

## **BEST EN Case studies: Innovation for Sustainable Tourism**

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### **Introduction to the Case Studies**

BEST EN TTVII hosted an industry forum facilitated by BEST EN Committee Member, Dr. Deborah Edwards in which three local practitioners from Arizona described their sustainable tourism products, how they deal with the barriers to innovation and how they have succeeded in being innovative.

The industry speakers came from three very diverse fields of operation. They were:

- Patty West, Freerange Botanical Consulting and Design Flagstaff, Arizona, USA who presented innovations in using local food to provide a “Taste of Arizona”.
- Gina MacIlwraith, Environmental Health and Safety Director of Xanterra, USA who provided insights into innovation in the environmental performance of the largest concession operator in US National Parks.
- Mandy Roberts Metzger, President of the Diablo Trust, Flagstaff, Arizona & Bill Towler, Community Development Director for Coconino County, Arizona, USA who described their innovative approach to land protection in the Diablo Canyon Rural Planning Area.

The outcome of the forum is three case studies. In order to case study the innovation process, the industry speakers were asked to focus their presentations on four key questions:

1. What are the key drivers of innovation in your organisation? i.e. Why Innovate?
2. What is the decision process for implementing innovation? i.e. When and How to innovate?
3. What are/were the barriers to innovation for your organisation and sustainable tourism generally? i.e. What are the barriers to innovation?
4. How important are networks for innovation? i.e. Who to innovate with?

Their responses to these questions are documented below so that others can learn from their experience. This structured approach to understanding the `who, what, when, where and how` of innovation provides the genesis of descriptive and comparative case studies in other tourism destinations.

In order to describe and compare the issues, drivers and outcomes associated with innovation in these three cases, a brief description of each operation is provided, followed by responses to the key questions listed above. The industry speakers were recorded during their presentation and each presenter provided a set of notes for use in the documentation of the case studies.

We at BEST EN hope you are able to take advantage of these case studies by using them for education and knowledge creation purposes within teaching programs and as exemplars for other industry firms.

## **Case 1: Tasting Arizona**

Tasting Arizona is a consortium of tourism, non-government, indigenous, farming, education, community, festival and food organizations that aim to provide 'local flavor' to customers in Arizona (see Table 1). Tasting Arizona began as a series of workshops held in 2007 as part of a project of the Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University. The philosophy behind Tasting Arizona is that visitors want local flavor and they have identified a range of food products that represent the taste and feel of Arizona. Wild foods such as flour made from the Mesquite bean and pure varieties of fruit and vegetables are just two examples of traditional local foods that have been revived.

The benefits of this revival extend well beyond providing visitors with local flavors, as these foods are linked with preserving traditional farming practices, conserving areas for wildlife, educating youth, keeping food pure and free from genetic modification, maintaining biodiversity and protecting cultural traditions.

**Table 1: Tasting Arizona Partners**

- Tourism providers
- Farmers markets
- Local growers (farmers and ranchers)
- Tribes
- Schools
- Hospitals
- National and State Parks (Slide Rock)
- Festival organizers
- Non-profit organizations (Native Movement, Native Seeds SEARCH, Slowfood USA, etc.)
- Foragers of wild foods
- Restaurants
- Food enthusiasts
- University researchers
- Plant and seed sellers
- Heritage food growers
- Youth gardens
- Community gardens

### **Drivers of Innovation: Why Innovate?**

Tasting Arizona believes that wild and traditional foods are good for everybody – producers, consumers and tourists. In addition to the community benefits there are indications that wild foods have previously unknown health benefits. Certain foods such as white corn are central to traditional cultural ceremonies yet these pure varieties are under threat from cross-pollination with genetically modified varieties of corn.

Hence the drivers of innovation in Tasting Arizona can be summarized as:

- Maintaining food purity and biodiversity;
- Protecting local cultures and traditions;
- Conserving natural areas;
- Reviving farm lands; and
- Educating the public (especially youth) about local foods.

### **Process of Innovation: When and How to Innovate?**

The first step in reviving the traditional and wild foods was to create a food network with local people to:

- Bring back local farmer's markets;
- Support local farms;
- Fostering of Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs);
- Demonstrate demand for local foods;
- Grow food in community gardens; and
- Contribute to organizations that are helping maintain and strengthen food systems.

