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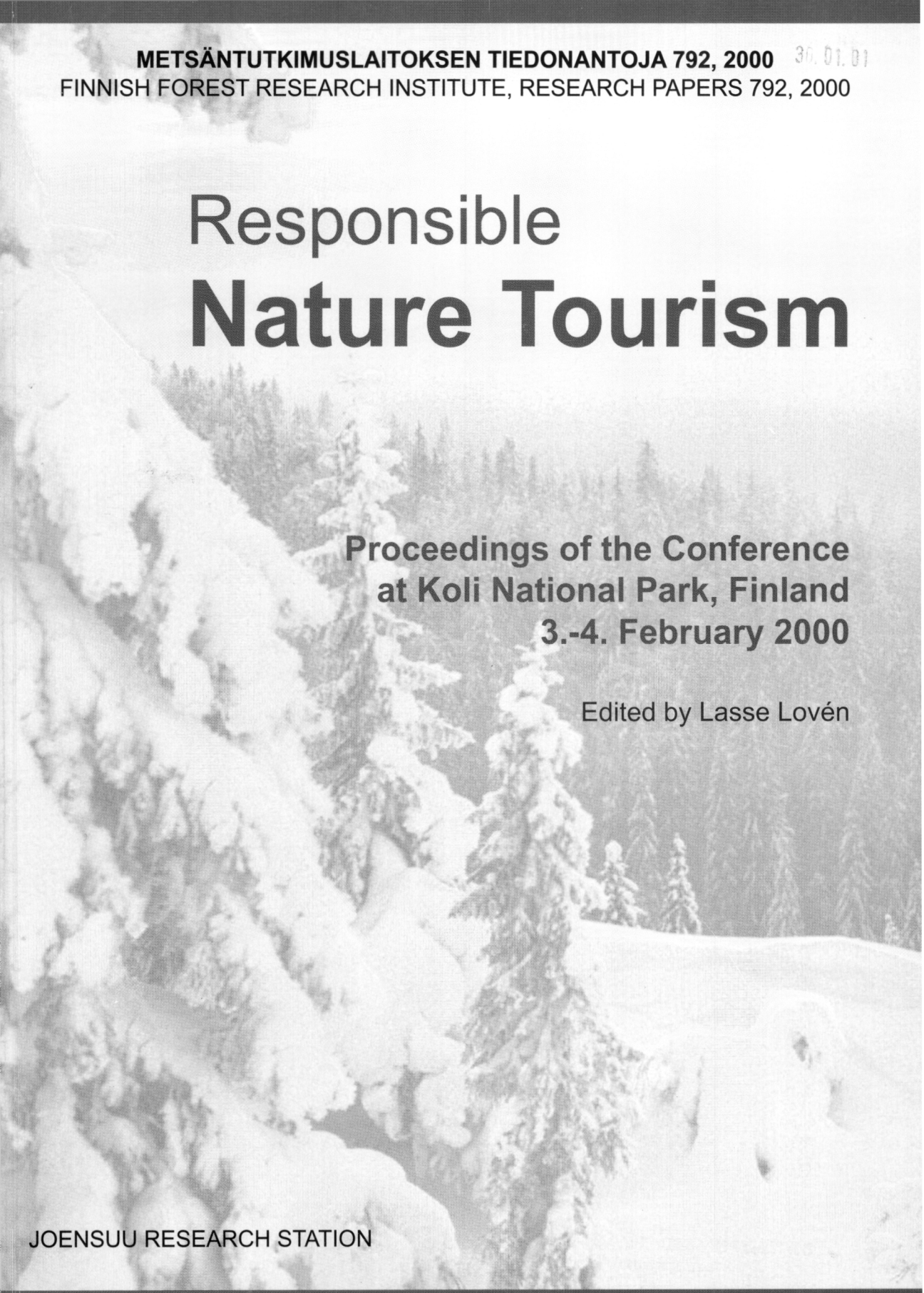
Responsible Nature Tourism

Proceedings of the Conference at Koli National Park, Finland 3.-4. February 2000

Edited by Lasse Lovén



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This proceedings includes the papers, which were presented and discussed in the Responsible Nature Tourism Conference, held at Koli National Park, Finland on 3.- 4.2.2000. The Conference was arranged in co-operation with Finnish Forest Research Institute and North Karelia Polytechnic for discussing the future visions of nature-based tourism in Europe. The main issue discussed in several papers was the theory and practise on responsible and sustai able development of natural tourism resources for the benefit of different groups of users. Several European and national projects reported in conference their main results and findings on developing nature tourism quality control and products. As a speciel case the TOURFOR - award, developed by several forest research and educational institutes in Europe in co-operation, was presented as a new approach for ecolabeling nature tourism development projects and products.

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The guiding sign for the Herajärvi -hiking trail, in the environment of Koli National Park, Finland.



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This Conference has two main themes - environmental responsibility and nature tourism. Both are important in Finland. This country is sparsely populated and peripheral to Europe, and vast tracts are in an almost natural state. Tourism in Finland has always been based on scenic beauty, the absence of pollution, and the safety of the environment.

The site of our Conference, the Koli mountain, reminds us of a period when the beauty of the landscape and the symbolism connected with it were the main attractions for tourists. But it is only during the last few years, after Koli National Park was set up and its proper management started, that this natural and historical site with such abundant beauties has become accessible to the ordinary tourist.

Properly managed, nature tourism does not threaten the environment in Finland, despite the sensitivity of nature caused by our northern location. This is, partly, because we have as yet no mass tourism. The environmental consequences of tourism depend on how people behave, and on housing, catering and traffic. Of these, traffic probably has the greatest impact on the environment. In the European Union, people travel, on the average, 14 500 kilometres a year. Finns, on the other hand, will travel about 16 000 kilometres a year, since Finland is a country of long distances. The main part of this travelling is by car. A key question in environmental protection related to tourism is how to solve the environmental problems caused by traffic. In nature tourism, the sites are often remote, and as no regular transport is available, travelling by is a necessity.

Those working with nature tourism and those working with nature

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conservation have joint interests, although conflicts also arise. The need for transport to conservation areas is increasing. The administration is pushed to build the basic services required and to pursue or facilitate the commercial interests connected with nature conservation areas. This is a relatively new problem, as our network of conservation areas is still developing. Also we do not yet have developed basic quidelines for tourism for new nature conservation areas, such as the Natura 2000 sites. We are looking forward to discussing these concerns here.

A main feature in developing nature tourism is the required long planning time. Areas should be reserved for specific functions in good time. When areas have already been built or otherwise developed, it is difficult to restore them to their original state. In Finland, this refers particularly to shore areas. To date, almost half a million holiday homes are scattered along the shorelines, which may give rise to conflicts when the same shorelines also have recreational uses. Improving the surroundings of holiday centres is another issue requiring attention. In order to make a long-term planning possible, we should know what people will look for in the future. This is why we have, for some years, studied nature tourism and recreation openly throughout Finland. The aim is to identify the major deficiencies requiring action and to make inventories of the basic features in nature tourism.

In the early 1990s Finland experienced a severe economic crisis, and severe unemployment is still a problem. Another problem is the continued influx of people into towns, as there is not sufficient employment available in the rural areas. So far, our employment in tourism is below the European average. A main aim in our tourism policy is now to raise the share of employment in tourism to correspond the EU figure of six percent of the national economy. This is quite ambitious because, at present, employment in agriculture and forestry is altogether about five percent of the labour.

Rural areas offer good opportunities for developing nature tourism. The government programme promises a special plan for supporting employment in nature tourism and outdoor recreation. This conference will contribute to our goal achievement, and will hopefully be successful in promoting responsible nature tourism, not only in Finland, but in other countries as well.

Nature-based tourism in forested North-Europe – case of Finland

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Abstract

Finland is a country where it is easy to show the role of nature oriented and nature - based tourism as one major sector of tourism industry. The main resorts are in or by the nature, including forests, fells, lakeside or the sea. Many cities are located between forests and lakes, rivers or the sea, so that it is not easy to say, whether or where a visitor recognises the borderline between nature and urban environment. Tourists having their

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major motivation for nature and nature-based activities provide about for half of the total tourism income. An increasing demand of scientific information is a fact; for example statistics of nature tourism and outdoor recreation are highly undeveloped. The information is improving in future, when several research projects are reporting the new results. The growing trend in research oriented approach is an indication about the increasing importance and economical value of the nature-based tourism itself.

Keywords: Nature tourism, forest, recreation, sustainable, future.

1 Introduction

"Snow and ice are becoming new trend products. The popularity of winter is not only indicated by the increasing fame of Santa Claus. It is also to be seen in the culture industry; for instance in the enormous success of Peter Hoeg's novel, Miss Smilla's Sense of Snow, and in Ang Lee's film, The Ice Storm, winning the first prize at the 1997 Cannes Film Festival". These words comes from the editor's introduction in an anthology Snowbelt, giving insights into the socio-economic development of the snowy European North (Granberg 1998).

The expected popularity of ice enters at the very mature stage of the product, to say the least. As far we know the most recent glacial period began some 115 000 years ago and the ice sheet melted some 10 000 years ago. As the ice receded, the travellers arrived. There were two type of ecotravellers - the pioneering ones were grasses and weeds while the invasion of the proper biomass bodies – the trees in order of birch, pine and spruce - took much longer time. But once they discovered the north they altered the landscape entirely. What used to be the ice cover and grassland is now mostly covered by coniferous forests, as a worldwide known as the zone of boreal forests.

The melting ice didn't disappear entirely. In Finland, it was partially transformed into the moistness of peatlands, and what is more important, into inland lakes and rivers, covering together 10 % of the total area of the country. And snow and ice still remain the characteristic seasonal winter features of both lakes and boreal forests.

As known, tourism as an income source or industry is expected to grow in volume. In the whole world, 7 % of labour works in tourism at the moment (as many or more than in agriculture and forestry in developed countries). Also in the European Union the tourism is a branch of the big industries. More than 7 million people are employed and the share of tourism of GDP is over 5 per cent. The annual estimate of travellers amount to 180 million, and many of them also are visiting the more than 10 000 protection areas existing presently inside the European Union.

No doubt, from the point of view of nature-based tourism the traditional attractions of Finland are lakes, forests, fells and archipelago. . The "Land of

Thousand Lakes" has been the image of Finland since the end of 19th century. Finland has also been the land of vast, threatening and mysterious forests, the "Land of the Green Gold". For the foreigner, the forest is a miraculous work of art that fills the mind with respect and fear. There is a primitive enchantment particularly in the silence of the wintry, snow-covered forest.

Indeed, Finland is a country where it is easy to show the role of nature oriented and nature -based tourism as one major sector of tourism industry. The main resorts are in or by the nature, including forests, fells, lakeside or the sea. Many cities are located between forests and lakes, rivers or the sea, so that it is not easy to say whether or where a visitor recognises the borderline between nature and urban environment.

A touch of the wild has been related even to the capital. In Len Deighton's (1996) The Billion Dollar Brain, Helsinki is portrayed as an urban appendix of the country, where half a million people are trying to forget that the vast, empty and uninhabited arctic, and the endless wilderness of silent lakes and forests are but a bus stop away.

2 The network of nature conservation areas serves nature-oriented tourism

The network of nature conservation areas has been introduced in Finland since the 1930s. The first national parks and strict nature reserves were intended to preserve specific natural and landscape values. Since then a number of various national programmes has been initiated to protect the main types of ecosystems: National parks, strict nature reserves, mire conservation areas, herb-rich forest areas, old-growth natural forest areas, wetlands for birds, glacifluvial esker formations, river rapids, shoreline protection areas and sub-arctic wilderness areas.

The conservation programmes for glacifluvial formations and for river rapids are based on special legislation prohibiting gravel and soil exploitation and regulating hydroelectric construction.

Although the extensive sub-arctic wilderness areas are not comparable to other conservation areas they are valuable in many other respects. The land use in the wildernesses is not based on consideration of the economy and efficiency. Local people can continue hunting, fishing and reindeer husbandry. Small-scale non-industrial forestry is also permitted in some wilderness areas.

The implementation rate of the planned conservation programmes varies between 5 and 90 percent, which means the extent to which these areas have been officially and legally established. These figures do not include the national parks and strict nature reserves, of which nearly 100 percent have been established according to the programmes.

In 1998, the Finnish government proposed to the EU Commission the initiative of a total of 1 458 sites to be introduced in the Natura 2000 Network The total surface area of these sites is approximately 12 per cent of Finland´s surface area. The areas proposed for Natura 2 000 mainly include all the existing conservation areas, wilderness areas, and sites covered by protection programmes.

There are several figures available characterising the magnitude of nature protection areas in Finland. The strictly protected areas cover 3,6 % of all forest land (forest where the timber production capacity is at least m^3/hectare), 6,6 % of forest and scrub land and 10,4 % of total land area. Protected forests and economical forests with special felling restrictions make 6,5 % of forest land, 10,6 % of forest and scrub land and 14,7 % of total land area (Finnish ...1999). However, the majority of protected areas are located in the northern part of the country, which was one reason for the Ministry of the Environment to appoint in 1999 a group of experts to investigate deficiencies in the forest protection network in southern Finland.

Many of the present national parks in Finland have already long been nationally famous for their attractive scenery. The values of the scenic beauty are often inherent from the topographic differences between the park area and the surroundings, sometimes emphasised by the contrasts between lakes and forests. The most popular national parks provide special opportunities for hiking, cross-country or downhill skiing and many other outdoor activities. These parks have been popular as destinations for domestic travellers and are increasingly so for the foreign tourists as well. Nowadays most of the larger-scale tourism accommodation concentrations in Lapland or elsewhere in the country are located in the immediate vicinity or in some cases partially inside the park or other conservation areas: examples are Aulanko and Punkaharju nature conservation areas in the southern parts of Finland, Koli in the east, and Pallas-Ounastunturi, Pyhätunturi and UKK national parks in Lapland.

3 Trends in recreational visits to the Finnish nature and protected areas

In Finland, 70 % of people travel in their own country, and 45 % travel abroad every year. Most of the longer trips abroad have their destination in the Sunbelt, on the beaches many of which once were without the foreigners' footprints, but now they are places of mass tourism. The concept of ecotourism or nature oriented tourism are not applied to this large scale phenomena although some people might assume that sun, sand and sea are somehow related to nature. However, one should keep in mind that in the global context the concept of travelling abroad is still an unattainable luxury product, available nowadays only for 3,5 % of the world population. The era of the mass scale tourism is yet to be

come.

The number of domestic trips has been about on the same level through the 1990's. Annually, about 40 % of Finns make an overnight trip in order to participate in outdoor activities outside their community of residence in Finland, and 15 % of Finns participate in some outdoor activities (including nature-related activities), when they travel abroad. Concerning the recreation environment in Finland, 80-90 % of destination areas include forest, and 70 % lake or sea (Sievänen 2000).

In Finland the national parks, national hiking areas and other recreation areas managed by state are all used also as a basis for nature-base tourism to some extent. Besides 1 528 000 hectares of forest and scrub land in protected areas there are 40 000 hectares of specific hiking areas, 3500 km of hiking trails and many municipal recreation areas (more than 2000 areas covering about 150 000 hectares) are also provided for travellers. However, the major asset given little emphasis by so far is the supply of ordinary economical forests outside the protected areas. The economical forests cover 90 % of all the forest and scrub land area and present a huge magnitude of recreational resource - 20,6 million hectares – available and largely used by citizens as a multiple use area on the basis of traditional everyman's rights. Economical forests are open to foreign tourists as well. The future for this basic recreational resource seems to be rather encouraging; the new environmental regulations and guidelines in forestry have essentially decreased the use of most intensive silvicultural methods debated in the past.

