laguna Atascosa NWRs), and Virginia (Chincoteague NWR). Birder visitation at these Refuges ranged from about 17,000 per year at Quivira NWR in Kansas to nearly 200,000 to the area surrounding Ottawa NWR in Ohio. The sex ratio of visitors was slightly skewed toward males who accounted for between 49% and 61% (average about 54% male) of visitors, which differs greatly from fishing (69% male) and hunting (92% male). Average age of visitors was in the mid-40's to lower 50's. Family incomes and education levels were far greater than the national average. More than 70% of respondents from all studies reported that they had attended some college. Birding ecotourism is family oriented with more than 50% of visitors in most studies traveling with their spouse. In most studies, about one-half of the visitors to NWRs made their trip to the area specifically to visit the Refuge.

Two measures of economic activity were calculated: total amount spent by visitors including travel to and from a refuge, and total economic impact of visitors on the communities surrounding a refuge. Simple arithmetic models were used, without economic multipliers. The total expenditures of visitors to the eight National Wildlife Refuges during their entire trips amounted to more than one hundred million dollars, which includes air fare, car rental, gasoline, lodging, meals, and other travel expenditures. The actual economic impact of visitors on the communities surrounding each of the Refuges ranged from slightly less than \$1 million (\$0.63 million) at Quivira NWR to about \$14 million at Santa Ana NWR, which included lodging (motels, campsites, etc.), meals, gasoline, and ancillary purchases. The average ecotourist was worth between \$21 and \$145 to the local communities.

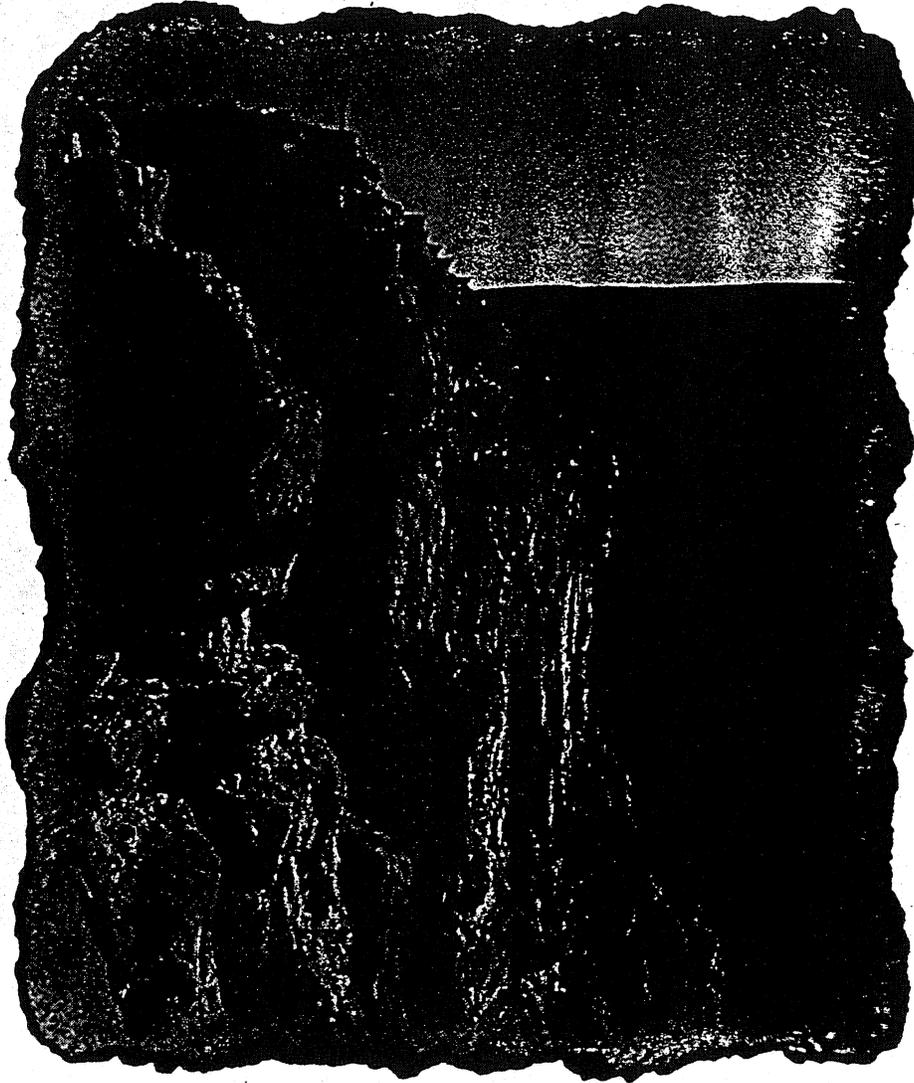
These findings show that Federal lands are an important economic asset to both the national economy and the economies of the communities in which they are located. Ecotourists provide a major source of external revenue to these communities for which the Community does not have to provide or pay for the attraction that brings the ecotourists. The information provided in this study will be useful to local planners, businesses, and elected officials who seek long-term, sustainable economic development.

It will also prove useful to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for providing services to ecotourists and for planning future acquisitions. Most importantly, the results of these studies demonstrate that fragile ecosystems, wildlife, and preserved lands are important economically.

Funds for this study were provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, New England Biolabs Foundation, New Jersey Audubon Society, and the Cape May Bird Observatory.

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NATURE TOURISM IN THE LONE STAR STATE



Economic Opportunities in Nature

A report from the State Task Force on Texas Nature Tourism.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2 - 7
INTRODUCTION — OPPORTUNITIES IN NATURE	8 - 11
PROFILE OF THE NATURE TOURIST	12 - 13
NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	14 - 15
CONSERVATION	16 - 17
EDUCATION	18 - 19
LEGISLATION	20
PROMOTION	21 - 22
CONCLUSION	23
BIBLIOGRAPHY	24
TASK FORCE MEMBERS AND STAFF SUPPORT	25

Eco-Tourism on Public and Private Lands in Florida
Agro-ecology Conference Summary
Florida Center for Environmental Studies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGRO-ECOLOGY SERIES

CONFERENCE AGENDA

PRE-CONFERENCE FIELD TRIPS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Welcome, Leonard Berry.....1

Keynote Address, Eva Armstrong and Bob Ballard.....1

The Many Facets of Eco-tourism in Florida

Evolution of Eco-tourism in Florida, Hitesh Mehta.....3

Ecology, Eco-tourism and Ecosystem Management:

A Scientific Approach to a Sustainable Future, Frank Mazzotti.....4

A Planning Perspective, David Barth.....6

The Role of Certification, Standards, Ethics and Sustainability in Eco-Tourism

Eco-tourism and Environmental Education:

Issues in Certification and Training, Marty Main.....8

Eco-tourism Guidelines for Florida Tour Operations, Ellen Linblad.....9

Training for Sustainability- The University of North Florida Ecoheritage Tourism

Provider Certification Program, John M. Golden and Christine Denny.....10

Ethics in Eco-tourism, Duanne DeFreeze.....12

Eco-tourism on Federal Lands in Florida

Managing for Resource Protection and Visitor Experience, Linda Dahl.....14

Eco-tourism and Compatible Uses: A Case Study of the J.N. "Ding" Darling National
Wildlife Refuge, Lou Hinds.....16