Bringing back local farmer's markets provides a place for celebration of local foods and interaction between producers, restaurants and consumers. Supporting local farms involves identifying traditional food varieties, orchard restoration, sponsorship of festivals and food events, inviting chefs to prepare local produce and creating food and wine trails. These activities will enable visitors to discover local foods which will increase demand and encourage more producers to get involved. Engaging with youth in creating and farming community gardens that grow local varieties of produce is a tool that is used to educate the local community, increase demand and strengthen supply. Tasting Arizona is also introducing wild foods to visitors and residents in familiar ways, such as cookies made from Mesquite flour which is naturally sweet. This has been so successful that demand now outstrips supply. Another initiative is 'Wild Food' walks. These walks provide educational opportunities for linking wild foods to wildlife and preserving natural areas.

CSAa is a direct connection between local farmers and the people who eat their produce. The aim is to foster a mutual commitment: communities of eaters commit to supporting a local farmer for a season. In return, CSA participants receive fresh, seasonal produce—sharing in the risks and bounty of farming.

The declaration of themed National Heritage Areas has provided an opportunity for the consortium to access funding for the development of tours and the production of maps of farming and wild food areas in Arizona and neighbouring States. In this way, tourists can be engaged in discovering new foods and support local producers.

### **Barriers to Innovation**

The challenges are many. First both natural and farming lands are under increasing pressure from larger producers and non-local produce, to satisfy demand from customers who have become used to buying out-of-season and non-local produce.

Second there are limitations of the scale of production that prevent traditional and wild food producers from achieving continuity and volume of supply. Third there is as yet no distribution system in place for local foods.

Fourth locally produced food has been declining as water is being diverted for other uses. Fifth there is a lack of place-based agriculture and agricultural diversity as the trend to source mass-produced foods from outside of the local area continues.

### **Innovation Networks**

The consortium has found that collaboration is the key to food production and distribution, and it is not possible to develop food systems without linking with various community, non-profit, tourism, education and land management agencies. Community and youth groups that grow traditional foods in community gardens are bringing people into the local food network. Non-profit organizations such as the Native Movement, Native Seed Search and Slow Food USA are important partners in providing knowledge and advice on production of traditional foods. Tasting Arizona has linked with schools, hospitals and universities through partnerships that undertake research and educate the public about local food. National and State Park agencies have a vested interest in conserving the environment where wild food and animals exist. Finally, tour operators, festival organizers, restaurants and food enthusiasts engage and support local producers and wild food foragers.

Hence food networks are extensive and interact with a wide cross-section of people in government, the community and business. Indeed, growing these networks could be considered just as important as growing the food if the consortium is going to remain sustainable into the future.

### **Summary**

The long-term vision is to have local foods linked to tourism and made available to visitors. This will only be achieved when the numerous benefits of local food production are clearly identified and articulated. The process of strengthening local food systems involves many innovative initiatives. Reviving local food production involves many barriers, not the least of which is reversing consumer trends towards mass produced food and protecting farming and natural areas from invasion. A strong network is critical to this process and overcoming the barriers.

This case demonstrates that a creative and innovative approach to food production can not only enhance tourism experiences, but it can protect local traditions, restore farmlands, maintain natural and agricultural biodiversity and move farming and native communities toward sustainability of their land, traditions, culture and community. Collaboration is the key to renewing food systems and creating local networks that produce, protect and promote traditional and wild foods.

## **Case 2: Diablo Canyon Rural Planning Area**

Diablo Trust is a land management team that was initiated in 1993 by two farming families the Metzgers and the Prossers to provide a forum for the community to actively participate in land stewardship.

The Diablo Trust is an innovative approach to rural planning in Arizona between 1998 and 2000, called the “Growing Smarter Legislation”. Landowners were encouraged to petition for the establishment of Land Trusts that would effectively assume planning responsibility for rural farming lands and adjacent tenures within Arizona. With the approval of the Coconino County Board of Supervisors the Diablo Trust was formed in 2003. Subsequently a planning meeting held at the Flying M Ranch in Fall 2003 and the Diablo Canyon Rural Planning Area (RPA) was formed. It was the first Trust of its kind in Northern Arizona and effectively transferred control of the planning and permitting process for the Diablo Canyon Area to the Diablo Trust.