In the national parks managed by the Finnish Forest and Park Service (Metsähallitus) the number of visits was in 1998 as high as 771 000 (Below & Vauramo 1999). Together with the three national parks managed by the Finnish Forest Research Institute (Metla), the number of visits in national parks exceeds now 1 million per year. During the last five years the amount of visitors has doubled. In 1998 the number of visits on 1350 legally protected areas and areas designated to protection by agency was as high as 2,1 million.

In larger and remote areas the number of visitor days is higher than the number of visiting persons because of bivouac activities inside the park in terrain or in wilderness huts. In large wilderness parks like in Lemmenjoki National Park the nights/person coefficient is about 4 and in Kevo Canyon even about 6.

In general, tourism in the national parks in Finland has largely been developed and managed during last 10 years. The network of conservation areas has been growing and the general development of recreation and tourism in these areas can be regarded as a story of success.

A review of recent supply of program services by 'nature tourism' enterprises in Central-Finland (Junnila 2000) indicates, that many of the nature tourism activities offered are in fact practised outside nature conservation areas. The enterprises offer opportunities for fishing (70 % of enterprises), hiking (70 %), cross-country skiing (68 %), picking berries (67 %), swimming outdoors (66 %), nature trip (64 %), ice-fishing (63 %), picking mushrooms (62 %), rowing

(62 %), bicycling (54 %), canoeing (51 %), wilderness trip (50 %), boating (46 %), bird-watching (43 %), hunting (33 %), snowmobiling (33 %), winter swimming outdoors (31 %), white water drive (26 %), cross-country riding (21 %), dog-sled driving (13 %), ice climbing (3 %), and many other activities.

4 Nature tourism – a new option for sustainable economic development on rural areas?

As known, tourism as an income source or industry is expected to grow in volume. In the whole world, 7 % of labour works in tourism at the moment (as many or more than in agriculture and forestry in developed countries). Also in the European Union the tourism belongs to the big industries. More than 7 million people are employed and the share of tourism of GDP is over 5 per cent. The annual estimate of travellers amount to 180 million, and many of them also are visiting the more than 10 000 protection areas existing presently inside the European Union.

In Finland, the income from tourism in many rural municipalities exceeds the income from agriculture and forestry. There is not yet available statistics about the supply of nature -based tourism, but research is going on; for example there are hundreds of enterprises, which offer different types of services for nature-based tourism. Only in the Central Finland –region there are about 200 enterprises in this business (Junnila 2000). In the most northern parts of the Lapland 40 % of labour is in tourism business.

Detailed studies on the economic importance of nature based tourism are few. One recent study was focused in Kuhmo, the distant border municipality in Kainuu, well-known for it's chamber music festival. Most of the direct employment created by nature tourism was part-time, making altogether 49 person-years, which was not more than 1,6 % of the total employment. Nevertheless, tourists having their major motivation for nature and nature-based activities provided for half of the total tourism income (Rinne 1999).

In general, the development of tourism offers many significant examples of success, but there are also plenty of other stories. For example, the severe economic depression in Finland in early 1990´s brought a drastic decrease also in tourism employment, especially in Lapland, and bankruptcies occurred. Many problems encountered serve as lessons for the future. Mustonen (1999) listed the characteristic features of tourism economy. Among them, the scattered nature of activities, strong seasonal changes and dependence on trends are particularly relevant for nature tourism.

By definition, the protection areas are mostly located in remote areas. Rural periphery and wilderness are most often areas where the alternatives for

getting high rates of employment and profitable entrepreneurship are rare unless extinct species. Development of nature oriented tourism can create here a new option for profitable local enterprises. A problem sometimes met is that the abilities of local people may often not meet all the requirements the successful nature-based tourism is calling for when establishment of an enterprise or working closely with clients is concerned. Especially the lack of skills in foreign languages, computers and marketing is a hard reality in most forest villages. On the other hand, nature conservation areas and related tourism activities also provide jobs where the practical skills, field work abilities and local knowledge are an asset. And training can always be organised.

One should keep in mind, that sustainable rural economy has lost it's main support when the rationalisation of forest work and agricultural work has been forced to reach the level where the major goal is to maximise profits and if any only minimal qualitative or regional constraints concerning manpower or technology can be taken into account. The development of the network of protected areas occurred on the same time as the rapid reduction of manpower was going on in forestry. Sometimes the new protected areas cut off the productive resources of forestry remarkably, especially in Northern Lapland, Kainuu and Northern Karelia. There are some municipalities and especially some remote villages, where the basis of sustainable local economy was severely violated by nature conservation programs, often also justified with arguments for nature oriented tourism having not much to do with the realities of tourism development..

One can notice, that sometimes compensation measures meant to smoothen the losses of regional economies due to the conservation programs were not quite well targeted from the point of view the actual losers, people working in forestry. The main stream of compensations was directed to develop the infrastructure for nature oriented tourism near by the reservations. The compensation allocations included public investments supporting tourism inside and outside the protected areas, support to enterprises and local communities through different public funds, lately also through EU-funds, and also in the beginning new resources for the management of nature oriented tourism resorts, especially in national parks. However, the compensations of forest resources protection were not allocated to strengthen the sustainable development of forestry outside the protected zone so as to support forest workers. The benefits of the compensation allocation policies mainly went to other groups.

Unfortunately, economic sustainability in and around nature oriented tourism resorts in some cases until now have not always followed the expectations. In many areas the flow of customers is too highly tied with the seasons. More than 80 % of customers may visit in some areas within 2 months of the year. The economic sustenance is now supported as much as possible by a complex integration of public efforts and private business. Compensations which are directed to local investments or management flow nowadays mostly through the unemployment funds. The seasons of work in the nature conservation areas

together with the availability of these funds has in some cases led to the employment patterns, where some people have finished their former orientation to work in agriculture and forestry, and prefer to wait their turn to get a half a year appointment in conservation activities related to a consequent period with unemployment subsidy.

5 Nature-based tourism in the future

Everywhere in the world, undeveloped green areas, especially virgin nature, is becoming an important attraction for tourism. This is the case in rural and non-industrialised parts of developed countries, but it is increasingly true also in many parts of the undeveloped countries. Tourism is often argued to be the last possibility for protection of the nature. This is also relevant in Finland.

The interest in 'Nature monuments' was the basis for nature-based tourism in former days. Today the interest does not concern only the famous places of national scenery and 'miracles of nature' (like Koli, the well-known example of Finnish National Landscapes), but rather the regular type of untouched nature. A regular type of pure and undeveloped nature is (becoming) rare and different. This process can be compared to the interest in historical or cultural monuments, and the equivalent development of the new value of heritage sites. This new interest in destination areas is to be considered when planning the supply of resources and services for nature-based tourism.

Concerning the future of nature-based tourism, the main stream of demand seems to be less likely for the "backcountry" of wilderness and remote places than it is for the "front" country of relatively easily accessible natural settings with a good but unobtrusive infrastructure of basic facilities. The growing number of people of urbanised generations consider nature something exotic, unfamiliar and therefore interesting and valuable. Many of urban dwellers have less skills to recreate in nature on their own. They need more guidance and information. Easy access to nature is demanded, and there is a growing concern about safety issues.

It is expected that the number of nature oriented trips will increase again with the improved economy. But it might be as well, that there is a rather low saturation point for the number of nature trips, which Finnish people want make. In future there might be more variation concerning the destination areas, the activities, and maybe the distances people are ready to travel, and expenditure per trip may grow. There is expected to be an enlarging variation in lifestyles, which refer to higher variation in travelling habits concerning the choice of environment and motives. One of the important motives for travelling in future concerns health, especially for the increasing number of older tourists. Another group of people is particularly oriented in exercise activities, and they look for adventures and participation in extreme-risk activities.

One strong motive for an ecotourist is the desire of solitude. The concept and value of solitude differs among tourists, but it is a fact that the amount of space is a critical factor when looking for solitude. If the expectations for the growing numbers of nature oriented tourists will be realised, there is serious problem of crowding among ecotourists. How it is possible to provide experience of solitude and close contact to nature in a safe, easily accessible, comfortable and non-crowded way to the mass of tourists? The sense of crowding differs among different nations, but the basic problem is to be solved before large-scale marketing of 'opportunity to experience solitude'.

Trends of nature-based tourism lie strongly on values, which will dominate among different segments of travelling population. Values may become more 'green' (environmentally concerned) to one part of the population, while the other part approaches the values related to more consuming lifestyle. Different groups of people specialise themselves in some particular outdoor activities. They want to identify themselves with this small group, which have advanced skills in this special activity (like snow boarding). They need the natural environment only as the right 'scene', and the right to use natural resources for their activity (hunting with bow as an extreme example). It is a challenge for the tourism industry to supply opportunities to these special groups of tourists.

Those categories of outdoor activities as motives for travelling, which are expected to grow, are:

1) nature oriented (bird watching, floristic explorations);
2) sport oriented (cross country running, orienteering), and
3) technology oriented (snowmobiling, downhill skiing).

Specialised orientation of customers creates a clear market segmentation, which the suppliers of tourism services should recognise. It is also easy to recognise that there is a increasing need for strong and skilful control of conflicts. Commercial supply of recreation opportunities demands a good knowledge of the motives and values of the customers. Management for social carrying capacity (control of crowding and user discrepancies) will be a major issue on nature protection areas. Also the threat of degradation of the nature itself rises the issue of management for ecological carrying capacity. This is already a serious problem in Southern and Central Europe.

We introduce some basic categories of factors, which affect the sustainable development of nature tourism. Like what is the future of leisure time in a polarising society? Will it be the end of leisure (due to overworking of the well-doing people, and the loss of work but abundance of leisure and resources for the not-so-well-doing people. Shall it be an increasingly uneven distribution of welfare among population in terms of disposable amount of leisure time and money. There are many other dimensions of polarisation: value polarisation (environmentally concerned vs. consumption oriented and urbanised), desire of

environment ('cultural nature' vs. 'virgin and wild nature'), recreation services (non-motorised vs. motorised), the allocation of time between outdoor and indoor recreation. Continuing urbanisation into larger cities may decrease the amount and quality of contacts of human people with nature. When will the era of mass tourism really start and what if the young internet-generation will be satisfied in recreating only in the virtual space?

The future and the sustainability of the basic resources for nature-based tourism and outdoor recreation in Finland does not seem to be severely threatened. The new environmental regulations in economical forests have essentially decreased the application of the intensive silvicultural methods. Due to the long term activities by Finnish state the network of nature conservation areas has essentially been improved. However, the lag of money may weaken the management of protected areas and recreation areas both in the state parks and municipal parks.

6 Scientific information as a tool of development

The more determined and "larger" scale research related to nature-based tourism started in Finland in the beginning of 1990's. Active scientific network upon themes "nature – tourism – outdoor recreation" and "wilderness" has been growing through several symposia since 1995 resulting in a series of proceedings (e.g. Järviluoma et al. 1995, Saarinen 1999). An increasing demand of scientific information is a fact; for example statistics of nature tourism and outdoor recreation are highly undeveloped. The information is improving in future, when several research projects are reporting the new results. Most important of the studies are

1) the Nation-wide Outdoor Recreation Demand and Supply Assessment Study (LVVI), which concerns the Finnish population in the whole count ry; co-ordinated and led by the Finnish Forest Research Institute together with several other institutions; and
2) the Border Study of International Tourists (by MEK), which collects information about the activities of international tourists in Finland.

The tourism research, nature-based tourism included, has been strengthening considerably during the past decade. An outstanding example is the creation of the Finnish University Network for Tourism Studies connecting the expertise of 16 Finnish universities for joint education program and research support. Of course, there are several universities and polytechnics having their own educational and research programs and many other important institutions doing research and development work in the field of tourism studies.

As a clear "vision" we can see that the future development in nature-based tourism in Finland can be supported by much more intensive research than presently. The growing trend in research oriented approach is an indication about the increasing importance and economical value of the nature-based tourism itself.

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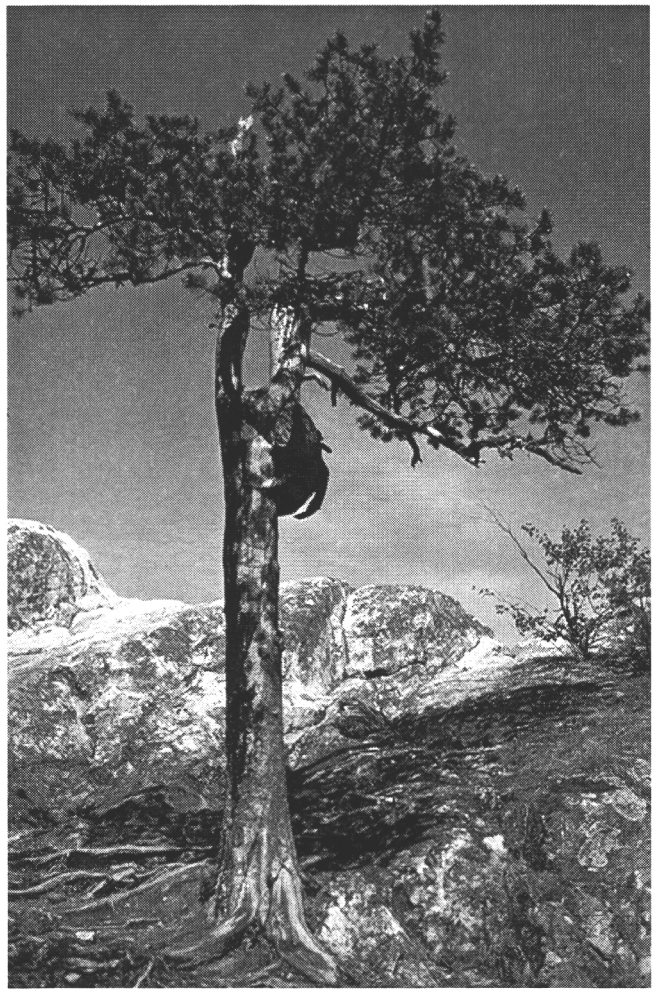

Footprints of nature tourists over the roots of old pine by the trail to Ukko-Koli summit in Koli National Park.

Sustainability, conspicuous consumption and responsible nature tourism

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Abstract

This paper attempts to resolve a conflict that exists between the conservation of the natural world and the demands placed upon it by the tourists who consume it. The debates around the concepts of sustainability, responsibility and social responsibility will be discussed and then related to the idea of responsible nature tourism. The apparent incompatibility between the behaviour described by Veblen (1899) as 'conspicuous consumption' and sustainability (Hall 1998) will then be examined and suggestions made as to how this could possibly be resolved by taking a socially responsible (Ireland 1997) approach. In conclusion, it will be argued that education of a number of stakeholders is necessary if the contradiction inherent in the title is to be resolved.

Keywords: Sustainable, consumption, responsibility, tourism.

1 Introduction

It is often felt that the impacts of tourism on the natural environment are all negative. There is, however, also the view that tourism will 'save' these areas by virtue of a substantial number of well-educated travellers who are familiar

with its resources and whose voices would be heard in defence of conservation policies (Smith 1994). Sanson (1994) agrees with this view and states that 'well-managed tourism can assist the ultimate protection' and believes that tourists with a clear understanding of the values of the area invariably become advocates for long-term conservation. Butler (1996), on the other hand, explains that having a green focus and good intent will not assure sustainable development or the minimisation of negative impacts.

Butler (1996) sees the idea of tourism saving the environment through non-impacting forms as an excuse for introducing tourism into areas where it may have been more appropriate for it not to have ventured, or where it should only have been allowed under conditions of control and management. The is whether or not nature tourism can be developed in a sustainable and appropriate manner.

Responsibility like sustainability has a number of meanings and the concepts are closely linked in the debate about the development of nature tourism. The main question is who should take responsibility?