Eco-tourism on State Lands in Florida

Eco-tourism and Florida's Statewide System of Greenways and Trails,

Debbie Parrish.....18

Overview of Resource-Based Recreation in *The Real Florida*SM

Bureau of Operational Services, John Baust.....19

Nature-based Recreation on Wildlife Management Areas:

Eco-tourism, Traditions, and Tomorrow, Nick Wiley.....20

Marketing Dispersed Outdoor Recreation Opportunities, John Waldron.....21

Eco-tourism Issues and Opportunities for Public/ Private Partnerships	
Eco-tourism on Public and Private Lands in Florida, Bob Ballard.....	23
Eco-tourism Opportunities for Public-Private Partnerships, Fran Mainella.....	24
The Role of Education and its Local Impacts on Eco-tourism	
An Eco-tourism Curriculum Model, Mark Bonn.....	25
Tourism at Corkscrew Swamp, Andrew Mackie.....	25
Gumbo Limbo Environmental Complex, Steve Bass.....	26
Eco-tourism and Marketing	
Sharing Information on Marketing Nature-Based Tourism to Florida Residents, Keri Post.....	28
Evolution of Florida State Parks Eco-tourism Marketing, Ben Harris.....	29
Marketing Tools for the Small Eco-Operator, Dennis MacKee.....	30
Marketing Plan for Flatwoods Adventures, Rhonda Robinson.....	31
Eco-tourism on Water Management District Lands in Florida	
South Florida Water Management District Eco-tourism, Fred Davis.....	33
Selling the Suwannee: Nature-Based and Heritage Tourism for Community Development and Natural Systems Protection, Charlie Houder.....	35
Planning for Resource Based Recreation on the Econfina Creek Water Management Area: Balancing between Resource Protection and Recreational Use, Bill Cleckley and Christian Newman.....	36
Eco-tourism on Water Management District Lands in Florida, Jack Eckdahl.....	38
Regional Examples of Current Eco-tourism Initiatives	
The Refuge at Ocklawaha, Jack Eckdahl and Earl Scales.....	39
Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area Public/Private Partnerships ...A Future Success Story, Dennis David.....	41
Regional Examples of Current Eco-tourism Initiatives, Greg Galpin.....	42
A Comparative Approach to Local Tourism: Broward, Palm Beach, and Volusia Counties	
The Creation of the West Lake Eco-tourism Center, Gil MacAdam.....	43
Heritage and Nature-Based Tourism from the Perspective of Small Counties, Bill Baker.....	44
Palm Beach County's Approach to Eco-tourism Preliminary Assessment of County's Image Relating to Eco-tourism, Charles Lehmann.....	45
Final Comments, Leonard Berry.....	46
ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTERS.....	47

Guide to Florida Eco-tourism References and Resources

Tourism is the leading economic activity in Florida, and eco-tourism has been identified as having a high growth potential. As Florida continues to develop, both the tourist and resident population will benefit from expanded eco-tourism opportunities. If these opportunities are developed properly, both the tourism industry and Florida's communities can benefit economically. The Florida Center for Environmental Studies sponsors an annual agro-ecology conference, and the purpose of the 2000 conference is to offer an exposition of eco-tourism resources and opportunities on public and private lands in the State of Florida.

Eco-tourism has been defined for this conference as follows:

Eco-tourism is a recreational and educational experience that: encourages greater understanding of the natural and cultural resources of an area; encourages the sustainable use of these resources; and provides economic benefits to the communities of the area.

Three themes are highlighted throughout the conference: 1) public, 2) private, and 3) partnerships. Under these themes, five tracks of eco-tourism are addressed: agri-tourism, eco-heritage, nature-based, urban-eco, and estuarine tourism. Individuals from all aspects of eco-tourism including ranchers, non-profits groups, researchers, regulatory and planning agency representatives are making presentations at the conference.

If the products developed for conference participants and other interested parties, is this guide to references and resources on eco-tourism within the State of Florida. This guide was designed to be useful to a broad audience including eco-tourism and agri-tourism operators, researchers, non-profit organizations, planners and state agencies. The citations included in this guide are categorized by the type of eco-tourism they represent, and further classified by the type of information they present including:

How to guides - information for potential and current eco-tourism operators

Partnerships - information and examples of partnerships including public/private, private/private and public/public

Sustainability - information on sustainability issues of an environmental and economic nature

Plans and Strategies - information developed by various government agencies and organizations regarding plans of eco-tourism opportunities

Tours - information about specific eco-tourism opportunities within Florida

This guide of references and resources does not include all of the literature available on eco-tourism because much of the information is outside the scope of Florida. Rather, the literature in this document focuses on information relevant to Florida. Documents and resources were selected for inclusion in this guide based on their pertinence to current and past eco-tourism activities in Florida; and, the value of the reference or resource as a tool for eco-tourism development in Florida.

There are a number of annotated bibliographies available that address eco-tourism in a broader academic and applied context including the Regional Development Group of the Strom Thurman

Institute's *Nature Based Tourism: An Annotated Bibliography* (1991), and The Ecotourism Society's: *Ecotourism: An Annotated Bibliography for Planners and Managers* (1997). Much of the information included in this guide of references and resources overlaps with these documents. Specifically, information regarding sustainability, demographics, and ethics are general in nature, and should be considered by all whom have an interest in eco-tourism.

SCENIC BYWAYS, TRAILS, AND CORRIDORS AND THEIR IMPACTS

A fact sheet produced by the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network Coastal Land Use Committee

by

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Glenn Kreag Minnesota Sea Grant

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Douglas Ververs Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oswego County New York

INTRODUCTION

Scenic byways trails and corridors simplify travel routes for visitors and can help communities direct visitors to important attractions and areas. They can benefit communities by increasing the real property value of the lands adjacent to them by multiplying visitor expenditures and by providing a mechanism for educating both visitors and residents about the natural historic and cultural resources and attractions found along them. Major coastal Great Lakes scenic byways such as the international Great Lakes Circle Tour and New York's and Pennsylvania's Seaway Trail have tremendous impacts on the areas they traverse. New York's 454 mile portion of the Seaway Trail alone receives approximately 20,000 visitor inquiries for information every year.

Scenic byways are road or highway systems that connect various communities and natural historic and cultural attractions and resources. They are often designated by a government agency. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) which administers the National Scenic Byway Program recognizes three main types of scenic byways: All American Roads (the premier national scenic byways) National Scenic Byways and State Scenic Byways. Trails differ from scenic byways in that they can be comprised of various roads and paths including abandoned railroad beds and hiking paths. National Recreation Trails are designated by the United States Department of the Interior's National Park Service. Prior to recent FHWA legislation many scenic byways received this designation. Scenic corridors consist of travel routes such as waterways or trails and the lands surrounding them.

This fact sheet describes the impacts of scenic byways trails and corridors through the use of case studies from the Great Lakes Region. Socioeconomic information such as visitor expenditures and educational impacts are given where possible. Additional data collection is needed to fully demonstrate the vital impacts generated by scenic byways trails and corridors.

