

Title: Response Strategies to Climate Change Impacts

Presenter: Nancy Loman Scanlon Ph.D.
School of Travel Industry Management
University of Hawaii

Abstract:

This study addresses the threat of climate change impacts on the sustainability of the economic benefits for, and environmental assets of, tourism destinations. It discusses the challenges for both the demand and supply side of tourism to forecast climate change effects and related weather activity. As tourism represents an increasing percentage of national, regional and local economics, the stability of this contribution becomes increasingly important as measured in tax income, employment rates and financial multiplier effects. Climate change effects on the sustainability of the environment of a destination is discussed relative to both the direct and indirect impacts to natural resources and the inconsistent availability of such for recreational purposes. This study offers strategies to help tourism destinations respond to three major issues of climate change; the emergence of unpredictable weather patterns, the impact of severe weather and the challenge to deliver a consistent 'experience' during changing weather patterns. In addition, this paper offers a visitor/stakeholder education activity model for the protection of natural resources. This model places the visitor in two categories, observer and active participant. Destination stakeholders are directed to commit to core strategies that at once protect natural resources and simultaneously develop alternative activities and products consistent with the destination experience. This model considers protecting natural resources as asset protection and the demonstration to both the local and visitor community of socially responsible business practices.

Purpose:

The purpose of this research study is to:

1. Raise awareness of the effects of climate change on both the economic and environmental sustainability of a destination.
2. Propose response strategies that tourism destination can adapt. These strategies address current effects of climate change and focus efforts on policies that create flexible tourism strategies for the delivery of a consistent quality tourism experience.

Results:

This conceptual paper was first presented at the World Travel Market, London, England in November of 2004 as part of the impacts of climate change on tourism. The results of this ongoing research will hopefully be the acceptance of the visitor/stakeholder education-activity model that seeks to ensure both environmental sustainability and enhanced visitor experience. In addition this researcher looks to communities to adopt climate change impact strategies such as those proposed in this paper.

Main References:

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