Thirdly, a term coined by Veblen (1899) 'conspicuous consumption', is related to the 'lavish or wasteful spending regarded as establishing or enhancing social prestige'. Is the behaviour described by Veblen as conspicuous consumption still occurring today and is it relevant in the context of nature tourism?

2 Sustainability

Hall (1998) describes sustainability as an 'essentially contested concept' and explains that the debate over sustainability and sustainable development is a continuation of a debate that has been occurring in industrial society for well over a century. Today, conflict over the way sustainability should be defined, managed and implemented continues. Butler (1996) believes the term sustainable development has been popularised, abused and misused and states that 'Sustainable development has been so well defined and redefined to fit everyone's needs that it is now virtually undefinable and meaningless' (Butler 1996).

The use of tourism to justify the setting aside of natural areas from other forms of economic development also has a long history and is closely linked to ideas of sustainable development, having often been a key factor in the justification for environmental conservation (Hall 1998). However the key objective of reserve management is the protection of the natural ecological systems. Other uses such as tourism can be allowed only provided that this primary objective of management is not jeopardised in any way (Sanson 1994).

Sustainable tourism can be defined as 'a form of tourism that is able to maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time'. However sustainable development implies development in the present, only to such a degree that it does not limit the options for future generations and the environment.

Tourism not only has to be developed but also maintained, which implies control and management. The type of tourism and the scale at which it is operated are both important factors to consider and the long-term future of the area is the fundamental concern of sustainable development. Tourism has impacts on destination areas, but these impacts should not be at such a level or of such a type as to prohibit either economic activities or natural processes (Butler 1996).

The importance of the term sustainable development relates directly to the response of the tourism industry, who have shown an increasing interest in the environment, which has resulted in an increase in the number of supposedly environmentally friendly tourist opportunities. These include the introduction of codes of ethics and codes of practice, increased attention to recycling and the appearance of green industry associations. However this reaction is not entirely altruistic but based more on the realisation that there appears to be a market for consumers who want a green experience. From this recent discovery an incredible number of 'new' forms of tourism have emerged beginning with the generic 'alternative tourism' and including other types of tourism such as 'responsible', 'green', 'nature', 'soft', 'adventure' and of course 'eco' tourism (Butler 1996).

Sustainability, sustainable development and responsibility are much debated and contested topics and the current body of knowledge lacks clarity and definition. A thorough literature review of all-relevant works regarding the use of the concepts 'sustainable tourism' and 'sustainable tourism development' with specific reference to 'responsibility' is required. This will not only clarify these issues for those involved in developing the tourism industry, but hopefully also aid management and implementation of the fundamental ideas behind the concepts. The questions: what is meant by these terms and concepts, how can they be applied to the tourism industry, and what is their importance, need to be addressed.

Smith (1994) describes sustainable development as a many faceted challenge of sustaining the physical habitat, while also providing appropriate visitor experience. Sanson (1994) explains that the challenge is to cope with increasing demand and protecting the premium experience that tourists are seeking while ensuring long-term protection. The level and type of tourism and the ability of the area to withstand the level of tourism pressure needs to be examined.

However there are problems with moving from defining sustainable development to implementing the concept. It must be realised that there will be difficulties in applying the ideas in the field for a number of reasons, including political corruption, the needs of the indigenous population, culture and traditions, ecological dependence and the need for economic development. It is important to study the actions and motivations of the tourist. Is tourism another form of conspicuous consumption, with Western values battling against the needs of the indigenous peoples? Government policies towards tourism differ by nationality and also in point of time. Some countries support tourism simply for its cash flow (Smith 1994). A theoretical and conceptual debate arises demanding a clarification of the definitions and an assessment of the validity of their application within the

tourism industry.

Sustainable development implies and requires the recognition that a capacity exists. If numbers exceed this level then the situation is not sustainable. The issue of limiting numbers is perhaps the most basic and fundamental aspect of achieving sustainability. Limited or difficult access is possibly the greatest asset that an area may have in controlling the numbers, type and scale of tourism development. Literature would suggest that the nature of tourism itself, the form of development, which is most compatible with the concept of sustainable development, providing development is at a scale appropriate to the capacity of the resources, is that based on natural attractions (Butler 1996). However the popularity and profitability of nature tourism is increasing concerns about pollution and environmental degradation (Smith 1994).

The core issues that surround sustainable development, particularly with respect to tourism, still remain; that is, a 'balanced' form of development that allows us to conserve the natural environment while also allowing it be exploited so as to ensure economic growth (Hall 1998). But the major problem with the concept of sustainable development is that it takes a very long time to be sure that any activity is sustainable (Butler 1996).

As has been noted, many feel that the impacts of tourism on natural reserves are all negative, but there is also the view that tourism will 'save' these areas, as educated travellers will support conservation policies. Unfortunately the key attractions for tourists seeking remote destinations with a focus on nature tourism, the areas considered most desirable by the tourists, are also the most ecologically sensitive (Sanson 1994). But who should take responsibility for the environment and assessing the impacts of new types of tourism opportunities? Nature tourism is highly dependant upon the quality of the environment in which it operates, so how can nature tourism be responsibly sustained?

3 Responsibility and social responsibility

There is a widespread belief that tourism development has not brought the promised nirvana to either visitors or host populations. Short-term prosperity has to be set against the need to sustain the resources of the tourism industry for the future, as has been discussed in relation to sustainability. Countless examples are available which tell how tourism development has created more costs than benefits. Host populations want the economic benefits generated by tourism but not the environmental degradation or social disruption that often accompany mass tourism.

Patterson (1992) describes tourism as an out of control global industry that has no understanding of limits or responsibility or concern for the host people of a land. It seems there needs to be some form of control for the potential downside of tourism development, perhaps through laws and legislation or through

a mixed economy of regulation and ownership. Currently regulation of the UK tourism industry has become the responsibility of tourist boards, conservation and heritage agencies and local government. But the questions; who should take responsibility and in what form should this control take, still remain.

Lucas (1993) reminds us, 'we want to have responsible people in positions of authority, performing their duties reliably and well', but who should take responsibility? Perhaps it is the tourists that need to change. Everyone has their own personal, moral and political views that influence the way they think and act. However people often behave very differently when they are away from home, sometimes in ways that would make them strangers in their own communities. Perhaps tourism could be sustainable if tourists were educated to be appreciative and responsible towards the host environment. A responsible or 'good' tourist would know how to act properly in tourist settings, would want to act in the right way in whatever context they found themselves in and would have the ability to successfully act in their chosen way.

Harrison & Husbands (1996) also note that it is widely accepted that conventional tourism is capable of destroying its own resource base. Thus raising the question as to whether tourism is sustainable and leading to a search for alternatives to conventional tourism practices and modes of development. As discussed in relation to sustainability, many new types of supposedly acceptable forms of tourism now proliferate, so what is responsible nature tourism?

Responsible tourism is not a tourism product or brand. It represents a way of doing tourism planning, policy and development to ensure benefits are optimally distributed among impacted populations, governments, tourists and investors. Responsible tourism encompasses a framework and a set of practices that suggest there is an alternative to conventional mass tourism and its associated negative externalities (Harrison & Husbands 1996). Product development, policy, planning and marketing can all be instituted in ways to ensure that tourists, host populations and investors reap the long term benefits of tourism. It is important to consult everyone involved and consider not only their views but the impacts on the environment as well. Responsible tourism is tourism in which local communities, governments, tourists and investors all have a stake.

The implementation of responsible tourism practices requires strong leadership and involves ways of managing tourism resources to achieve optimum benefits for the different communities of interest. Practising responsible tourism, like being sustainable, involves more than simply having a desire to do so (Harrison & Husbands 1996).

The idea of responsible tourism and that someone should be responsible and take responsibility leads us on to the term social responsibility. Although there are many similarities between the two concepts there are subtle and important differences and hence there is some confusion in understanding and implementing the principles behind the terminology. The term social responsibility can be used as a prefix to describe some aspects of tourism as a social and economic phenomenon.

Social responsibility has a number of meanings, which are derived in part from the context in which the concept is used. It is often used when referring to business practice and thus is applicable to tourism as an industry. Concepts central to any theory of social responsibility according to Donaldson (1993) and Rackman et al. 1990) Miller & Ahrens (1993) are those of obligation, justice and economic democracy. However there is for Friedman (1970) only one social responsibility of business, to make a profit.

The idea of social responsibility implies that an institution is asking its members to act in a certain manner towards the community in which it is located. The idea of a socially responsible tourism industry is that it will benefit both the environment and community (Ireland 1997). Hence the connection with responsible nature tourism.

A tourism product, which is socially responsible, is increasingly becoming a shared objective among the business community, local authority and local people, in a similar way to responsible tourism being developed by all stake holders. Whenever competing demands arise social responsibility should be exercised by all parties. Miller & Ahrens (1993) have put forward three useful criteria when looking for evidence of social responsibility. These are:

1) the principle of respect for individual rights;
2) the principle of responsible recommendations, which in the context of the tourism industry recognises the central place of profitability, and
3) the principle of moral consideration.

This final point is of particular importance, when considering the impact of tourism on host cultures.

Ireland (1997) discusses attempts that have been made in America to bring the interests of the individuals and industry together under legislation and proposals to set up policy committees, to be responsible for policies concerning community relations, consumer protection and environmental protection (Miller & Ahrens 1993). However, there is evidence to show such attempts at legislation have limited success. Set against the need to regulate the tourism industry in order to ensure social responsibility is the demand for individual freedom from tourists. The way in which individuals exercise freedom on holiday will depend on their 'world view' (Ireland 1997). This relates to the ideas of the 'good' or 'responsible' tourists and how education might influence behaviour.

If regulation appears to have limited success in fostering socially responsible behaviour in the tourism industry, an alternative method of bringing about change may be through codes of conduct, which in effect establish a social contract between the various interest groups in the tourism industry. Such codes need to educate participants in tourism to accept limits to the growth of this industry (Ireland 1997).

People generally seem to attach a higher value to their standard of living than to environmental protection. This must be considered when developing

tourism in the natural environment. Plus the level of popular support for responsible tourism practices depends on the immediate economic outlook (Harrison & Husbands 1996), as Ireland (1997) strongly suggests. It has been argued that the economic recession is the antithesis to the development of tourism, which is socially and economically responsible. The main barriers to socially responsible tourism are economic cycles of growth and depression, the use of tourism as a form of economic development and changing local attitudes and convincing people that they will benefit.

In terms of nature tourism, it is the landscape and host communities, which serves as a commodity for the tourism industry and which needs to be sustained. With responsible nature tourism the industry is being asked to make an investment in the environmental capital it exploits to achieve growth. 'To achieve a balance between profitable tourism development and conservation of natural resources and amenities' (Bryce 1991) a partnership is needed between environmental improvement and tourism marketing, to benefit both the local economy and the visitor. A balance between local needs and tourism is making the industry both socially as well as environmentally responsible.

Socially responsible tourism is an achievable reality under certain conditions of development. There needs to be a careful balance between regulation of the tourism industry via planning legislation and efforts to effect change through voluntary codes of conduct (Mason & Mowforth 1995). Any codes of conduct infer the obligation to behave in an agreed manner, between host, guest and the tourism industry, by following principles of social responsibility. Limits to the desirable growth of tourism in any region should be discussed with the local community and its views respected. Especially if they are at odds with promotional policies of national and regional tourism bodies.

The tourism industry should plan for the long term and invest in the cultural capital, which add uniqueness to the tourism product, by developing a tourism product which is sensitive and accepted by local people, and attractive to potential visitors. The tourism industry must take the responsibility to educate the tourists, their host and its members. Finally, socially responsible tourism will only be understood and achieved when the industry is not feared or resented by host cultures and can be seen as of real benefit to them.

4 Conspicuous consumption

Veblen (1899) attained great recognition with his book, 'The Theory of the Leisure Class', in which he coined the term 'conspicuous consumption' relating to the 'lavish or wasteful spending regarded as establishing or enhancing social prestige'. Veblen observed that the conspicuous consumption of valuable goods was a means of reputability to the gentlemen of leisure. Veblen also considered pecuniary emulation, which is another way of saying 'keeping up with the Jones's' as

'probably the strongest ... of the economic motives'.

MacCannell (1989), having adopted Veblen's general thesis that leisure reflects social structure goes on to say that Veblen anchors his analysis in the class structure, calling our attention to the uneven distribution of work in society and the status components of leisure: for example the ways it is consumed conspicuously is a symbol of social status. MacCannell also believes it is important to go beyond class structures. However what is of interest is the idea of status components of leisure, which brings us into the discussion about nature tourism.

Tourism is just one form of recreation, as a discretionary use of our leisure time (Holloway 1994). Is nature tourism consumed conspicuously as a symbol of social status, does participation in this type of tourism demonstrate an ability to pay? Is it selected and purchased for its social rather than inherent value, say like the buying of an obviously expensive brand-name tag might be? It is also important to note that Marx derived his model of social class relations from his analysis of the value of commodities. Thus it seems that considering the commodities purchased and the activities involved in nature tourism it is worth considering the ideas around conspicuous consumption for those seeking a nature tourism experience when discussing sustainable and responsible tourism.

Thus it must be decided exactly what is meant by conspicuous consumption before discussing its relevance to nature tourism. Conspicuous consumption is a device that signals the consumer's social status, a method of displaying wealth. Conspicuous consumption is the vicarious consumption of goods, but not just any goods, specialised consumption of goods as evidence of pecuniary strength. Even the consumption takes on a ceremonial character and this consumption is all done as evidence of wealth (Veblen 1899).

Veblen explained that the unproductive consumption of goods was seen as honourable, as a mark of prowess and a prerequisite of human dignity, especially the consumption of the more desirable articles. If the articles of consumption were costly, they were felt to be noble, honorific and a means of reputability. For Veblen the consumption of goods without stint, especially consumption of the better grades of goods, and all consumption in excess of the subsistence minimum, applied normally to the leisure class. The leisure class stood at the head of the social structure in point of reputability but as mentioned earlier, and even Veblen noted in 1899, 'in modern civilised communities the lines of demarcation between social classes have grown vague and transient'.

However in today's society, almost regardless of class and social structure, there is much evidence to support the belief that the theory of conspicuous consumption is still continuing. Simple examples can be found in the way people dress and the importance they give to fashion, designer labels and current trends. But examples are also easily available in the tourism industry: the types of holidays that people take, the destinations they choose, the activities they get involved in the type of accommodation and transportation they use. Holidaying on the Costa del Sol does not have the same prestige attached to it as perhaps a long-haul trip to an exotic and obviously expensive and exclusive resort. Even the time

period and number of trips taken indicates something about the status of the individual, because they all suggest something about that individual ability to pay. The amount of leisure time they have in comparison to time spent at work is also very relevant to Veblen's theory.

Closely related to the requirement that the gentleman must consume freely and the right kind of goods, there is the requirement that he must know how to consume them in a seemly manner. His life of leisure must be conducted in due form. Highbred manners and ways of living are items of conformity to the norm of conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption.

Thus conspicuous consumption is more than just indulging in luxury goods that go beyond minimum subsistence of life. Conspicuous consumption is not just what you consume but also how you consume it. Examples of tourist behaviour can also indicate something about the reputability of the individual, i.e. the larger lout verses the traveller who immerses themselves into the host community with respect and toleration for the host culture. We need to educate people to consume nature tourism in a responsible manner if it is to be sustainable.

The idea of the reputability of conspicuous consumption then leads on to the notion of pecuniary strength and the means of showing pecuniary strength through leisure and a conspicuous consumption of goods. This again relates to fashion. The growth of conspicuous leisure and consumption for the purposes of reputability lies in the element of waste. The waste of time and effort and the waste of goods are both methods of demonstrating the possession of wealth.