SCENIC BYWAYS

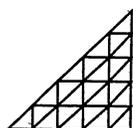
Case Study The Indiana Toll Road

Highlighting the historic and natural attractions of small towns and larger cities in seven counties along the Indiana Toll Road in northern Indiana the I 80 90 Tourism Corridor was developed to increase employment and economic development of the tourism industry. More than 36 million vehicles travel the Toll Road annually. Tourism related spending in the Corridor is more than \$700 million accounting for 18% of total state tourism dollars and providing 18,300 direct impact jobs according to a recent Indiana Department of Commerce report.

The I 80 90 Corridor Commission a partnership of the counties the Indiana Toll Road the Indiana Department of Commerce and participating businesses was organized in 1992. The Commission staffs two visitor information centers in service plaza restaurants. Three business marketing packages include video display information board advertising and brochure distribution. An annual I 80 90 travel guide is published with the most recent edition entitled *Beaches and Back Roads Back Home Again in Northern Indiana*.

The corridor includes Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Indiana Dunes State Park on Lake Michigan. Notre Dame University and hiking and skiing trails. Elkhart and LaGrange counties include a 90 mile loop of state and county roads offering unique gift and antique shops along with a glimpse of yesteryear as horse drawn buggies emphasize Mennonite and Amish heritage.

Commission business partners report increases in the number of customers and two adjacent counties will join the Corridor Commission next year. Regional projects include marketing ventures initiated by the I 80 90 Commission executive director. Illinois Indiana Sea Grant and the Commission have cooperatively sponsored marketing workshops.



The Great Lakes Sea Grant Network is a cooperative program of the Illinois Indiana Michigan Minnesota New York Ohio and Wisconsin Sea Grant programs that supports greater knowledge and stewardship of the Great Lakes and ocean resource. Through its advisory agents researchers educators and communicators the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network supplies the region with usable solutions to pressing problems and provides the basic information needed to better manage the Great Lakes for both present and future generations. Sea Grant is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) U.S. Department of Commerce.

SCENIC TRAIL SYSTEMS

Case Study #1 The Northwest Ohio Greenway System

This 180 mile trail system in various stages of development will link 14 cities and 6 park districts located in the northernmost counties of Ohio. When completed the trail will connect Lorain County (near Cleveland) to the Ohio Indiana border.

The Northwest Ohio Greenway Coalition has been the driving force behind this proposed multi use trail to be constructed largely on abandoned railroad right of ways. This coalition of county park districts, metropolitan park districts, and regional planning agencies has been building regional support for the project during the past 10 years. The entire trail is being developed in segments that are adopted by a park district, community, or not for profit organization who will oversee development of its portion of the trail system.

One 47 mile section known as the North Coast Inland Trail will begin construction in 1994 on the abandoned Conrail and Penn Central railroad right of way. The former railroad through the area was the last link to be completed in a direct New York to Chicago railroad route which enhances the historical significance of the trail.

When completed the trail will provide an alternative transportation and recreational route for hikers, joggers, walkers, bicyclists, skaters, skiers, and bird watchers. It will be accessible to mobility-impaired people. The trail will also serve as an environmental classroom. The many trees and shrubs planted along the length of the trail will provide cover for wildlife in the area.

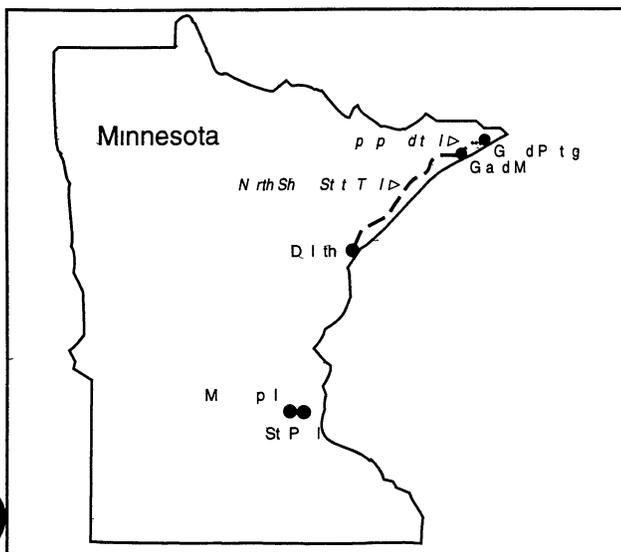


Figure 1 Map showing Minnesota's North Shore State Trail

Case Study #2 Minnesota's North Shore State Trail

Minnesota has more than 12,500 miles of trails designated for snowmobiling, many of which are funded by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Grants In Aid (GIA) program. The development of Minnesota's North Shore State Trail was authorized in 1975 by the state legislature. Project planning was completed by the DNR in 1981. In 1984, a 152-mile portion of the planned 235-mile trail between Duluth and Grand Marais was completed (Figure 1).

The trail is set several miles inland from the shoreline in the Sawtooth mountains, a range of coastal bluffs that span the length of the North Shore and for much of its length provides a wilderness experience. Although designed for snowmobilers, the trail is used by hikers, backpackers, horseback riders, hunters, dog sledders, skiers, and mountain bikers. Use by all terrain vehicles (ATVs) is prohibited. Warm weather use is limited by marshy areas and some unbridged waterways.

Seven parking areas, 14 shelters with pit toilets, and campsites, and nearly 40 bridges are located along the trail. Spurs connect the trail with coastal communities and other trails, allowing snowmobilers to travel throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. A link between Grand Marais and the Grand Portage Indian Reservation is planned for completion by the DNR in 1995. A Canadian trail that will meet the North Shore Trail at the international border is being constructed.

Although there is no formal data on use of the North Shore Trail, informal tallying of use by trail groomers has been done since the winter of 1986-87. From these data, the DNR estimates that trail use by snowmobilers increased 900% between the winters of 1986-87 and 1992-93. Based on total use estimates from groomer tallies and data from a 1989 economic impact study, total expenditures by snowmobilers using the trail were estimated to be \$2,117,400. Day use accounts for 20% of this estimate, while multi-day trips represent 80%.

Snowmobiling contributed an estimated \$300 million to Minnesota's economy in 1985. The state currently estimates that snowmobile use contributes more than \$2 million in fuel taxes (Minnesota DNR 1986). Snowmobile license data indicate that the number of registered snowmobiles increased 281% from 1987 to 1994. Northeastern Minnesota, with only 7.5% of the state's population, has 12.4% of registered snowmobiles (Powers 1989).

Besides these recreational uses, the trail is now host to two major events: the International 500 Snowmobile Race and the 500-mile John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon.

RIVER AND CANAL CORRIDORS

Case Study #1 The Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor

The Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor the nation's first national heritage corridor was developed to preserve historic and cultural features. Just as the Illinois & Michigan Canal itself was a link to economic and cultural benefits, the Corridor produces economic benefits of \$25 million annually from regional tourism related activities.

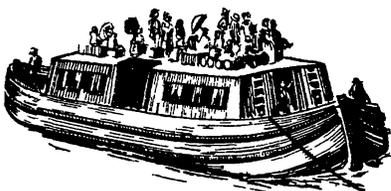
The canal opened in 1848 providing Illinois farmers access to new markets and signaling a major change in commerce routes. Although railroads offered faster and cheaper transportation by 1854 the canal contributed significantly to the industrial development and growth of Chicago. Although the hand dug canal no longer exists in some areas, the 120 mile Corridor links today's generations to American culture of the 1800s.