Their Mission statement is:

The Diablo Trust is a 501(c)(3) land management team created to promote the social, biological and economic sustainability of 426,000 acres of intermingled federal, state, and private lands southeast of Flagstaff, Arizona, by engaging in a collaborative stewardship process that is in harmony with the natural environment and the broader community.

According to their Vision Statement, the Diablo Canyon RPA:

Serves as a model approach for the continuation of traditional working ranches as long-term, economically-viable enterprises while maintaining unfragmented landscapes and restoring native ecosystems. The RPA successfully integrates economy, ecology, and community by pursuing a range of economic opportunities necessary to support and maintain the viability of ranching while recognizing the fundamental importance of the health of the land and the support of the broader community.

Their goal statement is:

To create a range of economic opportunities in support of private landholders and traditional uses while preserving open spaces for future generations.

The sub-goals are:

- Sustaining open space;
- Living in balance with biodiversity;
- Producing high quality food;
- Restoring watersheds;

- Creating stable, living soils; and
- Achieving community.

### **Drivers of Innovation**

The key driver for the formation of the Diablo Canyon RPA was necessity, and fear that the traditional cattle ranches and the families that run them would not survive. They aimed to protect traditional agriculture by preserving farmlands and developing options for value-adding products, tourism and alternative land-uses. Two families, the Metzgers and the Prossers have ranch properties adjoining Diablo Canyon and they both recognized that they needed to join forces to preserve their land and the traditions connected to those lands. They also recognized the need to communicate with the local community and conservation groups regarding their efforts to preserve grasslands not only for cattle, but also for the wildlife that inhabits the area.

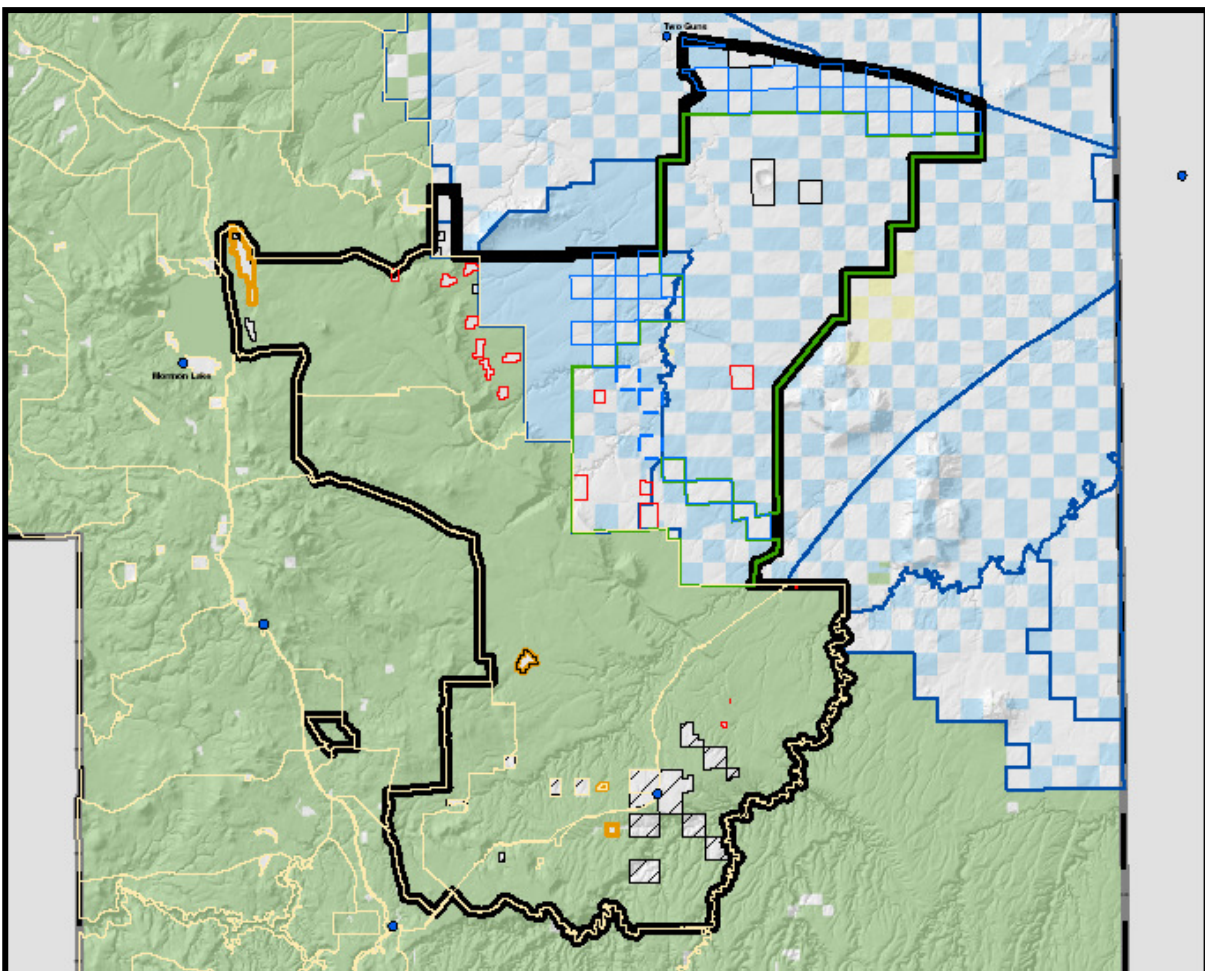
Antelope, elk and deer co-habit with cattle on their properties and they have made considerable effort to protect wildlife habitat by working with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Besides practical measures such as fencing cattle out of wetlands and using rest-rotation grazing during drought periods, they have also taken some innovative steps to incorporate, collaborate and communicate with the wider community under the banner of the Diablo Canyon RPA. Finally, there was a desire to pass on a viable business operation to future generations of family farmers, which in itself is a key dimension of economic and social sustainability.