At the time Veblen wrote his book it was felt that for those living in urban areas conspicuous consumption was more important that for those living in rural areas. This now raises an interesting point with regard to nature tourism. Technological advances now allow people to live in urban areas but 'play' in the countryside. Has this trend of conspicuous consumption of goods and leisure, predominately by urbanites, continued and is nature tourism an example of both conspicuous consumption of leisure and the activities and goods used a demonstration of conspicuous consumption of goods?

Initially conspicuous consumption of leisure over consumption of goods was seen as far more reputable both as a direct exponent of wealth and as an element in the standard of decency. Leisure was a means of reputability and gave distinction between noble and ignoble. Leisure was honourable because it showed exemption from ignoble labour. Leisure is still fully as effective an evidence of wealth as consumption. The subsequent relative decline in the use of conspicuous leisure as a basis of repute is due partly to an increasing relative effectiveness of consumption as an evidence of wealth.

Is nature tourism a means of reputability? Do those that participate in nature tourism feel it adds to their social status and in terms of keeping up with appearances and pecuniary strength does their consumption of the right kind of nature tourism goods mean they are superior?

5 Conclusions

Nature tourism can be developed in a sustainable, responsible and appropriate manner if all stakeholders are educated to appreciate that for nature tourism to be sustainable the resources on which it depends must be conserved, protected and maintained. Sustainable development is about development in the present without limiting the opportunities for future generations and the environment.

A balance between use and protection must be reached. Tourism has been used to justify the setting aside of areas of the natural world but the nature, type and scale of tourism needs to be appropriate to the capacity of the resources. Nature tourism seems to be the most appropriate form of development as long as a responsible approach is taken.

The question; who should be responsible, still remains. Perhaps if all stakeholders were educated to behave in a sympathetic and sustainable manner then the responsibility would be shared by all. The reasons why a responsible approach is needed is that creating a balance between use and protection, resolving conflicts of use and ensuring sustainability for future use will not simply happen without those involved taking responsibility. The concept of sustainability needs to include the ideas of responsibility, social and environmental responsibility.

The behaviour described by Veblen as conspicuous consumption and pecuniary emulation are indeed relevant to nature tourism as they are still occurring in today's society. Although some people behave differently when on holiday many of our beliefs and actions remain the same. There is on the face of it an apparent incompatibility between consumption of the natural world and its sustainability for future tourists but this could possibly be resolved by taking a responsible approach. Education is the key. If all stakeholders were educated about the importance of sustainability and how to behave in a responsible manner then nature tourism could strike a balance between use and protection of the natural world.

If behaving in a sustainable and responsible manner was seen as a means of reputability in terms of conspicuous consumption of leisure then the incompatibility of conservation of the natural world and the demands placed upon it by tourism might be, to a certain extent, resolved. Likewise if the goods bought and used in the natural world, in relation to nature tourism, were sustainable and responsibly used and acquired then conspicuous consumption of goods could still be compatible with conservation whilst being a means of reputability.

The important point about Veblen's conspicuous consumption is that only certain goods and leisure activities were appropriate and that these had to be selected as the 'right kind of goods', and consumed in a 'seemly manner', leisure had to be conducted in due form. Thus if education resulted in the selection of goods and activities that were in themselves appropriate to the idea of responsible nature tourism and then were consumed in a sustainable and responsible manner, then the ideas of reputability, social status, prestige and pecuniary emulation,

linked to conspicuous consumption, could continue in a way that was more compatible with the natural world.

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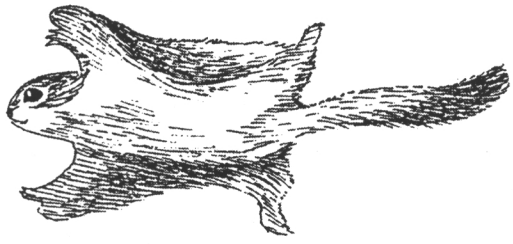

The development of environmental indicators for tourism; methodological limitations

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Abstract

For more than three decades attempts have been made, with limited success, to operationalise the recreational carrying capacity concept. Over time an array of alternative formulations have emerged. These replace the central feature of the carrying capacity concept - that there are ecological limits to development inherent in the physical environment - with diverse specifications that emphasise the socially negotiated character of recreational limits. However the recent global turn in the environmental debate and the continued expansion of international tourism have combined to raise anxieties about the capacity of the global environment to accommodate the burgeoning growth of tourism. This has prompted a redeployment of the carrying capacity concept, but specifically targeted at global tourism, along with the commissioning of research into indicators that would be suitable for managing 'capacity thresholds'. In the light of past experience there are plausible reasons to be sceptical about the future success of this venture. It is argued, in the presentation, that the reasons for past failure have not been adequately explored and that a fuller appreciation of these not only helps to account for the intractability of carrying capacity research but leads to troubling questions about the character and effectiveness of tourism management.

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Keywords: Environmental Indicators, Sustainable Tourism, Coral Reefs.

1 Introduction

This paper has grown out of a research project which explored the feasibility of constructing environmental indicators for tourism (Furley, Hughes & Thomas 1996). The original research was motivated by a sociological assertion about the way that social agendas are constructed. In outline this supposes that, when applied to public affairs, the character of discourse is conducted in ways that markedly differentiate it from private and domestic discourse - in particular, the observation that public discussion proceeds along rational lines which marginalise the display of emotion and affect.

In public discourse, facts and figures tend to be privileged over qualitative arguments which may be dismissed as the product of 'self-deception' and the 'prejudice' of affect. There is, however, a relative paucity of facts and figures in which to report the environmental performance of tourism when compared with the volume of data available for monitoring its economic performance. Hence, it may be argued, the environment is at a disadvantage when it comes to the public evaluation of tourism (Hughes 1991, 1995). This data deficiency acts either to silence the environmental side of the tourism-environment debate, through lack of factual information with which to contest the quantitative facts of economic importance, or to marginalise it to the untrustworthy domain of 'emotion' and 'prejudice'.

However, as with earlier attempts to develop empirical estimates for recreational carrying capacity (Coppock & Duffield 1975, Foin et al 1977, UNESCO 1972, Dartington Amenity Research Trust 1973, Colgan 1973, Wall n.d.) this tourism project encountered confounding factors sufficient to raise speculation about the feasibility of developing environmental indicators for tourism. But this experience contrasts markedly with the prevailing mood of the tourism industry. Here there is general optimism about the ability to devise environmental indicators founded on two compelling 'world views'. On the one hand the literature of tourism management marshals social exhortations about 'responsible' development under the theme of 'sustainable tourism'. On the other the application of science to the task of environmental management offers the promise of explanation and hence the ability to regulate and control environmental impacts.

These world views are complementary, since it is a belief in the efficacy of the rational method of science which underwrites management aspirations to regulate tourism in a sustainable way, along with the apparent certainty that scientific research into environmental indicators will furnish management with the necessary monitoring data. (See Andersen 1991, Environmental Challenge Group 1994, Pearce et al 1994, Local Government Management Board 1995, McGillivray and Zadek 1995, and UN Commission on Sustainable Development

1996 for examples).

Such confidence in the emergence of more sustainable forms of tourism has, of course, drawn its critics who point to the profit motivation of global capitalism and its disposition to expand, rather than moderate, tourist consumption (Mowforth & Munt 1998, Britton 1982, Shaw & Williams 1994). For such critics, talk of 'sustainability' manifests false consciousness or bad faith. But tourism is more multi-faceted than this and, while it demonstrably destroys environments, there are well founded reasons to believe that it can also be a force for environmental protection.

For practical reasons the empirical component of this research has had to be confined to one type of environment. Coral reefs were selected. This choice is justified on the basis that coral reefs are arguably some of the world's most vulnerable environments and they are of particular concern to tourism management because of their appeal to a new and fast growing type of tourism called, appropriately enough, 'new tourism' (Poon 1993).

2 Defining the problem

Tourism is popularly depicted as a kind of quasi-autonomous flow ('the golden hoard' 'mass tourism' etc). *Spatially* this has been represented, at the global level, by a core-periphery model in which visitor flows emerge from the metropolitan centres of industrialised nations and are funnelled through staging points towards destinations on the 'pleasure periphery' (Turner & Ash 1975 , Pearce 1989, Shaw & Williams 1994, Hills & Lundgren 1977, Prosser 1994). This, in its turn, stimulates the growth of tourist enterprise, which sets in motion the decentralisation of tourist infrastructure along local transport arteries. New development is forced outward from the original destination as a result of competition for land, rising land prices and general intensification (Cohen 1978).

Temporally, this cumulative pattern has been given its most coherent statement in Butler's (1980) destination life-cycle thesis, which proposes six stages in the evolution of a tourist area - exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and rejuvenation or decline. The dominant conception, then, is that tourism is both cumulative and cyclical. The effect of this is to create a picture of a contagious flow which threatens to overwhelm environmental and social limits by a process of creeping incorporation. Some authors consider this to be fatal for the hosts and argue that tourism is predisposed to economic exploitation (Britton 1982, Mowforth & Munt 1998) and environmental and cultural destruction (Cohen 1987, Greenwood 1989, Dann 1996a 1996b, Selwyn 1996). Conversely others welcome tourism for its culturally constructive contribution (Boissevain 1996), its environmental protection (Pigram 1980, Boo 1990) and positive economic impact (Woods et al. 1994).

This is part of a 'blessing and blight' (Young 1973) ambivalence that has

long been part of discussions about tourism and, whilst acknowledging the cultural and environmental erosion wrought by the globalization of tourism, there are plausible social forces that support the aspirations of tourism to protect the environment. The rise of new tourism, in forms as diverse as ecotourism, green tourism, responsible tourism, heritage tourism and cultural tourism, manifests the effects of deep structural transformations in Western society. Life in late modern society is characterised by heightened levels of insecurity and anxiety (Sennett 1999, Giddens 1991, Beck 1992) promoted by transformations in the economic and social structure. The work force is now afflicted by periodic redundancy and 'down-sizing' as well as processes of casualisation and fragmentation which favour female part-time over male full time labour. Social structures have simultaneously become less rigid in respect of class affiliation, sexual orientation, religious commitment and the like opening opportunities for social emancipation, but at some cost to an individual's social and psychological security. The emerging new forms of tourism may therefore echo some of the deeper social needs that arise from the insecurity of living and working in late modern society.

Table 1. Protecting The Environment.

Nature	Ecotourism, nature tourism, green tourism, adventure tourism.
Nostalgia	Heritage tourism.
Nirvana	Cultural tourism.

Table 1 poses some relationships between new forms of tourism and the protection of the environment. Nature, in Christian mythology, is associated with 'the fall'. This is a narrative of loss in which humanity has been separated from innocence. In a more secular age nature offers embattled citizens the psychological resources with which to recover some of the sense of lost innocence. Nature is valued for its wholesomeness and its implied moral critique of contemporary consumer society. Heritage tourism may be similarly associated with individual and social anxiety about change. The nostalgia of heritage tourism has been fiercely attacked for its social regressiveness (Hewison 1987) yet it offers myths of social and psychological identity that may be used as bulwarks against the alienation of modern life. The past offers individuals some sense of rootedness and a temporary escape from the insecurities of the present.

Cultural tourism shares with nature the narrative of loss in which primitive people continue to live closer to nature, and thus more authentically, than in metropolitan civilisation. As 'noble savages' primitive people are popularly supposed to retain the vestiges of innocence that have been eroded in Western materialism.

There is then some ambiguity about the cultural and environmental impacts of tourism. Much critical debate has turned upon questioning the sincerity of the

tourism industry and the materialist aspirations of consumers, but there are plausible reasons to suppose that the social and existential needs of individuals also require authentic relations with the world (MacCannell 1973, Cohen 1973, 1979). Sustainable development, the favoured solution of the tourist industry, need not necessarily be dismissed as the rhetorical cover for new middle class exploitation (Mowforth & Munt 1998). In the light of the social and psychological motivations that may be argued to drive tourism, and particularly the new tourism, it would be excessively simplistic to universally condemn globalizing tourism (Crick 1989). Grounded in deeper anxieties of social and psychological alienation, it has the potential to protect environments as well as to destroy them.

3 Sustainable tourism as the solution

Formal institutional recognition of the environmental threat posed by the growth of global tourism came in 1979 when the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) established the Environment Committee to address the issue of conservation. In 1982 it adopted a set of principles known as the Joint Declaration on Tourism and Environment, which was prepared in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996). However, it was probably the exhortations on sustainable development of the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987) and 'Agenda 21' (UN 1993), that gave momentum to the specific emergence of 'sustainable' tourism although the issue had been aired by Mishan (1969) almost a quarter of a century earlier.

As with other high level concepts, such as 'democracy', 'socialism' and 'environment', the concept of sustainability continues to excite opinion about its 'true' definition. The often quoted definition of the Bruntland Report sought to reconcile the competing claims of economic development and environmental conservation by emphasised the need to bequeath to future generations an undiminished environmental resource. Taken up in tourism this has been interpreted as a negotiating process between the interests of four main stakeholders - the tourist, the resident, the industry and the environment.

The World Tourism Organisation, World Travel & Tourism Council and the Earth Council incorporated into tourism a set of basic principles on sustainability derived from the 1992 Rio Declaration on the Environment (Department for ... 1998).

* Travel and tourism should assist people in leading healthy and productive lives in harmony with nature.
* Travel and tourism should contribute to the conservation, protection and restoration of the Earth's ecosystem.
* Travel and tourism should be based upon sustainable patterns of production

and consumption.

* Nations should co-operate to promote an open economic system in which international trade in travel and tourism services can take place on a sustainable basis.
* Travel and tourism, peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent.
* Environmental protection should constitute an integral part of the tourism development process.
* Tourism development issues should be handled with the participation of concerned citizens, with planning decisions being adopted at local level.
* Travel and tourism should use its capacity to create employment for women and local people to the fullest.
* Tourism development should recognise and support the identity, culture, and interests of local people.
* International and national laws protecting the environment should be respected by the travel and tourism industry.

This was a formal broadening of the constituency of tourism to include the environment. It revitalised management interest in the concept of environmental carrying capacity and also drew attention to the need for better monitoring information to measure progress.

The case against tourism is well known, that it pollutes and disfigures, corrupts traditional cultures and overburdens local resources. Man has been destroying his own leisure habitats, never mind those of the animal kingdom, and the destruction of habitat leads to the destruction of species. But the case all too frequently is an emotive one, founded in our own prejudices and preconceptions. *Precious little science* has been brought to bear, largely because there is *precious little science available* (Hughes 1994).

Three international institutions who represent the interests of the tourist trade initiated indicator studies in the early 1990s. The World Travel and Tourism Council published a study on the Statistical Indicators Needed to Monitor Sustainable Travel and Tourism Development (WTTC 1992), the World Tourism Organisation's Environment Committee established a task force to investigate the development of indicators of sustainable tourism (International Working Group on Indicators of Sustainable Tourism 1993) and the International Federation of Tour Operators (IFTO) commissioned a study, which reported in 1994, to devise a model of sustainable tourism which included a range of performance indicators.

Consideration of indicators also occupied the attention of the World Conservation Union (formerly the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources or IUCN) as one component of a larger concern with managing the carrying capacity of tourism in nature parks and protected areas. In conjunction with the WTO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) they authored a report called Guidelines: Development of

National Parks and Protected Areas for Tourism and, following the World Park Congress in 1992 they brought out a further study with recommendations on the management of ecotourism in protected areas (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996).