When the state and federal governments began selling portions of the canal and a canal section from Chicago to Summit was paved to make way for the Stevenson Expressway a group of people became concerned. Later known as Friends of the Illinois & Michigan Canal the group worked closely with industry, government and private citizens. The *Chicago Tribune* brought the issue to the public in a Pulitzer Prize nominated story by John Husar.

In 1984 Congress created a 19 member commission to oversee the Corridor as a part of the National Park Service. The Corridor runs from Chicago to Peru in western Illinois. Six visitor centers, 11 state parks and 22,000 acres of land administered by the Cook County Preserve District are included.

Industry retains a significant presence in the Corridor providing a striking contrast to natural areas. The Corridor includes Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area, one of the largest remaining sections of the tall grass prairie that greeted the first European settlers, and is part of the Mississippi Flyway. Some of the state's most diversely forested areas are in the Corridor and include both upland and bottomland forests.

Individual urban and rural Corridor communities retain their distinct identities and much of the land is in private ownership. The Heritage Corridor Visitors Bureau works in partnership with the National Park Service, Illinois Department of Conservation, Cook County Forest Preserve District, and other agencies.



Case Study #2 New York's Oswego River

The Oswego River, a 25 mile long branch of the New York State Canal System, connects the Erie Canal with Lake Ontario in central New York State. The river connects the cities of Oswego (at the northern terminus of the river) and Fulton, and the village of Phoenix (at the southern terminus). Although the Oswego Canal is no longer used extensively for commercial boating purposes, recreational boating on the river has become popular in recent years.

In 1991 the New York State legislature announced its intent of enacting legislation designed to promote the rejuvenation and development of the state-owned properties along the entire canal system, including the Oswego Canal. In response to this, the Oswego County Department of Promotion and Tourism, with technical assistance from New York Sea Grant, decided to promote the river corridor's natural, historic, industrial, and recreational resources by producing an interpretive guide for boaters. The project was initiated in the fall of 1991, and more than 50 businesses, industries, organizations, and agencies were contacted for information over the next six months.

In September 1992, 10,000 copies of the 40-page publication *Oswego River Canalling: A Boater's Guide to the History, Facilities, and Resources of the Oswego River* were published. Within four months of its release, the supply of copies was so diminished that the decision was made to reprint the guide. In April 1993, 15,000 copies of the guide were reprinted. Approximately 20,000 copies of the guide have been distributed throughout the northeastern United States and Canada so far.

The guide has contributed to the increased use of the Oswego River locks by boaters. Prior to 1993, use of the canal by boaters had been on a decline. In 1990, 23,753 recreational boats traveled through the seven locks on the Oswego Canal. This declined 18.7% to 19,311 boats by 1992. In 1993 (the first year that the guide was used for an entire season), the number of boats traveling through the locks increased slightly to 19,706. (NOTE: these data indicate canal use trends only, since a single boat is counted in the data each time it travels through a lock.)

Other users of the guide include canal boat touring companies for their narrated tours. The guide has also been used as an educational tool in many of the school districts throughout Central New York. Because of the success of the guide, several tourism promotion agencies in New York have considered producing similar interpretive guides for their sections of the canal system. Oswego County Promotion and Tourism is currently creating a similar touring guide for the Salmon River Corridor.

SPECIAL TOURING EVENTS

Case Study *The Tour DeTug*

The Tour DeTug a summer bicycle race was developed to increase summer recreation opportunities in the western Tug Hill region a plateau in central New York State It was organized in 1988 by the Osceola Tug Hill Cross Country Ski Center to promote its off season recreational opportunities provide a summer tourism related economic multiplier for the Greater Camden Chamber of Commerce and develop a regional tourism focus for the summer months on the Tug Hill Plateau The event is cosponsored by the Camden Chamber of Commerce with technical assistance provided by the New York State Tug Hill Commission a regional agency that provides tourism and recreation development assistance to communities It is held on the last Saturday of August to minimize conflict with the local fall sportfishing season and to fill a previously undeveloped part of the summer season

The race initially started with a 110 mile course and a 34 mile novice race and has since expanded to include an 80 mile intermediate road loop and a 30 mile ride for mountain bikes The loops cover a total of 180 miles and cross three counties A portion of this tour route also overlaps with a designated bicycle trail off the Seaway Trail The loops incorporate a wide diversity of environmental areas including the western edge of the Tug Hill Plateau and the Salmon River Corridor

Participation has increased from 87 riders in 1988 to 335 and 235 in 1992 and 1993 respectively The low participation in 1993 was due to inclement weather on the day of the race Riders travel from three states in the Northeast to participate

Improvements in the local road systems for bicyclists have begun as the impact of this event increases This project has received excellent support from regional businesses including the donations of supplies from local grocers complimentary truck use

from a local auto dealer and volunteer assistance for emergency medical and bicycle repair support Additional spin offs have been the development of both a spring and fall mountain bike race

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS

- Brown T L C P Dawson and N A Connelly 1991 *Design of a marketing conversion and evaluation system for Seaway Trail advertising programs* Seaway Trail Inc Sackets Harbor NY 11 pp
- Cutter T et al 1992 *Local management of visual quality along New York's scenic roadway and tourism theme trails a manual* St Lawrence Eastern Ontario Commission Watertown NY 69 pp
- Dawson C P T L Brown and N A Connelly 1991 *Tourism monitoring system* Seaway Trail Inc Sackets Harbor NY 27 pp
- Kuehn D 1993 *An interpretive planning guide for communities along scenic byways* NY Sea Grant and Seaway Trail Inc Oswego NY 90 pp
- Levin D R 1988 *Scenic byways* Federal Highway Administration Washington D C
- Minnesota DNR 1986 *Minnesota snowmobiling results of 1984 85 snowmobile surveys* Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 40 pp
- Murphy M J 1988 *New York State touring trails* New York State Assembly Albany NY 32 pp
- National Park Service 1990 *Economic impacts of protecting rivers trails and greenway corridors* Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program National Park Service Washington D C 145 pp
- Powers John 1989 *Economic impact of snowmobiling working paper #2 primary snowmobiler survey* Klaers Powers and Associates 33 pp
- Trapp S M Gross R Zimmerman 1991 *Signs trails and wayside exhibits connecting people and places* UW SP Press University of Wisconsin Stevens Point WI 108 pp

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Ohio
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Columbus OH 43212 1194
(614) 292-8949

Wisconsin
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Superior WI 54880 9985
(715) 394-8472

Sand, Wind, & Water



A recreational guide to eastern Lake Ontario's dunes and wetlands

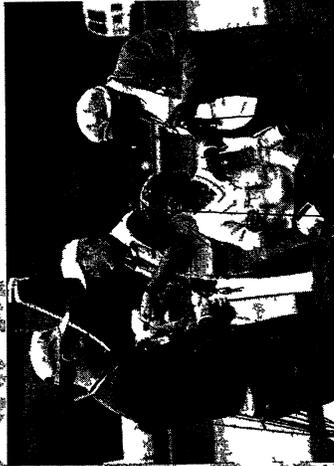
Table of Contents

Introduction	
Welcome!	1
Activities for you to do	1
Getting there	1
Protect the dunes and wetlands during your visit!	1
Eastern Lake Ontario Dune and Wetland Area map	2
About the dunes and wetlands	
What are sand dunes?	3
Why did the dunes form here?	3
Hey, where's that dune going?	4
Why are the dunes important?	4
What are wetlands?	6
Public access information	
Deer Creek Wildlife Management Area	7
Sandy Pond Beach Natural Area	9
Lakeview Marsh Wildlife Management Area	10
Southwick Beach State Park	17
Black Pond Wildlife Management Area	19
Other information	
What's that splash?	4
Covered with water!	5
List of plants in the area	6
A marsh leopard?	8
For the birds!	13
Marsh invader!	14
A touchy subject!	15
What's that pile of sticks?	16
Northern Jack (or is it Jill?) in the pulpit	18
List of birds in the area	20
Where to get more information	
	21

This guidebook has been produced with assistance from
The Ontario Dune Coalition
an organization comprised of state and county agency and
community group representatives dedicated to educating the public
about Lake Ontario's dunes and wetlands

Who are mentors?