### **Process of Innovation: When and How to Innovate?**

There were two steps involved in this innovative approach to saving and sustaining land and traditions in the area. First was establishing the Diablo Trust as the entity that would assume planning responsibility for the area. This was undertaken by the Metzger and Prosser families, owners of the two long-time ranches in the area, the Flying M and the Bar T Bar Ranches. They began a process of petitioning the County Board for approval to form a rural planning area. The second step was to develop the Diablo Regional Plan which would encompass all of the multiple land uses within this area of approximately 426,000 acres. The area was a “checkerboard” of different land uses and private, state and federal tenures, and ranged from forests to high desert country (see figure 1). This area in north-east Arizona is the heartlands of the American West, once characterized by the Ranchers and cowboys who were the stuff of legends and the source of images portrayed through books and movies of the “wild west”.

Now, there are many competing lands uses and the process of planning and managing the land involved many stakeholders, as well as integration with the County Comprehensive Plan. There was a need to educate the public of the importance of public land ranching and the environmental stewardship practices that ranchers had in place. A weekend workshop was the venue for the ranches to recruit new members of the trust, such as the Sierra Club (and American environmental organization), who were not aware of the ranchers' efforts with regard to land management and preservation.

**Figure 1: The Diablo Canyon Planning Area**



With regard to commercial operations, a variety of land use options were considered worthy for inclusion in the Diablo Regional Plan. All the options had a commercial focus and some had additional environmental benefits and included:

- Value Added Beef
- Tourism, Recreation and Education
- Wood Products

- Energy Development
- Housing

Examples of each of these options are cited in the plan and include fresh or frozen beef products, “dude ranches” and other tourism, recreation and education opportunities, firewood products, wind power generation and housing development. However, each option presented their own challenges and barriers that limit their economic viability and/or cultural desirability. These will be discussed in the next section.

### **Barriers to Innovation**

There were many barriers for these farming families, not the least of which was the global trend toward intensive farming of beef in feedlots leading to the failure of traditional farming methods such as cattle ranching. Another less tangible barrier was the perception held by members of the Diablo Trust that “they could do anything” on their lands, which turned out not to be the case.

The production of high quality, natural or organic beef for niche markets had been done in other parts of the West, and three examples — Babbitt Ranches, Oregon Country Beef and Ervin’s Natural Beef — were cited. A key decision is whether to provide the beef product in fresh or frozen form. Getting these products to market would require considerable investment in infrastructure and distribution systems which presented a major financial barrier.