4 Indicators for the sustainable management of tourism

4.1 Developing the indicators

The WTO working group report, which discusses indicators for the sustainable management of tourism (International ... 1993), is less easy to understand than it might be. The clarity of the report is compromised by the introduction of multiple terms for the same objects, often in different parts of the report, and the use of hierarchical levels of classification that are not always consistently applied. Notwithstanding this the study succeeds in documenting, in some considerable detail, a strategy by which the sustainability of tourism might be monitored and, by inference, managed. The study departs with a recommendation that indicators be developed using three categories to reflect differing policy needs. Separate sets of indicators would be developed to service national and local policy needs, but there should also be a third category which would bring together the good and bad of tourist impact into a composite set of indices that would be helpful for managing specific tourist destinations. This three category division forms the top level of the hierarchy of indicators:

1) *'Composite indices'* - which would integrate measures of destination attractiveness and destination stress;
2) *'national level indicators'*, and
3) *site or destination specific indicators'* - these would be used to report on 'hot spots' and critical areas.

They then turn to the level of detail at which these composite, national and local sets of indices might be reported. The working group make recommendations, again in three parts, that reflect the largess of resources that might be available for the task. At the best resourced level this would support a comprehensive coverage of indicators, but at progressively less well serviced levels two more modest exercises would be countenanced. Medium term or practical indicators would be a subset of the comprehensive coverage reflecting pragmatic considerations of time and money and a minimalist set might be countenanced under conditions of severe resource constraints.

The generation of the comprehensive set of indicators, which is also called the ideal set, should include a further tripartite classification into site characteristics,

site use levels and pollution levels. One assumes, although this is not clear, that this last division would also apply to the less comprehensive coverage of the practical and minimalist in so far as this could be done in the face of resource constraints. These then constitute a second and third level in the hierarchy.

4.2 A 'comprehensive' or 'ideal' set of indicators

To quote the report, 'such a set of indicators would respond in all respects to the need to measure the state of the environment, tourism-environment linkages, and the effects of our actions' (International ... 1993). It would include:

* a 'comprehensive *inventory of site characteristics'* ,which would include 'biological and physical monitoring of key qualitative and quantitative variables;
* 'measures of the *levels of different types of tourist use* which can be sustainably supported by different ecosystems' and 'measures to identify the *limits of carrying capacity* for representative ecosystem types and the sensitivity of certain parts of the natural and cultural environment to different levels of use' , and
* 'comprehensive monitoring at source of the *levels of pollutant* generation by the industry, and by other sectors which influence the resource base of the industry'. This refers to solid and liquid waste, discharge of sewage, oil spills, toxic waste discharge, air pollutants and visual pollution, loss of key resources and the like.

On the specific issue of measuring *ecological* stress the working group recommended monitoring - species loss, biodiversity, ecosystem resilience, changes to critical habitats, and specific measures of chemical and physical change - as examples of key bio-indicators.

However the WTO working group were aware that in practice the production of an ideal or comprehensive set would probably be beyond available resources so they commend the choice of a more practical set of 'operational indicators' using the comprehensive long list as a context. These are variously referred to as candidate or medium term indicators.

4.3 'Candidate' or 'medium term' indicators

These are 'practical indicators which cover the most important subjects at a national or regional level that tourism decision-makers need to know to build towards a more sustainable form of tourism development'. These are subdivided into:

* national level indicators; those to be collected and aggregated at the level of the nation, and
* local (or 'critical area') indicators - collected for particular sites.

Some 17 indicators were listed for the *national* level. Those 8 that refer principally to the physical environment are as follows:

National level indicators - physical environment

A. Area protected (% of national territory);
B. endangered species (area under stress);
C. use intensity ('hot spots', UNESCO sites classed as stressed, concentration of natural features at visited sites);
E. key resource consumption (water, energy and fuel);
K. environmental standards (% of homes and hotels connected to water and sewerage system);
L. infrastructure capasity utilisation (analysis of extent of overloading of water, sewage and energy systems);
O. environmental planning (what strategies and codes of practice exist for tourist operatorsand tourists) and
P. environmental review process (evaluate effectiveness of EIA process, development application process).

Each indicator has an entry attached to it that suggests its value for informing the policy making process. However these are fairly circular statements producing tautologies like indicator B, which measures endangered species, would alert policymakers to the impact of tourism on biodiversity while indicator E, which measures intensity of use or tourist 'hot spots', would alert policymakers to the distribution of sites which were currently and potentially under stress. What they are less forthcoming about are the raft of problems deciding *when* species become endangered, that is identifying the critical thresholds, and to what extent *tourism* is the agent responsible.

The exercise is then repeated to identify 'candidate indicators' at the *local* level. Unfortunately it is not clear, what the characteristics of the most minimal or 'base' level of indicator study might be since the report appears to make no further mention of this.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is list making that has got out of control. In the appendices the Working Group identified some 73 indicators, with further subdivisions, which aspire to become the WTO international standard. However, these are overwhelmingly measures of what is available, rather than what may be required, for while the environment is much spoken about in the preliminary discussion there proves to be only the most minimal of attention to monitoring *tourism impact on the ecosystem.*

The second study of indicators was prepared within a project commissioned by the International Federation of Tour Operators (IFTO). ECOMOST, standing for European Community Models of Sustainable Tourism, is the result of a brief to devise a planning framework within which tourism can be sustainably developed. The ECOMOST project benefited from better resourcing than the WTO working group and had the opportunity to test its recommendations in two case studies. Table 2 illustrates the basic features of the ECOMOST approach.

Table 2. Sample Check Lists for Dangers to Sustainable Tourism.

Topic	Component or Target	Indicator	Critical Value
Population	Preserving the population's prosperity	Population dynamics Unemployment rate Per capita income	Continuous & major migration of working population
Tourism	Retaining guest satisfaction	Maintenance of quality and monitoring ecology	Persistent criticism of accommodation, overcrowding, ecological conditions, aesthetics
Ecology	Environmental consciousness	Guests aware of environmental problems	If simplest cost-free measures not taken to make accommodation more environmentally friendly
Politics	Effective tourism & ecologically orientated legislation	Existence of ecologically -orientated quality standards	

Taking sustainable development as its goal the study devised a management framework within which tourism might be developed. This implied a balance between many competing interests, which were collated into four categories - population, tourism, ecology and politics. Each category or 'topic' was then considered against the management issues (called components or targets) that were seen to influence it. Thus, for example, the 'ecology' of an area is effectively produced by the extent to which its carrying capacity is compromised, 'tourism' by the level of satisfaction of guests and tour operators, 'population' by its prosperity and so on. These targets were then associated with indicators that could be used to monitor performance in fulfilling the targets.

One feature of this approach, which differentiates it from the WTO study, is that each indicator has associated with it a critical value. If a critical value is triggered, it would indicate an unacceptable rate or level of change which would

invite policy intervention. This is a painstaking study. It creatively defines the components of a sustainable approach, proposes means by which these may be realised and takes account of the vagaries of political influence on the development process.

However the ECOMOST study raises questions similar to those already discussed above. It evinces the same air of confidence in the ability of research to identify and calibrate environmental impacts and then to relate these to tourism in ways that allow decisions to be made about acceptable levels of use. Perhaps it was the difficulty in doing this for ecological impacts, rather than social and economic ones, that explains the relatively limited attention to the biosphere and bio-indicators in this study. The indicators they suggest for ecology tend either to reflect concern primarily with incommoding the tourist industry, such as water shortage, access to attractions and airspace, and only secondarily with the impact on the ecology, or else they have plausible but as yet unspecified relations with the ecology such as bland statements like 'water', 'soil', and 'air pollution', whose impacts remain undiscussed.

In the case of the indicator for the 'protection of species, biotopes and protected areas' the critical point in the process of ecological destruction is stated to be when 'species are in danger of becoming extinct' and when 'biotopes are becoming imperilled or being destroyed'! Again it seems reasonable to ask, *when* such states are rendered serious enough to be confirmed as in danger of extinction and *how* is tourism causing this?

Herein lies the problem with all such studies. The confidence with which they commend the use of indicators belies the many impediments to their construction and use. These scenarios make a range of questionable assumptions - the readiness with which environmental effects can be identified, the readiness with which they can then be measured, the ability to specify critical thresholds of change, the ease of linking change to tourism as its cause, the assumption of available management powers within the appropriate jurisdiction and the will to take action after all these impediments have been satisfied. Butler (1993) captured the effects of this when he asserted that "there are no satisfactory indicators of carrying capacity or the ability of environments to sustain tourism. All too often, the first indicator of nonsustainability is the decline of attractiveness perceived through a decline in visitor numbers, or undesired change in the human physical environment of the destination area. In many cases such indications come too late for satisfactory remedial action, even if that had been possible" (Butler 1993).

This is a radically opposed observation to the optimism evident in both of the above studies. The discrepancy between this, and the confident commitment to the sustainable management of tourism, begs some explanation. Many, as reviewed earlier, would explain this by accusing the tourist industry of bad faith or misplaced optimism and while this may be true the balance of this discussion examines a further possible explanation - that there are also good scientific reasons why environmental indicators for tourism may not be available in a

timely way. There are a variety of impediments to the construction of indicators, and particularly bio-indicators, that may account for the state of affairs summarised by Butler (1993). Failure to recognise these has meant that indicator studies have either effectively ignored the biosphere, assuming that measures of tourist overcrowding and perceptions of quality somehow relate to ecological change but through processes that remain unspecified. Or else they have collected measures of environmental impact, such as pollution levels, but fail to offer critical values of sufficient specificity to permit their useful interpretation.

4.4 Developing bio-indicators

There are three possible approaches to the development of environmental indicators:

1) Monitoring
Monitoring may measure directly the intensity of the stress that is put on the environment, such as the measurement of contaminants in water and air. This appears to be the favoured approach of the indicator studies reviewed above, but it requires a detailed knowledge of critical or threshold levels of stress. The problem here is that knowledge is at best tentative about the critical levels of some contaminant stresses and simply unavailable for many others.

2) Bioindicators
The second approach is to measure the indirect effect of stress on the environment through use of environmental indicators or bio-indicators. This associates changes in the volume, health and composition of selected flora and fauna with known patterns of environmental stress, such as the build up of tourism.

3) Combination of monitoring and bioindicators
The third method is to employ a combination of both the direct and indirect approaches.

Various authors have addressed the desirable ecological requirements of indicator species (Brown 1991, Ward and Jacoby 1992, Thomas 1993, Hourigan et al 1988, Furness & Greenwood 1993). In an ideal world indicators would fulfil the following conditions:

* be easy to identify and measure;
* be functionally important in the ecosystem (e.g. keystone species);
* have a high imputed value (cultural, socio-political or economic);

* be relatively sedentary;
* have modest technological requirements;
* be sensitive to the stress in question;
* have mechanisms whose response should be understood;
* be quick to respond, and
* be low in ambiguity.

Of the above conditions the most fundamental is that the ecology of an indicator species, and the patterns and processes of its response to stress, should be understood. If the factors bringing about change are not understood then management can only guess at how to fix what is wrong and the results of a monitoring programme would be of little practical value. However, this critique will illustrate just how difficult it is to devise appropriate bio-indicators. It will argue that, far from producing greater certainty, these difficulties give rise to ambiguities that undermine the value of indicators for guiding the sustainable development of tourism.

5 Case of coral reefs

To focus the critique prented above it was necessary to restrict the case study to one ecosystem and the coral reef system was chosen. A coral reef is a major natural spectacle, which attracts skin and SCUBA (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus) divers as well as more passive sight-seeing tourists. It is acknowledged to be a highly sensitive ecosystem and it has attracted a considerable quantity of scientific research.

A coral reef may signal stress in a number of ways. These include changes in the growth rate, in its reproductive status, in the incidence of disease, and in the patterns of distribution and abundance of some general indicator species (Brown & Howard 1985). However selecting indicators that will measure such stresses involves considerations of spatial and temporal scale, scope and level of detail as well as issues involved with differentiating the source of the stress. These issues will be explored under five themes - natural perturbation, scale, instrumentation, subjectivity, ambiguity, and tourist stress.

5.1 Natural perturbation

Coral reefs are subject to a variety of natural stresses that affect species abundance and distribution on a number of scales. They include small scale trivial events, such as predation and disease, up to events that may cause massive destruction over a wide area, such as tropical storms, volcanic eruptions and El

Ninõ events (Wells 1988, Grigg & Dollar 1990). Coral ecosystems have evolved to withstand such severe catastrophic dislocation and are now recognised to exist in non-equilibrium conditions. Change is therefore a natural feature of the system.

Anthropogenic stress has thus to be measured against the background of dynamic change. In the absence of there being no 'physiological constant', the equivalent of body temperature in humans (Thomason & Roberts 1992), the most obvious way in which to take account of background changes unrelated to human imposed stress is to also monitor control areas that are thought to be unaffected by human impacts. This should begin 2-3 years before the stress is imposed in order to determine the relationship between natural levels of variation at the two sites (Schroeter et al.1993). However, in practice monitoring programmes are often only established in response to an anthropogenic stress that was not previously anticipated. Attempts to meet this requirement therefore limit the choice of species and sites to those adopted in existing programmes of research, which can provide the appropriate baseline.

5.2 Indicators and scale

The question of spatial scale is of critical importance in the selection of bio-indicators. Prevailing approaches tend to concentrate on measuring reef health as indicated by the percentage cover of live coral or changes in the diversity of species. However, a coral reef is an open system linked to seagrass beds and mangroves through the flow of energy, nutrients and the reproductive migration of fish.

For example, sediment and organic matter is carried from the terrestrial shoreline communities and dispersed over inner channels, coral islands and the outer reef while the breeding grounds and nurseries of many reef species are believed to be located in the protected inshore and wetland communities of mangrove (Odum et al.1982, Zisman 1998, Blanquet et al.1994). This is a mutualistic relationship whose importance is marked by the potential for system transformation as the shoreline mangrove is lost to hotel, condominium and second home development and the like. Thus it is in the nature of the ecological complexity of this environment that monitors of anthropogenic stress require onshore as well as offshore indicators which greatly expands the coverage. Not only does this add appreciably to the costs of monitoring but it may transgress managerial jurisdictions in which the source of a stress occurs within a different jurisdiction than where its impact is finally manifested. The current trend toward coastal zone management is one step in combating this but national frontiers exacerbate the problem.

Temporal scale is also a limiting factor for indicator development. The time-scale of the processes which structure coral reefs may not readily coincide

with the temporal perspectives of reef monitoring programmes. Porter & Meier (1992) argue that 'at the very least [the] appropriate time scales must encompass the lifespan of the dominant members of the community'. Rogers (1993a, 1993b) also argues for long term studies on the grounds that it is otherwise impossible to differentiate natural from anthropogenic changes.

Continuous monitoring may therefore be required over tens of years. The problem may be illustrated from the effects of sub-lethal stress when imposed on coral by activities such as SCUBA diving. Physical damage to the coral skeleton, by fracturing, may not be intensive enough to be fatal but it may expose the host to pathogens, which eventually cause death some years later.

The short term response observed in a trampling experiment by Liddle & Kay (1987) was the production of copious mucus which later broke up to reveal 'polyps withdrawn into corallites often with tentacles missing, lesions in the tissue between polyps, bleached and empty corallites'. Thus temporal monitoring needs to embrace the life histories of damaged species in order to fully capture the impact of stress. This is not only a costly requirement but it also raises the question as to whether the slow response time has already permitted unwitting damage to have crossed the critical threshold.