Mentors are special hand-picked volunteers who are willing to share their experience and love of the outdoors with NatureLink families. If you're interested in becoming a mentor, contact National Wildlife Federation.



Is NatureLink affordable?

Registration fees will vary depending on the site, but will average \$100 per adult and \$50 or less for children (depending on age). Family scholarships are also available. The registration fees include all program costs, lodging, meals and, in some cases, transportation.

Where is NatureLink?

Began in 1993, NatureLink is one of the most successful programs developed by the National Wildlife Federation. The goal is to establish NatureLink in each of the 50 states and the Virgin Islands. Call our toll-free number for locations near you.

Ready for a NatureLink weekend?

For more information, contact National Wildlife Federation, Outdoor Ethics, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22184-0001. Or call 1-800-822-9919.

Invite a friend or another family!



NatureLink weekend changed us all and for the better.

— Charles T. Brown, Jr.
Pennsylvania Federation
of Sportsmen's Clubs



They all made good pledges of what they would do. I do think those things will carry on. And it's the sort of thing that can help you feel better about yourself when you're outdoors every body's on equal footing.

— Ann Murray, Tennessee Conservation League

National Wildlife Federation



The mission of the National Wildlife Federation is to educate, inspire and assist individuals and organizations of diverse cultures to conserve wildlife and other natural resources and to protect the earth's environment in order to achieve a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future.



Canon U.S.A. is proud to sponsor NatureLink as a part of its Clean Earth Campaign. Canon's program that promotes conservation and protection of the environment.



National Wildlife Federation

What's NatureLink?

If you would like to be closer to nature than you can get viewing it from a car window or on television NatureLink is a weekend planned for you!

It's a weekend filled with hands on outdoor activities You may learn to fish paddle a canoe and identify wildflowers or just become more comfortable with nature And along the way you'll get a big bonus You see NatureLink was designed by National Wildlife Federation for the growing number of Americans just like you - people who care about nature and want to learn more and take a role in protecting it When was the last time you were rewarded for making fun? By the end of a NatureLink weekend you'll feel more connected to the earth and to the resources on which all of us depend

Who participates in NatureLink?

NatureLink weekends are for families It may be an aunt bringing a nephew mothers with their sons grandpar ents and grand children You don't need previous outdoor experience to enjoy NatureLink You and your family will share time during the weekend with a mentor who will help you every step of the way



I wish the weekend could last a whole year!

— Pennsylvania youngster



I enjoyed every moment

throughout the entire weekend because I learned so much about the outdoors

— Joe Phillips Pennsylvania Mentor

What makes NatureLink unique?

We've slowed down the pace of life at NatureLink so you can learn about nature and discover new friendships This isn't just a camping weekend Together we'll build a new awareness of the natural world around us and develop a commitment to conserving its resources After all when we're linked we're strengthened

At NatureLink fun and learning go hand in hand On Saturday you may go canoeing while learning about the importance of keeping our waters healthy and what YOU can do to help

On Sunday you'll make an Earth Pledge — a personal action promise to do your part in protecting our environment It can be as simple as turning off the lights when they're not needed pledging to volunteer in a local stream cleanup or planting a tree

What kinds of opportunities and activities does NatureLink provide?

NatureLink weekends feature a variety of conservation themes Programs planned throughout the United States share a common goal to introduce participants from all walks of life to the outdoors and to support families who bring to the weekend their willingness to learn and have fun

We take the hassle out of an outdoor weekend We'll prepare the meals provide essential equipment and take care of most chores for you

You'll be free to
Learn how to
bait a hook
and catch
a fish
Take a
woodland
walk to watch
wildlife
Go on an owl
prowl and be enchanted by fireflies
Wade in a stream or paddle a canoe
Join friends in a sing along around
a campfire



We'll match you with a family mentor to help you throughout the weekend Your NatureLink host may offer opportunities for you and your mentor to get together in the months and years to follow You may join other NatureLinkers on field trips and special occasions such as holiday parties It's a great way to share your accomplishments with folks who are also committed to preserving our precious natural resources

If you are an adult who would like to participate as a volunteer NatureLink hosts offer a variety of opportunities for you to get involved as well Call our toll free number for further information

Adventure Travel



Profile of a Growing Market

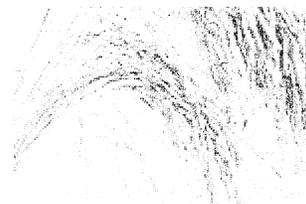
Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Executive Summary	2
Detailed Findings	3
Activities	3
Traveling Companions	6
Spending	7
Purpose	8
Demographics	9
Overview	9
Profile	10

Executive Summary



- Of the 146.9 million people who have traveled in the past 12 months, half (50%) have taken a vacation for outdoor or adventure activities at some time in their lives. A majority (75%) of travelers who have reported taking an adventure trip have taken one in the past two years.
- About one third (30%) reported taking their most recent outdoor or adventure vacation within at least the last six months, including eight percent in the last month. Another one third (32%) said they traveled within the last year. Other adventure travelers (38%) reported taking their vacation two or more years ago.
- Camping (85%), hiking (74%), and skiing (51%) were the most popular outdoor or adventure activities.
- More than one half of adventure travelers took their most recent vacation with a spouse (58%). Children and grandchildren (36%) and other adult non-family members (34%) were also popular companions.
- Over one half spent \$500 or less on their adventure vacation (51%). One fourth spent \$500 to \$2,500, while six percent spent \$2,500 or more. The average amount spent was \$871.
- The majority of adventure travelers said they took their vacation for fun and entertainment (71%).
- Adventure travelers are more likely to be married and have children than other travelers. Also, a higher proportion are women compared to the average profile of U.S. travelers.



April 26, 2001

LANDOWNERS SEEK DIVERSITY, INCOME THROUGH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Writer: *Tim W. McAlavy, (806) 746-6101, t-mcalavy@tamu.edu*

Contact: *Dale Rollins, (915) 653-4576, d-rollins@tamu.edu*

LUBBOCK – Higher production costs and shrinking profit margins are leading many Texas landowners towards a greater appreciation of wildlife. They wonder if their abundant land resources can be profitably managed for eco-tourism as well as traditional livestock production.

"Basically, there are two motivations managing wildlife on your property. One is for personal recreation. Either you enjoy seeing or viewing wildlife, enjoy having them on your place – or you, your family or guests intend to hunt them," said Dale Rollins, Extension wildlife specialist based in San Angelo.