Tourism, recreation and education also presented many barriers. Hosting and accommodating visitors on the ranches would require a huge effort by farmers, who are already busy with their farming activities. Other on-farm activities involving recreation and education programs were also considered, but their small scale meant that they may not be commercially viable. The cost associated with public liability insurance is also a major barrier to entry into this form of tourism, especially if an authentic experience of ranching and all of the hazards associated with it are to be offered. Finally, the presentation and communication skills of the local workers who would work in tourism are also a constraint.

Wood product production was considered as an innovation that would address two issues. Firstly it would reduce the area of Juniper and Pinion trees, making more land available for grazing. Juniper was an invasive species that was destroying grasslands and a program of reduction was already in place. Secondly it provides a source of commercial firewood production to meet demand in the cold Northern Arizona winters. However, tree-clearing and firewood collection is highly labour-intensive and there are many other sources of fuel for home log-fires, including packaged,

manufactured logs with guaranteed three-hour burn times and even with crackling that imitates the sound of real burning wood!

Commercial banks of wind turbines that generate power for the grid can be found on many farming lands, and the rent that these sites generate for land owners is substantial. However, they have a tendency to ruin the rural vistas and aesthetics and as such meet with considerable resistance whenever they are proposed in open landscapes. View sheds in Northern Arizona can extend for 60 miles or more and in themselves provide a great sense of space for the millions of tourists that view the area on the way to world-class attractions such as the Grand Canyon and Monument Valley. Locating Wind Turbines on farms requires consideration of not only engineering factors such as proximity to the grid, but also aesthetic considerations and effects on vistas and view sheds.

Finally, housing development perhaps presents that biggest issue for farmers, as land sold off for housing will be lost to farming forever. All farmers, no matter where they live, want to retain or indeed expand their land holdings in order to attain economies of scale and more economically viable farm production. Partial sale of farmlands would however enable farmers to keep their Ranch houses and the majority of their lands, so a careful plan for developing land has to be put in place.

### **Networks for Innovation**

The Diablo Trust arose for a single purpose, to protect traditional farming families, so was not really involved with other groups. In fact it was described as an “accidental organization” that had to embrace all land management issues in the area, taking it well beyond it’s original task. Having established the Trust, they then began the process of engagement with other groups such as tourism, whom they originally viewed with caution. Developers too were viewed with suspicion, but bringing these groups together around the table was critical to developing the Diablo Regional Plan. Rather than “supping with the devil” this engagement with all other land users was considered as “embracing thine enemy” and a way for openly considering all options for protecting and preserving the farming lands. The Diablo Trust considers the engagement with land developers to be one of the most constructive outcomes of the planning process.

## **Summary**

Innovation can be both necessary and practical and will not always require extensive research and new technology, especially when it comes to dealing with the universal problems of rural land management. By working with local, state and federal agencies, community and conservation groups and each other, these two long-time farming families have taken considerable steps to improve land management practices, conserve habitat for wildlife, maintain their farming traditions and ensure that the land remains representative of all of the values associated with the West.

Further Information:

Visit <http://www.diablotrust.org/about.htm>

## **Case 3: Xanterra LLC: You Can't Save What You Can't Measure...**

### **Corporate Environmental Sustainability**

Xanterra is the USA's largest national park concessioner, operating hotels, lodges, restaurants, retail, campgrounds and transportation systems in more than 20 locations, including:

- Grand Canyon - North and South Rims
- Rocky Mountain National Park
- Yellowstone National Park
- Bryce Canyon National Park
- Zion National Park
- Crater Lake National Park
- Death Valley National Park
- Petrified Forest National Park
- Everglades National Park
- Mount Rushmore National Memorial
- Silverado Resort in Napa, CA
- Gideon Putnam Resort
- Furnace Creek Inn & Ranch
- Grand Canyon Railway
- Salt Fork State Park
- Maumee Bay State Park
- Shawnee State Park
- Burr Oak State Park
- Punderson Manor State Park
- Hueston Woods State Park

Xanterra has about 8000 employees in 19 locations and is headquartered in Denver, CO. Xanterra's Environmental Management System (EMS) Ecologix is the source of a range of innovations that are the focus of this case study. Ecologix is the logical integration of ecology and business. According to Gina McIlwraith, Environment, Health & Safety Director, Ecologix ensures:

- continual improvement of Xanterra's environmental performance;
- compliance with all environmental regulations;
- incorporation of best management practices; and
- flexibility to respond to property environmental priorities.