5.3 Subjectivity

The objectivity of a monitoring programme may be compromised either intentionally or unintentionally. Ward & Jacoby (1992) describe a strategy for monitoring the ecosystems of an embayment in Australia that was exposed to a variety of anthropogenic stresses. 'Valued Ecosystem Components' were identified based on the bay's protection status, conservation value, commercial value and recreational value. Five attributes were then identified (recreational/amenity, commercial fisheries, vegetated habitats, faunal inhabitants) with general indicators for each (e.g. water quality, especially clarity, as an indicator of value of the recreational/amenity attribute). The choice of indicators was generally subjective and reflected human values. For example plankton were rejected, despite their potential utility as an indicator, because they were not rated highly as Valued Ecosystem Components (they had a low public profile). Such approaches to user defined indicators may be presented as positive stakeholder involvement, but they may also be open to manipulation by vested interests and biased by 'popularity'.

Coral bleaching may be one such example of popular recognition. Bleaching is caused by the loss of the photosynthetic and symbiotic zooxanthellae and results in discoloration of the coral. It is a very visible response of corals to stress and it has generated public and political concern about the status of reef ecosystems. It therefore has a high imputed value as an indicator recommending it under at least one of the ideal specifications. However, there are problems

with interpretation, which may limit its use.

Bleaching may in some cases go unperceived by the observer (Brown & Howard 1985), or apparent bleaching events may actually be due to some other disturbance (e.g. predation) or due to light-adaptation by the coral (Glynn 1993). There is no standardised method of assessing the degree of bleaching in affected organisms and standardisation is complicated by the presence of genetically different types of zooxanthellae with different tolerances and responses, as well as varying responses of identical types of zooxanthellae in different hosts (Glynn 1993). Finally, the fact that bleaching may reflect a combination of stresses may hinder identification of cause, essential if management is to relieve the stress.

5.4 Ambiguities of expert interpretation

Part of the difficulty with assembling evidence that has been derived from different sites and under different contexts of stress is that findings may differ for quite legitimate reasons. However that does not make it any easier to use existing knowledge to evaluate the potential candidate indicators of anthropogenic stress. For example, increasing intensity of diving at a coral reef is normally associated with a decline in the percentage cover of live coral and a decline in the diversity of species. The decline in diversity is accounted for by the differential resistance of coral morphologies to physical pressure, for example trampling. Thus more massive forms are more resistant than delicate foleaceous and branching forms. However, Hawkins & Roberts (1992, 1993, 1994) report that after 15 years of intensive tourist pressure on the Red Sea, there appeared to be *no* significant impact on the abundance of different coral morphologies.

Liddle & Kay (1987) explain this paradox by suggesting that the more fragile skeletal forms also have higher recovery rates after damage and this may compensate for their vulnerability. But at Bonaire, in the Caribbean, it was found that coral diversity *increased* at sites where diving was more intensive. The use of 'species diversity' as an indicator is therefore highly dependent on how these various effects to stress are explained. Yet it is in the nature of scientific research that such counterfactual observations develop as part of the process of hypothesis testing and theory development. Thus, contrary to the popular notion that scientific intervention is the means to secure certainty, it has to be recognised that the ongoing practice of scientific research also generates ambiguities as differing empirical observations give rise to competing explanations (Giddens 1998). In the longer run research findings tends to converge but in the short run such ambiguity undermines the function of indicators.

5.5 Tourist stress

But if the above difficulties were not in themselves insuperable there is also the final problem of separating tourist stress from other sources of anthropogenic stress. For example, over-fishing to supply the demand of distant markets may be hard to separate from fishing to provide for local restaurants frequented by tourists. Coral mining to provide lime for construction and industrial expansion inland may be inseparable from the demand for raw materials to build hotels at the coast. There is also a difficulty in assigning particular forms of stress to different categories of tourist to enable selective management intervention.

6 Conclusions

This critique of the feasibility of developing bio-indicators has revealed some methodological impediments. These introduce a range of uncertainty into indicator development that arises from the difficulties of differentiating natural from anthropogenic change, the problems of scale, the introduction of subjectivity into a supposedly objective assessment, the ambiguities that arise in interpretation and the difficulties of differentiating tourist induced stress from broader anthropogenic stress. Collectively these threaten the very purpose of indicators.

Thus when can one say that an effect has 'finally' happened? This requires notions of 'start' and 'finish', which are highly problematic, when the baseline from which change has to be measured already bears the combined impacts of tourism, other anthropogenic stress and an as yet indeterminate level of natural perturbation. The 'finish' is also likely to reflect the temporal demands of management rather than the environment since the cycles through which ecological change becomes apparent seem likely to exceed the one to five year planning horizons over which management typically seeks such information. In short, biological rhythms seem disposed to beat to a different cadence than the demands of tourism management.

These impediments to the construction of bio-indicators constitute a dilemma in which management is faced with the choice of either waiting for a conclusive outcome to ecological research, running the obvious risk of acting after environmental damage becomes irreversible, or acting without the full benefit of ecological indicators. They introduce a degree of inconclusiveness into interpretation, which threatens to undermine the effectiveness of environmental indicators as tools with which to identify and manage the environmental impacts of tourism. Collectively they can be argued to reduce the power of measurement and undermine the utility of explanation.

In the absence of certainty about causes and effects, black and white shades off into grey and quantification slides into qualitative judgement. This

inconclusiveness undermines the basic function of environmental indicators. In the WTO study the supposed function of indicators was 'above all'... 'to *avoid* risk, or to take *calculated* risks with more complete knowledge of the outcomes' (International ... 1993). Yet when there remains so much in question about what constitutes 'sufficient' stress, what are its causes and what practical remedies are available for its mitigation the process of indicator development may be argued to contribute to risk generation as well as risk reduction!

This becomes particularly pertinent at the point where environmental indicators are called upon in arbitration over appropriate uses of land. One of the common mechanisms for land use regulation is the system of urban and regional planning with its associated procedures for development control. This paper began by arguing that it was in the nature of public discourse to privilege rational debate over emotion and quantitative information over qualitative. This is particularly evident in the institutions for development control, where appeals are considered in a quasi-judicial way.

The difficulties experienced with developing bio-indicators suggest that the environment may not be well served in this arena if fuzzy assertions about the ecological impact of tourism have to be pitted against economic 'facts' about job and wealth creation. The current ambiguities that attend bio-indicators offer a slender barricade behind which the interests of the environment may be defended against the continuing global pressures to develop tourism. The rationale of capitalism predisposes the institutions charged with land use control to favour development unless good cause is shown why permission to develop should be refused. Unacceptable environmental stress, exposed through ecologically grounded bio-indicators, would constitute such good cause, but we still seem to be some way off being able to establish this with the level of certainty necessary to satisfy these institutions.

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Experience of nature and history in border tourism

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Abstract

This paper provides three thematic areas within which to place the touristic experience of nature and history and the borders reached and crossed by the visitor. The first section of the paper looks at experience and nature, demonstrating the synthesis between the two, which is argued occurs in the mind of the visitor and social scientist alike. Nature and experience are part of the touristic setting. This setting is usually referred to as the landscape. A discussion of the notion of landscape as a social science concept forms the second section of the paper. Thirdly, we try to ascertain just how these social constructs of nature experience and landscape form in the minds of the visitor. This is achieved by looking closely at people's local histories and cultural environments, to include what we describe as the natural world. The penultimate section of the paper attempts to illustrate the preceding conceptual themes by applying them to the visitor's encounter with borders as they continue on a touristic journey around Britain, the Baltic and Eastern Finland. Each example shows how mythology, folklore and history are woven together with nature and utilised by the tourist industry, as the visitor continually crosses borders in search of their identity.

Keywords: Border tourism, emotion, experience, history, nature, mythology.

1 Introduction

It is important to define what is meant by border, in this paper. The term border is not only being used in the political sense to denote a crossing point from one country to another. There are at least three senses in which the concept of border is used in the paper. To begin with the most abstract, the mythological border. This is a border that demarcates the land of legend. These are the borders, which surround places half believed to have existed and of which there is no certain truth. Closely linked to this notion of border, is the border between the natural world and the super-natural world, which lies just outside our realm of comprehension.

The modern concept of border is as a political boundary between two states. The eastern border of Finland is a familiar example, which shows us that this is in fact no more stable than the preceding examples, which are drawn in the mind and not on the map. What unifies these notions of border, is that each one separately or combined, provide a focal point for tourism. The themes, which are explored in the paper, demonstrate just why border tourism in the senses described, holds such an attraction for the visitor.

2 Experience and nature

The idea to build a conceptual bridge between experience, nature and history began with work by Ireland and Kivi (1997) on the Finnish concept of *elämys*. Preliminary field work in England and Finland had shown that the idea of *elämys* could be most easily identified in association with nature, and nature tourism products. Before this could be done a much clearer definition of *elämys* was needed. A more precise use of the concept of *elämys* is possible by adhering more closely to the Finnish definition, which is 'a very strong affecting expression incident that has great influence on a person'. The base word in Finnish is *elämä*, which means life in English. Therefore we could try to understand the concept of *elämys* as a matter of life, as a very basic element of existence.

The Swedish translation also includes the notion of life, the latter part of the word *upplevelse.* In Swedish *leva* is to live! What is interesting is the word *upplevelse* has a prefix - *upp* -, which changes the meaning to move life up. Selänniemi (1997) has made this point in the consumer magazine Suomen Kuvalehti. This definition is not incompatible with Warnock's (1962) view that emotion is an indissoluble synthesis that incorporates the magical.

The concept of *elämys* can be used to identify the most essential core of tourism, the emotional experience of the tourist. A review of the literature has found that researchers' definitions and illustrations of tourists' behaviour can be regarded as expressions of *elämys* (see Cohen1979, MacCannell 1989, Parinello

1996). Te Kloeze (1996) work on campers and caravaners in the Netherlands, demonstrates the point that *elämys* could be a very precise concept for the understanding of tourist experience. This is illustrated through Te Kloeze use of Urry's (1990) concept of the tourist gaze. Urry identifies two kinds of tourist gaze, the collective and the romantic. It is the latter that is close to the concept of *elämys*.

Te Kloeze (1996) defines the romantic form of tourist gaze as having an emphasis on 'solitude, privacy and a personal semi - spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze'. Te Kloeze links this notion of the romantic gaze with the tourist quest for the authentic. He argues that this romantic gaze might be found in social relationships between people, between host and guests and between the farmers' family and campers. Te Kloeze argues that once the farmer as host, no longer perceives the campers as tourists but as guests, this can be reality, even for the Post-Tourist. Te Kloeze says that the Post-tourist knows that 'there is no authentic tourist experience, that there is merely a series of games or text that can be played' (Urry 1990:100). The concept of *elämys* raises questions about the utility of the term Post-Tourist as an analytic tool for accounting for tourists' experience.

Using the tourist's experience of nature as a case study it should be possible to identify *elämys* as an experience in the statements collected from the field. The natural environment is likely to provide the tourist with emotional cues and signals that will result in the uplifting experience of *elämys*. This view is supported by Manstead (1991) who says that although there has been a growth in the study of emotion in the last twenty years 'relatively little of the psychological research has focused on the role of emotion in social life'. In the context of tourism and the study of emotional experience Manstead's next remark is particularly relevant. He says, 'Many psychologists and probably the majority of other social scientists interested in emotion acknowledge that extra-individual processes are also important aspects of emotion, either contributing to the experience and expression of emotion, or providing the context in which emotions manifest themselves in altered perceptions and judgements, changes in expressive behaviour, and strengthened or weakened social relationships'. Again it should be possible to identify these extra-individual processes from the statements given by tourists.

Rethinking the use of the concept brings to the surface a number of methodological problems which fieldwork hopes to resolve. The question for tourism studies is to what extent can it be shown that tourists at a site share the *elämys* experience? The difficulty of operationally defining *elämys* as a construct has been acknowledged, it is likely to prove equally problematic to verify it empirically. The arena chosen for verification (Parkinson 1995, Lazarus 1991) is the person-environment relationship, that is represented here by tourists visiting National Parks in England and Finland.

Before we can address the question of how tourists experience the person - environment relationship. It is important to examine human experience

and nature as mental constructs. Experiences are not something external, but within each of us.

Experience like emotion is a neglected area of research in the field of tourism studies, especially when looking at the quality of visitor experience. Studies that have been undertaken often adopt a quantitative paradigm. For example a recent monograph by Muroma (1992) has the expressed purpose of analysing 'experience in the behaviour of leisure traveller'. Among the research questions posed by this study of Finnish tourists, was 'How travel experience changes the person?'(Muroma 1992). Muroma concluded that one group termed the 'Involved Traveller' find culture, adventure, entertainment and *nature*, more important in the destination that the others... Regretfully it is not possible to establish much about the quality of these experiences, because they appear only as factor tables. However, what this study shows is that the experience of visitors is an important field of study, but the quantitative paradigm used may not be the best way of ascertaining just what that experience is!

Dewey (1958) laments a similar neglect of the study of experience by philosophers. He points to the methodological difficulty that academics in leisure and tourism studies have encountered. Dewey argues that the problem of understanding experience is 'neither psychological nor epistemological, it is metaphysical or existential. It is whether existence consists of events, or is possessed of temporal quality characterised by beginning, process and ending' (Dewey 1958). The existentialist position would subscribe to the view that as humans we are responsible for our own being and hence experience of life. Thus human experience consists of direct enjoyment and relating stories about past experience. As part of that experience the enjoyment of nature by the visitor is acknowledged as an important touristic activity. This leaves an important question to be addressed, 'What form does nature take as a place and space in visitor enjoyment?' To answer this question it is necessary to re-think the construct of nature held in Western cultures.

The point of departure for the answer to this question, is the view held be some academics that the distinction between nature and culture is an inadequate and misleading way of accounting for the way people study, discuss and interact with the natural world (Descola 1996). Descola provides a way forward to enable tourism researchers to re - think their conceptualisation of nature. Descola invites us to see nature as being transcultural and transhistoric, and in doing so takes us across the first border encountered in this paper, between the natural and the super-natural. The super-natural is those things, which cannot be explained, in the natural order of things. However, before venturing further into this realm we need to clarify the different models of nature used by both academics and visitors.

There are two ways to approach the understanding of nature and culture. The first is to describe the specific conditions that have lead to a society's concept of nature. The second is to look for general principles to compare nature and culture. If we take the second position it is not sufficient to relay on ethnobiological

taxonomies. We also have to take into account 'social objectivation of nature' (Descola 1996) and include local theories of cosmology, sociology and the ontology's of non-human beings.

The problem with this approach is that it leads to a sociocentric model (Descola 1996). In such a model social categories and relations are used as a kind of mental template for the ordering of the cosmos. Descola appears to favour this approach to understanding how the 'social objectivation of non-humans can be treated'. Descola is not arguing for universal reductionism, instead a template much like the concept of kinship, which although accepted by anthropologists has room for local variation. The idea of our relationships with nature seen through a series of templates or grids needs to be outlined if we are to appreciate that local people and visitors are likely to have competing experiences of the natural world.

Descola (1996) sets out three templates through which it is possible to conceive different relationships with nature. The first two define the boundary between the self and the other. These are the totemic and animic systems of classification.

Totemic systems use empirically observable discontinuities between natural species to order social units. This system treats non- - humans as signs and links them to decent groups. In contrast the *Animic system* ascribes species in nature with human characteristics. As a consequence non- - humans are treated as a form of relative.

The third template is *naturalism,* which is the belief that nature does exist. This is the Western view in which nature is part of our common sense and scientific practice. The view from this perspective of totemism or animism appears to us intellectually interesting but a false representation (Descola 1996). Descola goes on to point out that these views of human - natural world relations are only 'abstract topological grids' (Descola 1996). What is interesting is when these relations with nature become differentiated in what have now become touristic sites. Descola cites three types of relationship between ourselves and nature; 1) predation, 2) reciprocity (humans and non- - humans have substitutes for one another) and 3) protection. Two of these relations with nature have relevance to the way tourists and other visitors relate to the natural world today.