"The other is a commercial situation, where you are charging someone for the trespass rights to enjoy deer, quail, turkey or other wildlife.

"We're seeing increasing interest in both segments of that audience. On the commercial side, more and more landowners are seeking ways to diversify their income. Especially in situations where the cattle market is down, or drought is prevalent. They've got another asset out there, and in many parts of the state the income potential from wildlife surpasses grazing values from livestock production."

A grazing lease worth \$4 to \$5 per acre may well be worth that much or more as a quail or deer lease, Rollins added.

That's where Extension's wildlife appreciation days come in. These intensive, one-day seminars test landowners wildlife knowledge while

Audio

[WAV\(22.0 Mb\)](#)

[AIF\(11.7 Mb\)](#)

[MP3\(0.7 Mb\)](#)

[Audio Script](#)

Video

[Quicktime Movie \(5.1 Mb\)](#)

[Real Player \(8.1 Mb\)](#)

[Video Script](#)

educating them on best wildlife management practices.

A recent Deer Appreciation Day in Stonewall County on the Rolling Plains attracted more than 50 landowners interested in expanding their knowledge of wildlife stewardship and management.

"We bank on the deer management triangle at these events. Habitat is the bottom leg of the triangle. One side is population management, such things as buck-doe ratios and harvest levels," Rollins said. "The other side of the triangle is people management...especially when you're dealing with leases.

"We teach landowners that habitat is the foundation. On habitat you build the deer population...through sound management. Then you integrate or add people management by marketing wildlife through hunting or eco-tourism."

Aside from receiving an overview of deer management, landowners share their ideas on leasing land and managing land for hunting or tourism. They also get an up-close look at wildlife.

Landowners also learn how to properly identify and age deer, the importance of genetics, and how nutrition plays a role in promoting and maintaining a healthy deer herd.

Then it's out to the field, where discussions on habitat assessment, beneficial plant species, predators, brush control and grazing are the order of the afternoon.

"Every landowner or land manager should carry a camera, and use it to build a scrapbook of the vegetation on their place," Rollins said. "This habitat is the foundation of your land management plan. There are a number of resources available to landowners who want to improve their wildlife and land management, but don't know where to get started.

"Resources they can access locally include the county Extension agent, USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists. These are free public resources. There are also consultants who can tailor-make land and wildlife management plans for a fee."

An often over-looked resource is the Internet. There is a wealth of background material, seminar information, and symposium proceedings on wildlife management available at non-profit and commercial Internet sites, Rollins said.

The Texas Agricultural Extension Service offers several wildlife appreciation and management seminars throughout the state each year. At present, these seminars focus on two wildlife species: quail and deer.

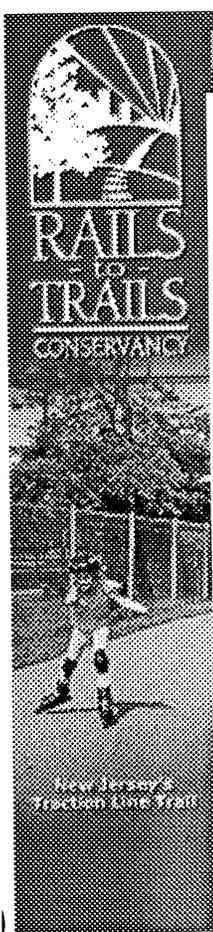
"We talk about the critter, how to appreciate its habitat needs, and how to incorporate that into our overall land management scheme," Rollins said. "We haven't gotten into deer appreciation days full scale. We've spent a lot of time on quail, but there is a growing demand for deer information. I can see where we will be doing a lot more deer appreciation days in the future."

For more information on wildlife management, or the dates and locations for upcoming quail and deer appreciation days, landowners can call Rollins at (915) 653-4576 or contact their local county Extension office.

-30-

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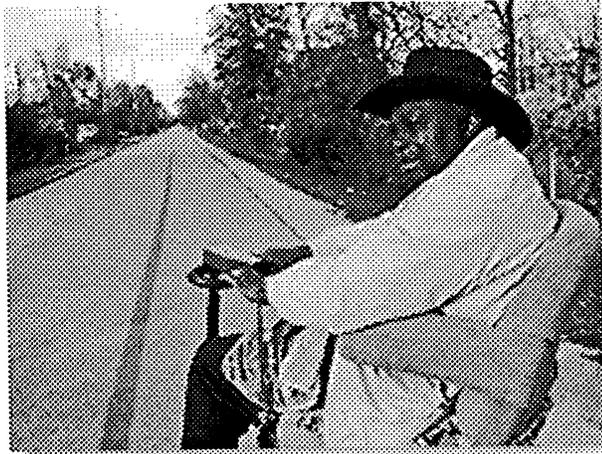


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What We Do



A gentleman takes his powered scooter on **Indiana's Monon Trail** for some solitude (Photo: Indy Greenways).

Trails don't just happen. Everything we do at Rails-to-Trails Conservancy supports local efforts to transform the dream of a trail into a tangible community asset.

We **promote policy** at the national and state levels to create the conditions that make trail building possible. RTC is a leader in the fight to protect the federal **Transportation Enhancements** program, which is the largest source of funding for trail development. We steadfastly defend the federal **railbanking** statute in the Congress and the courts as an essential tool to preserve unused rail corridors.

We **catalyze action** at the local level by providing the information, technical assistance and training that local trail builders need to succeed. RTC's **15,000 Miles Campaign** is targeting our technical assistance with the goal of reaching 15,000 miles of open rail-trail by the end of 2004.

We **provide leadership** to the trails and greenways movement. We are developing an innovative **Regional Trails and Greenways Initiative** designed to make trails an essential component of the emerging smart growth and livable communities movement.

Just click the second tier menu above to review the broad range of RTC activities that support trail building.

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Texas Nature Tourism



Marketing Natural Resources

*Through Recreation and Tourism
Enterprises*

Facilitator's Resource Manual

Collaborating Organizations

Texas A&M University System
Texas Agricultural Extension Service
Texas Agricultural Experiment Station
Southwest Texas State University

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
Natural Resource Conservation Service
Texas Nature Tourism Association
Texas Department of Economic Development - Tourism

Marketing Natural Resources Through Recreation & Tourism Enterprises

Latest Revision: April 27, 2000 (10:33AM)

NOTE: There is an underlying assumption of this agenda to address "marketing natural resources." The assumption is that the ranch owner has as their goal...to maximize return on their investment of (ROI) resources. Other personal goals and ideals are not considered even though, for some owners, they may have significant impact on resource allocation decisions.