### **Drivers of Innovation**

The most succinct reason for pursuing innovation in all of Xanterra's operations through the Ecologix EMS is captured in the Mission Statement, as follows:

*Our business decisions balance economic viability with ecological responsibility.*

*We reduce and recycle waste, conserve energy and water, and educate our guests and employees on environmental stewardship.*

*We believe that increasing the sustainability of natural systems is not just good business. **It is the right thing to do.***

There is a belief within the organisation that sustaining natural systems through continuous innovation and improvement is not only good for the environments in which they operate, but also good business. Employees are asked to hold management to account for all operational decisions that relate to environmental performance. Thus, they have both a top-down mission and a bottom-up monitoring mechanism to ensure continuous improvement in environmental performance, compliance with environmental regulations and responsiveness to environmental priorities.

### **Process of Innovation: When and How to Innovate?**

Xanterra's Ecologix EMS involves a continuous improvement process, based on achieving a truly sustainable business by the year 2015 with the following characteristics:

- Use zero fossil fuels;
- Use zero persistent toxic chemicals;
- Generate zero waste to the landfill;
- Generate zero hazardous waste;
- Consume water to extent no species are negatively impacted;
- Employ sustainable design, construction and maintenance practices in all operations ;
- Serve 100 percent local organic food;
- Sell 100 percent fair trade products; and
- No flora, fauna species impact from development.

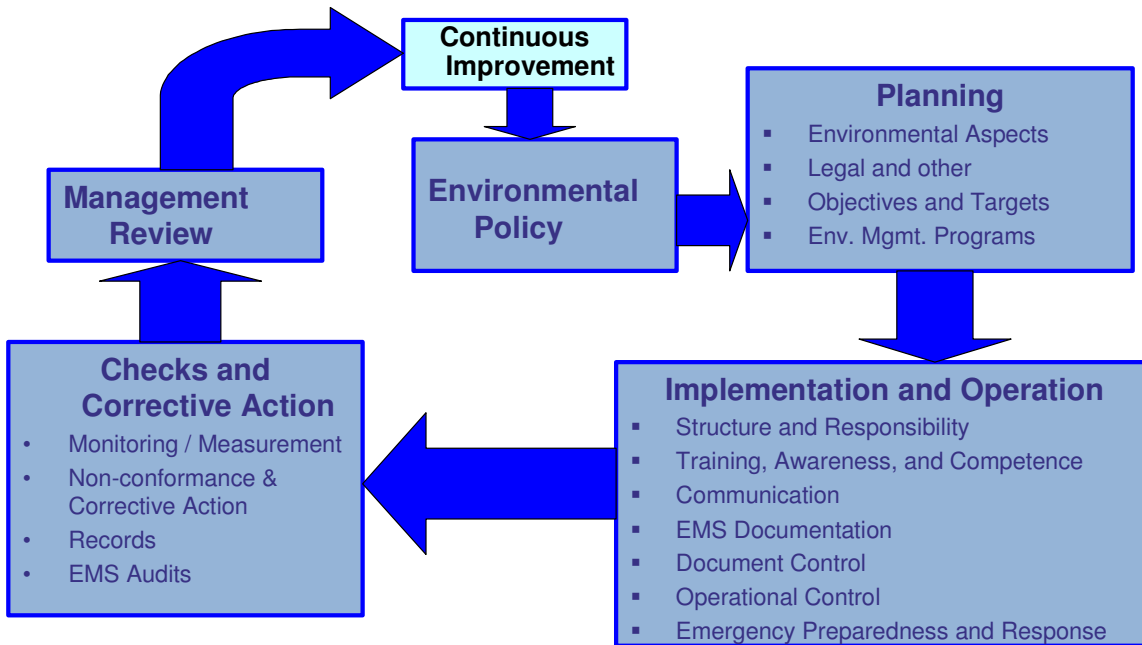
In order to achieve this, they have set the following ten-year targets for all areas of operation:

- Transportation: Achieve companywide CAFÉ standard of 35 miles per gallon (EPA rated combined city/highway mileage) for all vehicles purchased by 2015.
- Emissions: Decrease greenhouse gas (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions by 30 percent (baseline year 2000).
- Solid Waste: Divert from landfill 50 percent of all solid waste generated.
- Hazardous Waste: Generate zero hazardous waste.
- Water: Decrease water usage by 25 percent (baseline year 2000).
- Energy: Decrease fossil fuel usage by 30 percent (baseline year 2000); Increase renewable energy to 7 percent of total electricity usage.

Ecologix is described as a hybrid Environmental Management System as it includes aspects of compliance, sustainability and accountability. It is based on ISO 14001 Certification and the National Environment Performance [NEPT] Track programs and began with top management setting an environmental policy expressing commitment to compliance and continual improvement.

Planning for Ecologix was done by forming a cross-functional team to complete a comprehensive review of a facility’s environmental activities that have potential to interact with the environment. The structure of the EMS is indicated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Structure of Xanterra’s Ecologix EMS**



Xanterra addresses significant environmental aspects by developing environmental policies, setting objectives and measurable targets, implementing actions which can include activities such as inspecting a chemical storage area to ensure zero spills and provide a framework for continuous improvement (eg. reducing energy use by 10 percent each year).

Thus, Xanterra has a management structure that incorporates these objectives and targets into its programs and procedures. These translate into work instructions to train employees in the EMS and ensure competence to carry out their responsibilities. In terms of monitoring, everything is documented so that progress towards goals is continually checked and corrective action is taken when necessary. There are procedures to monitor and measure activities and for handling non-conformance. Periodic auditing annual management review of the efficacy of the whole system is completed.

Xanterra’s environmental performance is also subject to significant public scrutiny, and Gina describes operating in national parks as “operating under a microscope”. In order to improve transparency and public accountability, Xanterra produces web-based reports that include:

- Corrective Action Database;

- Ecometrix – measures of total resource useage, greenhouse gas emissions and solid waste generation; and
- Sustainability Reporting on the web as well as hard copies available in all guest rooms operated by Xanterra, with an opportunity for guests to comment on environmental performance.

They also have third-party certification and complete external audits through programs such as:

- ISO 14001 – ANSI – RAB;
- Florida Department of Environmental Quality (FDEQ);
- Clean Marina;
- Environment Protection Agency [EPA] Performance Track;
- US Green Building Council LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) a nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings;
- Marine Stewardship Council;
- Organic Fair Trade; and
- WasteWise / Energy Star.

### **Barriers to Innovation**

Introduction of Xanterra's innovative EMS system Ecologix was an extensive and costly exercise for the organisation. It also remains to be seen if it will translate into actual improvements in environmental performance. So not only was it costly, it was also risky.

The ISO 14001 standard upon which it is based is not prescriptive. ISO is a basic process framework; initially intended for the manufacturing/industrial sector. Whilst it requires EMS, regular audits, and commitment to continuous improvement, it does not require environmental performance levels to be met. It's one thing to have an EMS in place (on the shelf) but it's another thing to actually achieve changes – such as reductions in resource consumption. Essentially the effectiveness of ISO depends upon the will and intention of each company employing it.

Hence Xanterra have had to first of all gain top management support for the EMS program and then set about designing the program and implementing it with the support of all staff members. This whole process was scrutinized by public and private agencies with an interest in US parks.

It has also taken place within a highly competitive environment for the concession contracts in US parks. Concessioners not only have to be cost competitive, but must also demonstrate strong

environmental performance. Hence it has been far from easy, yet they have made significant innovations in all aspects of their business and environmental performance.

### **Networks for Innovation**

Xanterra procures almost \$40 million annually of foodstuffs to meet the needs of its guests including:

- \$30 mil in food
- \$1 mil vehicles
- \$1 mil chemicals
- \$1 mil seafood
- \$2 mil produce
- \$3.5 mil meat
- \$500,000 in sheets/towels
- 250,000 lbs. fish
- 16,000 gal. of ketchup
- 110,000 gal. of ice cream
- 380,000 rolls of toilet paper
- 32,000 cases soda
- 65,000 gal fountain syrup
- 70,000 lbs. coffee

Thus in addition to the certification and external collaborations that support innovation, Xanterra took the opportunity to engage its extensive procurement and supplier organizations' to assist in the process of improving environmental performance.