Descola (1996) says that protection as a mode of relations with nature, 'prevails when a large collection of non-humans are perceived as dependent upon humans for their reproduction and welfare'. This most obvious expression of this mode of relations with nature is in our creation of National Parks. Koli National Park exhibits this and another earlier relationship with nature, the predatory. Descola (1996) points out that when large tracts of forest were cleared for cultivation...A desire to protect nature could not fail to emerge from such a state of affairs.

The conservation of natural landscapes in much the same way as we developed pleasure gardens has lead to the conservation movement perpetuating the man (sic) - nature dualism. The validity of this dualism is strangely enough

being challenged by the tourists themselves as they search for the magical and spiritual and super - natural in nature.

3 Landscape as a social science concept

To make the natural world intelligible the concept of landscape has been used to divide it into wilderness, urban and rural. A challenge to our accepted notion of landscape comes from Kuchler (1993), who see the landscape as an 'inscribed surface' which holds, ecological, historical and personal information, all of which gives it contemporary significance. Central to Kuchler's argument is the concept of *a landscape of memory*. Kuchler argues that landscapes shown in paintings are in fact landscapes of memory, because they seize upon and validate personal or social memories. Kuchler then engages in a subtle but important shift in her argument, from talking about landscapes *of* memory, to landscapes *as* memory. The point being made is that landscapes are shaped *by memory work* (cognitive processes) rather than definitive accounts *from* memory.

Kuchler describes the creation of landscapes as memory, like a rite of passage, with all the ritual ascribed to a funeral. This explanation has huge significance for the way in which border visitors see the places they visit.

The process for the creating of a landscape as memory begins with the 'forgetting of the place'. Kuchler outlines the process in the following way; 'For landscape to become subject to recollection it has to be rendered absent and handed over to forgetting. The periodic erasure of inhabited and worked upon landscape is the product of the funerary process, commencing with the burial of a person and culminating in the desertion of the settlement and burial place' (Kuchler 1993:97).

Kuchler continues with an excellent paragraph, which helps explain the importance of border tourism. She says; 'As the forest overgrows the traces of past inhibition, the place becomes memory. When encountered again a nut, a fruit tree, a plant or a piece of wall, like an odour, may trigger a recollection of social relations and of past social conditions' (Kuchler 1993:100).

What Kuchler (1993) illustrates is the social processes that the 'old country visitors' become part of, when they return to their former homeland. Accounts about the actions of Finnish Karelians visiting Ceded Karelia tell of people picking up stones, earth and even water from puddles, on the sites, where their former homes once stood. These items become signifiers for the 'old country' now just across the border.

4 Local histories and cultural environments

For border visitors the existence of a once familiar landscape, nature and evidence of the former cultures are local histories. The action of collecting stones, earth and water provides access to that past, and a life once lived. As Dewey (1958) points out, 'existence is historic and can only be known or understood as each portion is distinguished and related'. In much the same way as an archaeologists interprets finds, so the visitor to the old country engages in a mental reconstruction of what life was like for previous generations. Local histories are then a result of memory work and are not necessarily accounts of actual social life.

Local histories, culture and the natural world become visitor attractions by a process, which is metaphysical or existential. That is individuals must create their own being, each in their own specific situation and environment (Dewey 1958). This is the process visitors become engaged in, when they visit a border region. To enable people to reconstruct their lost identity, heritage centres and cultural centres now act in much the same way as a spiritualist medium, making it access possible to another world.

The Carelicum culture and tourism centre in Joensuu serves as this kind of medium, allowing visitors to cross a border into another world and experience Karelianism and Karelia through the exhibits. Some of these exhibits show how close Karelians lived to nature. For example the Folk Healers magic bag contains powerful and feared objects; bear claws, snake fangs and the skull and hair of the dead. What the items in the magic bag tell us is of the Karelians respect for nature, and the realisation that not all aspects of nature could be controlled. The exhibits at the Carelicum have a similar function to that noted by Golden (1996) in her paper on the Jewish Diaspora Museum. She says the exhibits 'appear to allow people to move in and out of a world of historical association with the most extraordinary ease' (Golden 1996:223).

5 Borders encountered on the visitors journey

Lyonesse

The journey begins with the mythical land of Lyonesse, which is said to lie somewhere between Land's End, Cornwall and the Scilly Islands off the West Coast of Britain. Lyonesse brings together the power of nature, belief in a parallel world and an ancient Celtic king. Such is the power of these combined elements that tourist attractions develop as the industry invests in myth.

'According to legend, Lyonesse disappeared beneath the seas and this

has led to its sometimes being identified - or confused with - Atlantis. The country is frequently mentioned in Thomas Malory's *Morte d' Arthur* written in the 15th century and by other authors of this period, although there is no mention of it inundation' (Roper 1999).

Nature and natural events serve to conceal the truth about Lyonesse. There are records as early as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which record disastrous sea floods, these have been associated with the loss of the land called Lyonesse. Reference to the land called Lyonesse appear again in the 18th century in the Gentleman's Magazine (1797); 'Tradition says, that between Scilly and the Land's End stood a large town, Llyans, which suddenly sunk down, the sea over flowed it, and one of the Trevelyan's was saved on the back of a white horse. It is certain that people now alive have, on a very low ebb and clear water, seen what they affirm to be walls of houses in the place where this city is said to have existed'.

Later in the early 20th a century reference appears in a guide book to West Cornwall of King Arthur's association with the land of Lyonesse (Notes & Queries 1906, Nicoll & Mitton 1915). Today there is a contemporary battle being fought across the political borders of the countries and counties of the UK for control of this myth. The Welsh, English and Cornish, '*Tourist Chiefs*' are all fighting for ownership of the Arthurian legend and the lands associated with his exploits. In Wales there is the construction of an Arthurian theme park to attract three million visitors a year. Across the border in the English county and Celtic country of Cornwall, the Chairman of North Cornwall District Council is quoted as saying; 'If we lose the fight, we stand to lose millions of pounds of tourist money' (Daily Telegraph Weekend 1999).

King Arthur is said to have crossed many national borders to conquer the countries of Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Denmark.

Lithuanian Folklore

Lithuania has as part of its modern tourist industry a rich folklore tradition, which celebrates the notion of the border between the natural world and an ancient ethnic boundary between two tribes, the Samogitians and Lithuanians.

Martinaitis (1998) says that the old pagan culture of the Samogitians was connected with the underworld and the dead. Although the people of the Samogitia region of Western Lithuania are today predominately Catholic, evidence of the pagan religions can still be found. Lithuanians retain strong bonds with nature worship. In the 19th century it was common to see small shrines at roadsides and in woods and trees. Evidence of the sacredness of the woods and animals can still be seen in Western Lithuania today, in graveyards and house carving in the Kursiu Spit.

Martinaitis (1998) notes that, 'Stories are still told about strange places, where people see mythical creatures related to home, fields and property. People

guard old trees and speak about stones, which have names and are often linked with the doings of the devil, because they "grow" in the springtime from the earth, pushed out by frozen water'.

Folklore is important in Lithuania in the retention of the relational boundary between Lithuanian ethnic identity and the other cultures which have crossed its borders, the Poles, Germans and Russians. Today the relicts of animism and totemism serve as markers to the visitor of a distinctive Lithuania culture.

Karelia

The border region of Finnish Karelia brings into focus many of the ideas expressed in the brief examples given of Cornwall's land of Lyonesse and the nature religions of Lithuania. In contrast to the examples of Lyonesse defined as a parallel world, which exists in the minds of past and contemporary visitors to Celtic Cornwall. Karelia is an example of parallel social worlds, which have a real existence, each with their own political economy, but shared common beliefs and myths. All that separates these people, who share Karelianism, is an International and National political boundary.

Tourism has the power as social and economic process to unite peoples in these parallel worlds. This potential is well illustrated in Viena, the northern most part of Russian Karelia. This part of Karelia has suffered at the hands of the Russians in the 20th century, with old Karelian village 'liquidated for lack of perspective' (Karelian Association 1996). Today there is a new role for these villages through the 'Revitalising Project of the Viena Karelian Folklore Villages'. The project involves the preservation of language, culture and historic buildings. Some Finnish Karelian villages also share in this project. The Viena cultural heritage includes the border villages of Heitajärvi and Kuivajärvi in the municipality of Suomussalmi and Rimpi in the municipality of Kuhmo.

Almost all the themes pursued in this paper crystallise in the Viena project, as the following extract from the Viena Cultural Tourism Web sites shows:

'You too can visit Viena! Thanks to the Arhippa Perttunen Foundation, you can experience the enchantment of the Kalevala song lands. You can follow in the footsteps of Elias Lönnrot and other folklore collectors. You can photograph the same Finnish landscapes as did Finnish photographer I.K.Inha one hundred yeas ago. Discover the uniqueness of Karelian wooden architecture. Admire the poetic views, which threw the Karelianists, late 19th and early 20th century artists, into states of ecstasy and wonder. Enjoy the silence and experience the peacefulness of the natural environment. Meet the rune singers and traditional artists, who process skills and knowledge passed down from generations.'

6 Conclusions

We have explored the concept of border in a multi - dimensional way. Visitors can be invited to cross the boundaries of mythical, natural and human worlds, and between political and ideologically different spheres. At each crossing point the visitor is involved in an experience of nature, history and culture. The concept of *elämys* enables tourism researchers to build a bridge, to understand the visitors personal experience of the border. Each example presented has the potential to generate in the heart of the visitor a magical and emotional state. The invitation to experience cultural tourism in Viena Karelia illustrates this point.

There is a need and opportunity to re-think nature as a social science concept. Using the templates proposed by Descola (1996) it is possible to see that each example presented above embodies more than one cultural view of nature.

Visitors to the border regions come with a preconceived notion of the landscape they hope to see. According to the work of Kuchler (1993) we can suggest that these landscapes are not so much of memory, in the way a photograph is taken on a family holiday. They are landscapes as memory, being constructed and reconstructed in the mind of the visitor.

There exist parallel worlds, which the visitor seeks to experience. To do so a person must cross a border, spatial, temporal or political. In the process of crossing that border the visitor becomes involved in an experiential process which is both a mental and social encounter with nature and history.

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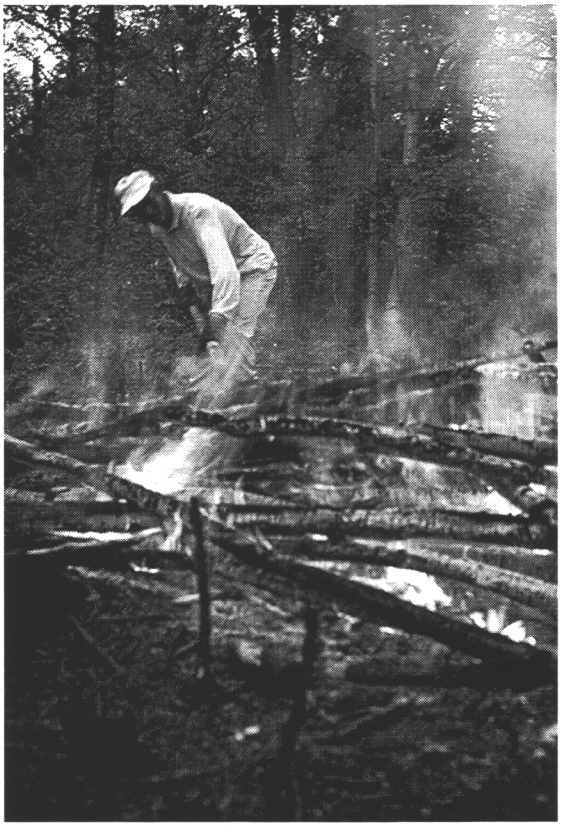

Ancient slash-and-burn agriculture is a living cultural heritage in Koli National Park producing interesting *elämys*-experiences to nature tourists.
Photo: Finnish Forest Research Institute - Tuomo Saarelainen.

Nature tourism - utopia or reality for disabled customers?

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Abstract

Tourism for various special groups is growing. Disabled people form a large special group in which there are several types of people. Nature tourism refers to touristic activities mainly based on natural circumstances. This paper discusses possible roles and applications of nature tourism for disabled customers. Defining disabled customers is discussed in the first section of the paper. Types and motivations of nature tourism as well as various possible rewards from it are clarified conceptually. Some empirical results from a field survey are also given. Finally, a scenario for development paths of nature tourism for disabled people is presented.

Keywords: Disabled tourists, tourism strategies, nature tourism.

1 Introduction

The year 1981 was the United Nations Year of the Disabled. The basic idea of

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the year was to learn understanding the disabled as usual people having some specific requirements for their environment. The size of this population is remarkably big: according to estimates there are some 50 Million more or less disabled people in Europe (Dicken 1989). The European Year of Tourism was held in 1990, and it inspired a number of projects aimed for disabled people. The amount of attention for their needs, however, has varied from year to year, and there are big differences in the state of art between European countries. The concern about the disabled seems to be above average in Nordic Countries, often described as 'welfare societies' (Dicken 1989).

Tourism for various special groups is growing. Disabled people form a large customer potential including several different subtypes. Old aged people form the largest special group and its size is growing rapidly in most developed countries (see e.g. Mobility ... 1995). This group includes a great variety in the degree of disability from more or less normal people to badly handicapped, for example. Allergies form another important special group with certain requirements concerning the environment and premises of their stay.

Besides the two large mentioned groups there are many other types of disabled people. In fact, the meaning and contents of disability is multifaceted and needs to be clarified. Generally speaking disability refers to some kind of difficulty in overcoming various barriers inherent in a person himself or his environment. These may have different forms. Therefore, a conceptual analysis of disability is needed for the background of further considerations.

Nature tourism clearly means tourism based on nature. More precisely, nature tourism is a wide and ambiguous concept covering various aspects of nature, but also the complicated relationships between various elements of nature, nature oriented tourists, nature tourism enterprises and nature tourism products. The relationship between the nature and the disabled needs to be specified according to various types of people and their activities. Therefore, this relationship is much more complex than in the case of "normal" tourists.

Important questions concerning nature tourism for the disabled include 1) conditions of supply of nature tourism products and 2) motivations to provide them for the disabled. The first question is treated briefly in this paper on the basis of one case study: the Levi holiday resort in Kittilä, Lapland. Motivations are approached from three points of view. The relevance of the general equity principle is considered first. The second point of view builds on the knowledge of general tourist motivations. Understanding the disabled as a special group that as such implies some specific external motivations for supply of services is the third important issue.

2 Dimensions of disability: types of disabled customers

Disability has various roots and it appears in several forms. According to Abeyratne (1995) World Health Organisation finds it useful to distinguish between three related concepts: impairment, disability and handicap. WHO defines these concepts as follows:

Impairment is a permanent or transitory psychological, physiological, or anatomical loss or abnormality of structure or function.
Disability is any restriction or prevention of the performance of an activity, resulting from an impairment, in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

Handicap is a disability that constitutes a disadvantage for a given individual in that it limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal depending on age, sex, social and cultural factors for that individual.

Thinking of nature tourism, or tourism in general, it is necessary to identify the roles that may be important for disabled people as tourists, because these roles are the keys to assess their disadvantages. These roles can be derived from the aims and motivations of the disabled as tourists.

According to the WHO definition, disability means a restriction or prevention of activities resulting from an impairment. These restrictions may have very different forms, and each form its specific relationship with the types of possible tourism. It is useful to note some basic types of the factors causing disability.

Francken & von Raaij (1981) make an important distinction between internal and external barriers to leisure participation. Internal barriers may take place in personal capacities, abilities, knowledge and interests, for example, external barriers include geographical distances, lack of time or money and lack of facilities. Iso-Ahola & Mannell (1985) distinguish between social-personal, social-cultural and physical constraints for the disabled, and define these constraints either variable or stable.

