
Understanding the Sustainable Development of Tourism

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Introduction to Sustainable Tourism Development

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Design and setting by P.K. McBride

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Introduction to Sustainable Tourism Development

Janne J. Liburd

Rationale

One of the most important challenges facing the world of today is educating the leaders of tomorrow. In order to create challenging vistas and avoid blind reproduction where students simply learn to reproduce the world that exists (Minogue, 1973), these future leaders should be equipped with a holistic understanding of the values and principles of sustainable development. Students are hereby challenged not only to think about the means to current problem solving but to reflect philosophically upon the ethics and ends in the context of desirable futures. Reflecting upon the kind of tourism we wish to have does not imply moving away from industry needs and demands of the marketplace, as well as meeting those of society, which well-trained tourism graduates must continue to satisfy. More fundamentally it raises the issues of stewardship, the kind of tourism to be developed (by whom and how it should be governed) and what the end objectives behind these activities should be.

Throughout this book, sustainability is shown to be a dynamic process of change, rather than a static goal to be achieved. This chapter will first introduce the antecedents to the concept of sustainable development and then elaborate on its application to tourism. Particular attention is next paid to the meaning of complex adaptive systems in tourism. Drawing on the Tourism Educator Futures Initiative (TEFI), interrelated values of ethics, knowledge, professionalism and mutuality will be outlined to further substantiate how sustainability should be treated as a managerial philosophy rather than a subject matter taught in one comprehensive course.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this chapter the student should be able to:

- ◆ Explain the principles of sustainable tourism development
- ◆ Understand the difference between sustainable development and sustainable tourism development
- ◆ Examine sustainability as a managerial philosophy and a process of transformation
- ◆ Explain the meaning of complex adaptive systems
- ◆ Critically reflect upon values related to sustainability
- ◆ Reflect upon desirable futures for travel and tourism.

Chapter extract

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