By introducing the environmentally friendly procurement policy, Xanterra has been able to develop:

- A Green Procurement Program with goals and targets;
- A tool to determine if a product is environmental preferable;
- Guidance on how to purchase fuel efficient vehicles;
- Letters to contractors explaining their responsibilities;
- Capital expenditures environmental impact checklist;
- Policy for vendors on product packaging; and
- Green Seal certified products.

Xanterra through an extensive program of retrofitting and replacement in the areas of waste management, energy, buildings and transportation achieved considerable reductions in their energy footprint. In particular, buildings which account for the highest energy and resource use and generate the most solid, liquid and gaseous waste have been the focus of the Ecologix program. New designs and technologies have been incorporated into all "green" buildings and suites, producing the following benefits:

- Ecological benefits;
- Decreased operating costs;

- Increased worker productivity;
- Raising the bar for market competitors;
- Shorter return on investment (RoI) periods;
- Recognition by US Green Building Council and local media; and
- Becoming the industry standard and guide for environmentally sustainable design and construction.

### **Summary**

The overall benefits Ecologix flow not only to the environment but also to the business performance of Xanterra. Increased environmental compliance, corrective action, measurement and monitoring of ecometrix, certification and external auditing has placed the company in a position of leadership in environmental performance. The innovative green procurement program has led to reduced costs, liabilities and impact on the environment and for Xanterra created competitive advantage.

## **Conclusion**

These three case studies serve to demonstrate that innovation for sustainable tourism can take many forms, can occur at different operational and sectoral levels and can apply in a range of geographic locations. From the agricultural and ranch operations, to natural and tribal lands, to national parks and protected areas that are used for tourism, there is room for innovation.

The reasons and motivation for innovation can also be diverse, from necessity and survival to gaining competitive advantage. In all cases there is an underlying ideal that supports innovation and that is the concept of sustainability of ecological, economic and social systems. In many ways innovation can provide the link between natural and cultural heritage and the future of local communities and national parks. Innovation is the key to locking in natural and cultural diversity as well as opening up new possibilities for showcasing this diversity in the form of sustainable tourism.

Each of the case studies demonstrates that the process of innovation begins with engagement of the many stakeholders – local communities, land-holders, indigenous groups, businesses, government agencies, corporations and even competitors and critics. Ideally, a shared vision would be developed that would guide the implementation of new ideas, operations, collaborations and communication. Timing of innovation can be opportunistic or systematic, but it is evident that once the process of innovation has commenced it is ongoing and continuous, requiring all of the effort and resources that can be allocated.

A common thread that runs through all three case studies is the need for networks that support, communicate and disseminate the benefits of innovation. Indeed, just as innovation supports sustainability, networking supports innovation and this is particularly true for innovation in sustainable tourism. It is evident that innovation would rarely occur in isolation, and that all people in the innovative organisation need to be involved in the process.

The barriers to innovation for sustainable tourism are many and varied, and can come from external pressures as well as internal limitations. Food producers in particular face external pressure from market forces that favor intensive farming and mass production and consumption, whilst landholders confront competing land-use groups such as property developers. At the end of the day, cost, revenue and return on investment may override any move to innovate, so these short-term imperatives subsume any longer term sustainable innovations. Again, it is only with the commitment of all parties to the longer term ideals of sustainability that innovations such as those described in the three case studies can truly be realized.

These case studies also demonstrate the benefits that can be gained from using a structured approach to researching and demonstrating innovation for sustainable tourism. In addressing the

key questions on the “who, what, when, where and how” of innovation in an organisation, the industry presenters have not only provided the participants of BEST EN Think Tank VII with some unique insights into their organisations, but also a basis for generalization of some of the key elements of innovation. Of these, the need for networking for innovation appears to be a common denominator across all three cases. It would be appropriate for BEST EN members and others with an interest in innovation to explore the importance of networks, along with other issues relating to the motivations, processes and barriers associated with innovation for sustainable tourism.