Landowner questions / issues	Workshop Content	Learning Objectives
<p>Goal - ROI</p> <p><i>Day 1 - 8:30 am</i></p>	<p>Introduction of Workshop</p> <p>Goals of Owner Focus on ROI Nature tourism/types of enterprises overview - video/pictures - collage of images with little or no dialogue</p>	<p>*Focus of workshop - marketing *Goals of owners *1st focus is on ROI *2nd focus is on marketing through the eyes of the consumer *Understand the terms supply and enterprise as the businesses that produce the product *Understand the terms demand and market as the customers who purchase and experience the product *Introduced to the "marketing circle"</p>
<p>Who are my customers?</p> <p><i>9:00 am - 11:00 am</i></p>	<p>Developing a Marketing Perspective</p> <p>① Contrasting Supply and Demand - Participant Exercise</p>	<p>*Understand the difference between supply and demand (market) perspectives *Know what it means to examine your enterprise from a market perspective</p>
<p><i>11:00 am - 12:00 pm</i></p> <p><i>12:00 pm - 1:00 pm Lunch</i></p>	<p>② Marketing - Presentation (Sarah Richardson)</p>	<p>*Know the definition of marketing *Understand market segmentation Introduced to the criteria for evaluating market segments and selecting target markets *Be familiar with the nine "P's" of tourism marketing *Know why tourism marketing is different from the marketing of most other products and services *Know the steps in developing a marketing plan</p>
<p>What do my potential customers want?</p> <p><i>1:00 pm - 1:30 pm</i></p>	<p>Collecting Market Information</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>③ Methods of collecting market information</p>	<p>*Know the importance of being able to access data to describe market segments *Know that there are an infinite number of ways to segment markets *Understand the concept of using comparables to collect market information *Improve the understanding of the nine P's of marketing *Understand how market information can be secured</p>
<p><i>1:30 pm - 3:00 pm</i></p>	<p>④ Case studies</p> <p>⑤ Comparables</p>	<p>*Understand the role and use of case studies</p> <p>*Understand the role and use of comparables in market information *Know the types of information that should be collected from comparable enterprises *Know how to collect comparable enterprise information</p>
<p><i>3:15 pm - 4:00 pm</i></p>	<p>⑥ Current markets - profiling existing customers</p>	<p>*Understand why to profile existing customers *Know the types of information that should be collected on current customers *Know the importance of a systematic collection of customer information and how that information can be used to make decisions *Know how to use information to segment markets</p>

4 00 p 5 00 p

Describing Marketing Segments/Products

⑦ Describing outdoor recreation markets using national and state trends demographic and behavioral variables Presentation (David Scott) – (60 min)

Know national and state trends in outdoor recreation participation
Understand how to use demographic psychographic geographic and behavior data to segment and profile markets
Understand how to use trend data
Know which variables can be used to describe market segments

What are my options?

Day 2 8 30 am 9 30 am

⑧ Alternative resource use decision making how do I decide among options?

Understand how to identify alternative enterprise options
Understanding of the economic and personal trade offs of non traditional land use enterprises
Understand the purpose and processes of choice between traditional and non traditional land use enterprises
Understanding the basic elements of commercial recreation feasibility analysis
Understand the management trade offs of enterprise diversification

9 30 am 10 00 a

⑨ Defining options two approaches What do I have? What does the market want?

Understand the contrast between a market approach vs a resource (production) approach
Know about a process for discovering and identifying underutilized recreation and tourism resources on the land
Know the value of market understanding to inventory resources

How many are out there who will buy my recreation product?

10 15 a 12 00 p

Market Feasibility

⑩ Describing market segments using demographic geographic and psychographic information Market Feasibility Exercise

Understand and apply the steps for a market feasibility analysis
Know how to segment markets using three types of information (demographic psychographic geographic)
Know how to associate a market profiles/segments with product/service mix
Know how to use market information and available data to quantify market segments
Demonstrate the impact of distance to market on volume of business
Demonstrate the impact of price on volume of business

⑪ Describe product/service mix of the enterprise

Know how to describe the combination of activities and services that constitute the experience for a market segment
Understand the packaging and programming of resources required to provide the experience desired by a market segment

12 00 pm 1 00 pm Lunch

⑫ Positioning and competition differentiation

Understand and apply market positioning and competitor analysis
Know the impact of competition on volume of business
Know the importance of positioning with the customer to differentiate from the competition

How do I reach my potential customers?

1 00 pm 2 00 pm

Advertising Promotion and Evaluation

⑬ Methods of advertising and promotion direct mail internet media

Understand the various advertising and promotion vehicles
Understand how to select an effective advertising and promotion vehicle
Know how to use direct mail to match the profile of the customer
Know how to evaluate direct mail marketing
Know sources of help in direct mail marketing

⑭ Evaluating advertising and promotion effectiveness address partnerships & industry insiders/media

Know the criteria for evaluating the different advertising mediums

Is it worth the effort?

2 00 p 3 00 p

Enterprise Feasibility

⑮ What are my resource requirements/inputs?

Know the importance of market feasibility in enterprise feasibility
Know the steps in enterprise feasibility
Know the resource requirements/inputs for enterprise feasibility
Understand the types of information needed to project enterprise revenue

⑯ Comparing alternative investments

Understand the purpose and processes of choice between traditional and non traditional land use enterprises



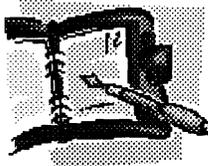
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IMPORTANT NOTE:

The "Nature Tourism Handbook" is currently being Typeset and will be available soon. The following is the introduction and table of contents.

Nature & Heritage Tourism: A Guidebook to Evaluate Enterprise Opportunities

By: Andrew N. Skadberg, Jeremy James, Miles Phillips, James R. Kimmel, Carson E. Watt
with special thanks to Stan Meador, James Featherston and Jason Johnson



Can a Tourism/Recreation Enterprise Help Achieve Your Goals?

INTRODUCTION

Can a Tourism/Recreation Enterprise Help Achieve Your Goals?

An Enterprise Assessment Handbook

Our chief aim for this resource-guide is that it be concise because we understand that your time is very valuable. But we have also strived for it to address the most important questions and issues that need to be considered for a new tourism/recreation enterprise. To that end we believe that it will provide valuable guidance, but it cannot provide all the answers on these topics. We have included an "additional resources" section at the end for those interested in more information.

This guide is designed to lead you through a process in a step-wise fashion so that you will have a clear idea about:

- 1) whether a agritourism, nature/alternative tourism or recreation business will work for you, your family and your current ranch/farm operation,
- 2) if the answer to the above is "Yes"-you will have a clear and specific idea about what that business will be,
- 3) you will also have a first assessment of whether or not that business will be economically feasible, and
- 4) you will have some plans about how to enter into that business based on sound research and planning.

Tourism/recreation is significantly different from traditional ranching/farming activities. It will be necessary for you to put on a “new pair of glasses” when considering these opportunities. However, as those who have been in the business will tell you, it can be very compatible with a rural agricultural lifestyle, and it can provide significant benefits economically and in other ways.

In addition to these ideas this handbook is...

-for landowners who have an interest in tourism/recreation enterprises that take advantage of the natural and heritage resources of the land.

-a guide to information sources where landowners can pursue more in-depth answers to questions not fully covered in this handbook.

-focused on tourism enterprises, but the framework for decision making can be applied to other enterprises considered as alternatives to traditional agriculture products.

-designed so that landowners who complete the steps in this handbook will have the beginning of a business plan describing their enterprise and an estimate of its revenue potential.

Tourism enterprises--defined...

For the purpose of this handbook, tourism (or recreational) enterprises are those that utilize the natural and heritage resources of the land, by inviting people to come on to the ranch/farm to “experience” the unique natural, cultural and historic resources of their place, with the aim to create a sustainable income stream.

This handbook is designed to...

-be a 5-week assessment process, requiring about 2 or 3 hours of activities per week. Each weekly topic includes a section of the handbook, exercise and worksheet(s) to build on those topics. Some weeks require more time than others. Also, you could surely invest more time because you will likely benefit in the long-run.

-provide space for you to compile your ideas as you consider your own situation.

-have an exercise worksheet that accompanies each chapter that captures your ideas for your potential operation.

-result in a business plan framework at the end of the process, e.g., topics addressed in the worksheets can be inserted into an outline to become the beginning of your business plan including a five year projection of revenues and costs.

Contents

Introduction

I. Getting Started

1.1 What are my options?

Tourism and recreation options for my operation

Defining tourism and recreation products

1.2 Where do I want to be?

Why tourism

Thinking about your values and goals, where do you want to be in the next...

1.3 Tourism/recreation: is it for me and my family?

Tourism recreation ingredients for success
Evaluating your initial potential

II. Enterprise Selection and Product Development

- 2.1 What do people want and what will they pay for?
 - Perspective 1: Market perspective
 - Perspective 2: Resource perspective
- 2.2 Market Perspective
 - Information gathering methods
 - Information gathering questions
- 2.3 Resources Perspective
 - Important note about resources facilities and planning
 - Comparing with others
 - Other useful resources
- 2.4 Does the enterprise match my resources and the market?
 - Do these enterprises fit with my current situation--Ranking possibilities
 - Time allocation
- 2.5 Interpretation Plan
 - Definitions
 - Principles of interpretation
 - Developing the story of your place

III. Creating A Financial Plan

- 3.1 Defining your product: The Experience
 - #1 Enterprise
 - Experience description activity
- 3.2 What is a financial plan?
 - Mr. J's cattle ranch
 - The Question-- Can Mr. Jones meet his goals with this idea?
- 3.3 How do I determine if I will make money?
 - Getting started questions
 - Project gross revenue
 - Projecting expenses
 - Projecting net income
 - Creating income and cash flow projection

IV. Developing a Marketing Plan

- 4.1 What is marketing?
- 4.2 How do I create a customer profile?
- 4.3 How do I describe my ideal customer?
- 4.4 Marketing Methods
 - Table of options
 - Selected promotional pieces
 - Web sites
 - Developing a brochure

4.5 Better understanding where your customers come from?

4.6 How do I evaluate the plan?

V. Enterprise Selection & Moving Forward

5.1 How do I make and evaluate my decision?

Revisiting goals

Exploring Alternatives

5.2 Next steps in more detail?

Completing your business plan

Legal and regulatory issues

Legal forms of business

Liability and insurance

Regulatory Issues

Risk Management-Reducing Liability and Financial Risks

Resource Assessment, Site/Activity and Facilities Planning

Taxes

Employees

Administrative planning

Reservation Requests

Office Equipment and Supplies

Bookkeeping/Accounting

Job Responsibilities

Safety procedures

Operation planning

Customer service planning

Appendixes: More details on a few topics

Appendix A. Business plans

Appendix B. Forming a business

Appendix C. Liability exposure and insurance

Appendix D. Helpful Resources by Topic

Goals writing

Comparables

Financial planning

Business plans

Marketing

Information on Developing Interpretive Materials

Texas Organizations Providing Assistance for Tourism

A short list of ranches with nature-based tourism/recreation enterprises

Worksheets

W1: Potential Enterprises

W2: Resource Map

W3: Enterprise Information Gathering

W4: Operating Schedule

W5: My Enterprise Description

W6: Financial Plan

W7: Marketing Plan

The
BUSINESS
of **Ecotourism**

CAROL PATTERSON

Kalahari Management Inc.

Foreword by

DELIA AND MARK OWENS

Owens Foundation for Wildlife Conservation

Explorer's Guide Publishing
Rhineland, Wisconsin

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	vii
INTRODUCTION	xi
CHAPTER 1 UNDERSTANDING THE ECOTOURISM INDUSTRY	1
Ecotourism Definitions	1
Industry Growth	2
Ecotourism Products	3
Who Are The Ecotourists?	6
Ecotourism Challenges	9
CHAPTER 2 THE PLANNING PROCESS	13
Strategic Planning: Developing Your Business	13
Mission Statement	14
External Review of the Environment	14
Internal Review of Your Business	19
Objective Setting	20
Analyzing the Marketplace	21
Defining Your Product	22
A Reality Check	23
The Need for a Business Plan	25
Getting Your Community Involved	26
CHAPTER 3 THE ECO IN ECOTOURISM	29
The Development Phase	29
Setting Your Company's Environmental Policies	31
Sustaining Environmental Policies in Daily Operations	32
Assessing Impacts	37

CHAPTER 4	MARKETING YOUR PRODUCT	41
	Marketing Versus Selling	41
	Developing a Marketing Plan	42
	Marketing Budgets	64
	Forecasting Sales	64
	Monitoring and Evaluating Marketing Activities	67
CHAPTER 5	SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND THE TRAVEL TRADE	71
	Your Relationship to the Travel Trade	71
	Players in the Travel Trade	71
	The Role of the Travel Trade in Marketing Ecotourism	72
	Evaluating Travel Suppliers	76
	Supporting Sustainable Tourism: Preparing the Client	76
CHAPTER 6	BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUCCESS	79
	Marketing Partnership	79
	Tour Packaging	80
	The Tour Package Process	80
	Marketing Your Tour Package	85
	Cooperative Marketing Partnerships	87
	Festivals	88
CHAPTER 7	THE DOLLARS AND SENSE OF YOUR BUSINESS	91
	Financial Management Needed	91
	Financial Forecasting	92
	Financial Analysis	100
	Tools to Help You Better Understand Your Business	100
	Obtaining Financing	108
	Accounting	110
	Cash Management	112
CHAPTER 8	CLIMBING THE CUSTOMER SERVICE MOUNTAIN	117
	What is Customer Service ?	117
	Delivering Exceptional Customer Service	118
	Customer Service Problems	121
	Interpretation	123
	Qualifying Customers	124

CHAPTER 9 GETTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR THE JOB	127
Who Do You Need?	127
How to Hire the Right Person	129
Interviewing Techniques	129
Using Contract Help	132
Training	132
Human Resource Policies	136
Managing Turnover	136
CHAPTER 10 MANAGING YOUR BUSINESS RISK	141
Is Ecotourism Dangerous?	141
Where Does Risk Originate?	141
Legal Liability	142
Insuring Against the Odds	143
Safety Management: Minimizing Your Risk	144
Asset Protection	147
CHAPTER 11 BUSINESS PLANNING	151
The Need for a Business Plan	151
Elements of a Business Plan	151
Your Audience	152
The Ecotourism Difference	152
Preparing the Plan	153
Business Plan Workbook	158
CHAPTER 12 INDUSTRY STANDARDS AND ASSOCIATIONS	159
Industry Standards: Needed or Not?	159
The Role of Ecotourism Standards	159
Maintaining Standard Integrity	160
Existing Programs	161
Industry Associations	162
IN CLOSING	165
APPENDICES	166
A: Supplementary Files on Computer Disk	166
B: Business Plan Workbook	167
C: Liability Loss Control Memorandum	183
D: Glossary of Ecotourism Terms	192
INDEX	193