Jackson & Searle (1985) considered leisure participation and activity enjoyment of the disabled and distinguished six unsatisfactory situations:

* non-participation because of a lack of interest;
* non-participation because of the influence of internal barriers;
* non-participation because of the influence of external barriers;
* participants who wish but are unable to increase the frequency or intensity of their participation;
* people who were formerly participants in an activity but have ceased participation, and
* people who participate but are unable to achieve the full desired level of satisfaction or enjoyment.

This classification reveals the complex character of disadvantages experienced by the disabled. It is worth noting the two dimensions of the mentioned situations, i.e. participation and degree of enjoyment. The former is of rather clear and objective character, while the latter is much more difficult to formalise and measure.

A further analysis of the barriers experienced by the disabled is made by Smith (1987). It divides the barriers in three categories as follows:

1) Intrinsic barriers
   * Lack of knowledge: limited ability to learn AND inadequate access to information.
   * Health-related problems: pain, limited range of motion, medical restrictions.
   * Social ineffectiveness: deficits in social skills.
   * Physical and psychological dependency: performance of activities, participation.

2) Environmental barriers
   * Attitudinal barriers: negative public attitudes, social stigma.
   * Architectural barriers: obstacles of mobility and to use of resources.
   * Ecological barriers: natural physical obstacles and weather, etc.
   * Transport barriers: physical and mental aspects of fluent travel.
   * Rules and regulations barriers: exclusion of technical help, etc.

3) Interactive barriers
   * Skill-challenge incongruities vs. optimal challenges in relation to the persons skills.
   * Communication barriers: usual in tourism, emphasised by disability.

These categories of barriers provide rather a clear framework for structuring and assessing practical opportunities of tourism in general and nature tourism especially for the disabled. A part of the barriers is clearly in the disabled people themselves, a part in physical and functional structures of the environment. Lowering of these different barriers require different types of expertise. The recognition these barriers and their complex interplay is a necessary general starting point for developing new opportunities and improvements.

Knowledge of different types of disability and the barriers related to them is necessary for understanding and assessing their relationship with various types of tourism, and more basically, with differences in tourism motivations of the disabled.

3 The concept and types of nature tourism

Definitions of nature tourism build on the relationship between nature and tourism: it is tourism *related* or *based on* nature. There are four main possible elements in this relationship:

1) the tourist interested in nature;
2) the organiser of the possibilities in nature to satisfy these interests;
3) nature tourism products, and
4) the nature itself in its innumerable elements.

Further definitions specify the relationships between these elements.

Some reports connect nature tourism with sustainable tourism. Hemmi (1995), for example, defines nature tourism as "*tourism that takes place in the nature environment with the aim to follow principles of sustainable tourism*". This aspect can be disputed from the general conceptual basis. The dominant role of nature is clear by definition in this type of tourism, but the conditions for the style of doing nature tourism are a diffuse matter. As the concept of sustainable tourism as such is more or less vague, it does not appear appropriate to incorporate it in the core concept of nature tourism.

It seems appropriate to define the core of the concept 'nature tourism' simply on the basis of the target and motivation of the trip. The target consists of one or more elements of the nature. The motivation is based on either the contrast or rewards (or both) offered by the nature to visitors (cf. Iso-Ahola 1982). These motivations as such do not imply principles of sustainable tourism, neither exclude them.

When applying this 'broad' definition it is appropriate to recognise various possible *styles* of nature tourism. These are based on various principles and practices in its applied forms. Issues of nature care, sustainability in a broader sense, the level of costs, equity, the production pattern and the scale, for instance, can be used as different bases for defining various styles of nature tourism. These aspects are not mutually excluding. Selection of the emphasis, however, helps further considerations.

In the case of disabled people equity appears as an important issue. Various forms of nature tourism are not always easily accessible for the disabled. Therefore there are three important questions: to what extent, in what forms and on what basis nature tourism should be open for the disabled?

The equity principle implies that various public resources for the welfare of people should be evenly available. Nature (for the most at least) is typically a public resource. Therefore, its availability and accessibility are essential issues from the standpoint of equity. The answer to the first question is thus: to as high

an extent as possible. This means a general legitimisation of nature tourism for the disabled.

The forms of possible nature tourism for the disabled depend strongly on the types of disability and on premises and conditions of destinations. These must be specified case by case.

4 The case of Levi

Possibilities of health tourism were studied empirically in a well-known Finnish tourist destination *Levi* resort in Lapland (Väärälä et al. 1999). Information was received from 552 tourists and from 46 local tourism enterprises covering a great majority of the local service production. Issues relating to the disabled were a part of the questionnaire. The following brief review includes information from both consumers and producers.

Service for disabled is an important issue for rather a large part of tourists. One fifth of autumn visitors to Levi had a disabled person in their family. The most common type of disability was allergies (more than one third of the disabled cases). The second largest group included various illnesses. Physical handicaps were relatively rare.

Visitors having disabled family members were asked to assess arrangements done for the disabled in Levi. These assessments form rather a satisfactory picture of the situation (Figure 1).

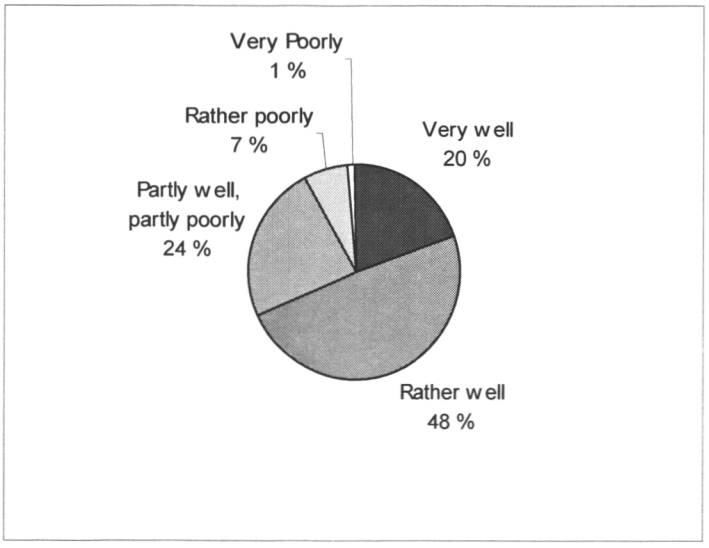

Figure 1. Arrangements for the disabled at the Levi resort: assessments by the disabled and their family members (n=84).

Almost 70 percent of those knowing the needs of the disabled gave a good mark ('rather well' or 'very well') for the Levi resort. Rather neutral were 24 % of the answers, and only some 8 % were clearly critical. It is worth mentioning here that Levi is the 'home slope' for the Finnish country team of the disabled in Alpine skiing.

Allergies is clearly a big cause for attention and it is associated with several practical arrangements. Materials of the rooms and furniture, general tidiness, plants and animals of the place may all be important issues for various types of allergic people.

Physically handicapped people need special arrangements when concerning their movement from place to place, both within buildings and outdoors. This should be taken into consideration already in the planning of buildings and tracks for skiing and hiking. Use of wheel-chairs was found difficult in many places. Snow produced certain problems in winter time. Alterations in old buildings are often expensive and not necessarily functional. Therefore, the disabled should be borne in mind already at the planning stage of buildings and routes.

In Levi resort the bigger units seem to have more interest and possibilities to take into account the needs of the disabled. Co-operation is a key factor in the promotion of nature tourism for the disabled; it is especially important for small enterprises. Specialisation for certain types of the demand together with a clear division of labour may create functional joint patterns of service supply in groups of small tourism enterprises.

The general atmosphere in relation to the disabled in Levi resort was positive amongst both service suppliers and tourists. Many people seem to share the following statement:

'Tourism in Levi has based on health care: people stressed at their work have come here for revival and exercise.'

5 Nature tourism motivations: in general and for the disabled

There are three relevant starting points when considering motivations of nature tourism for the disabled:

1) The *general equity principle* states that public resources should be distributed fairly amongst population. Nature is clearly a valuable public resource that can be utilised through nature tourism. The disabled are a remarkably large group of people (see e.g. Borg et al. 1998), and it therefore deserves ample attention in the general pursuit for equity. This

means a strong general motivation for attention and arrangements of nature tourism for the disabled.

2) The disabled form *a large and heterogeneous group*. Therefore, it is impossible and inappropriate to treat them as a single case when considering in closer detail their motivations of nature tourism. There are various restrictions according to the type of disability, and these present barriers to specific groups and needs for special arrangements. However, many of these barriers can be abolished. This together with the great variety of disabled people mean that they all together at the national level cover most probably all general nature tourism motivations. The recognition of these is appropriate to make in the framework of general tourism motivations.

3) The *specific professional motivations* of nature tourism for the disabled *include issues associated with the care and treatments* of these people on the bases of their individual handicaps. This group of motivations differs from the previous two in its clear pursuit to use travel and tourism as means of improving the system established for taking care of the disabled. Therefore, they can be described as external motivations.

The general equity principle offers an important background and basis for considerations of nature tourism for the disabled. The relevance of the whole issue depends on the dominant values of the society: it is great in egalitarian societies, but small in non-egalitarian societies. Finland clearly belongs to the former group where the general equity principle essentially influences societal policies. However, further discussion on applications of the general equity principle in its nature tourism context with the disabled is not possible here.

Recognition of the general motivations of nature tourism can be based on general tourism motivations. These are reviewed widely in literature (see e.g. Iso-Ahola 1982, Cohen 1979, Crompton 1979, Ilola 1994, Järviluoma 1994).

According to Crompton (1979) the general tourism motivations include escapism, self deem, relaxation, search for status, regression, family ties and search for social contacts. Learning, a good environment for health purposes, and useful exploitation (e.g. mushroom and berries) of the nature are other common motivations. It is easy to find arguments for the relevance of all these motivations in nature tourism, and also for the disabled. None of them is necessarily excluded when considering the disabled as a common group. Neither are they all generally valid in the case of the disabled or the 'normal' population. The valid motivations vary between individuals, and also between various trips as well as between times of travel, in both groups (the disabled and the non-disabled population). In conclusion, the general tourist motivations can be taken as relevant and useful basis for understanding general needs of nature tourism for the disabled.

The following table 1 includes essential types of reward elements in the variety of tourism experienced by people in general:

Table 1. Reward elements experienced by tourists in general.

Relaxation, feeling well	Gaining utility	Retreat
Excitement	Suitable activity	Narcism
Status, prestige	Fulfilling a norm	Collective feelings
Social contacts, connections	Beauty, harmony	Learning, finding out
Competence proved	Variety	Regression
Improving health	Achievement	Finding escape
Memories		

The table indicates the complex character of tourist experiences. Each of them includes usually more than one of the mentioned elements. Nature, clearly, can in various forms offer resource for all these rewards. Intuitively they appear as important to the disabled as they are to other people.

As to specific *professional* motivations of nature tourism for the disabled, there are at least three important aspects to mention:

1) Nature tourism offers concrete opportunities to *develop* the care and treatments of the disabled. Various 'natural additions' can be developed and adopted in treatment processes of certain types of disability. Suitable natural environments have already been utilised as cure of tuberculosis, allergies and some neurotic or psychic illnesses. Strong existing tendencies to maintain personal health and enjoy nature are likely to result in some new nature-directed patterns of cure.

2) Nature tourism can be developed as *a practical and economic alternative in the care process* of the disabled. The traditional care of the disabled is rather heavily organised in hospital-type institutions, and therefore, quite expensive. The existing resource base as such may be sufficient for reformulated arrangements where new alternative patterns of cure can supplement some parts of the old costly practices.

3) Introducing nature tourism in the care of the disabled can aim at *completely new comprehensive patterns of care processes*, where the whole concept of care and also the roles of the staff are reformulated. Special types of nature tourism services can be developed and supplied for the care of the disabled. These involve new types of professionals.

In conclusion three general comments can be made. Firstly, there are three basically different arguments for nature tourism for the disabled: the general

equity principle, the general tourism motivations, and professional aims of care and cure. These arguments are not necessarily associated in practical situations, and their strength may vary between times and places. Secondly, it is not appropriate or even possible to distinguish between general tourism motivations of the disabled as a group and those of the normal population, because a large part of the disabled is quite comparable with other people in their motivations. Thirdly, general tourism motivations offer a good framework for understanding the variety of motivations in nature tourism.

6 The disabled in responsible nature tourism: a scenario of three development paths

The disabled can be understood to have a special double role in the development of responsible nature tourism: they are both the objects and a particular test group of new solutions in nature tourism. Responsibility has two targets and tunings in this context: social responsibility for the disabled and general responsibility for the nature. There are two conceptual systems of 'fragility' involved at the same time. This means a very strong challenge for new solutions.

The significance of nature tourism as a development resource for the welfare of disabled people has been considered in previous sections. There is no need to change any basic ideas of responsible nature tourism for the needs of the disabled. Certain modifications, however, are needed in practical applications of these ideas. Three basically different strategies can be suggested as development paths of nature tourism for the disabled.

1) *The institutionalised nature tourism*
   Nature is used as a framework resource for developing fully controlled nature tourism services for disabled people. These can be characterised to have fully tested practices, heavy professional staffing, little spontaneity and minimal risks. The functional pattern is highly structured and the treatments follow principles of established professions. A corresponding pattern can be found in Finnish health spas specialising in treatments for war veterans. Nature tourism products *resemble medical treatments* in this approach.

2) *The "return back to nature" pattern*
   Nature tourism is understood as an open forum for various experiments. This situation allows for a variety of actors, absence of strict rules and new experimental forms of cure. Even risks are accepted to a reasonable

extent. Nature tourism is seen as an arena for attempts to develop forms of natural cure, the nature thus having the central role. The philosophy behind this pattern could be expressed in words: *The nature cures.*

3) *A joint resource pattern*
Nature tourism is seen as a new resource for the cure and treatments of the disabled in this pattern and it is taken as a major functional factor that incorporates in new ways professionalism and sectoral mixes of both socio-medical and nature expertise. Nature tourism products are developed for various purposes of disabled people on the basis of joint motivations derived from the aims of cure and tourist satisfaction with attention to general aims of responsibility in nature tourism as well. Nature tourism is used as a forum for improving capabilities of the disabled and tourist satisfaction is used for therapy. New mixes are developed in the use of medical and tourism professional and in the uses of premises, too. This approach offers also basis for a general conceptual model of fragility and cure (including both nature and people).

The first strategy (1) is quite realistic in highly developed welfare states, especially in periods of growing resources. It follows largely accepted welfare ideals and adopted professional practices of the well-established public sector. The second strategy (2) may to some extent take place in the private sector of the economy, relying on new business ideas. Some of its versions may be developed also in the third sector. The joint resource pattern (3) incorporates two well-established professions, that of socio-medical treatments and that of responsible nature tourism. It represents a completely new professional approach.

It is also important to note both the variety and the scale of restrictions: in some cases the barriers are minimal, while in the other extreme they are an absolute hinder for enjoying nature tourism.

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Seats on the scenic points
of trails make hiking for the older
people more pleasant in Koli National Park.
Photo: Finnish Forest Research Institute - Jorma Siitonen.



Planning and managing the nature tourism for sustainability at rural destinations in Finland - some entrepreneurial aspects

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Abstract

This article presents some results of a larger research project aiming to study a tourism company's commitment to issue-based nets and networks. The importance of co-operation and commitment among all stakeholders is discussed in context of designing a sustainable destination image. Some characteristic features of the Finnish rural tourism are presented, when describing the level of sustainable development in rural tourism destinations in Finland.

Keywords: Rural tourism, commitment, co-operation, small enterprises.

1 Rural tourism in Finland

Finland is well known as a nature tourism destination. The most significant strengths of Finland are the low degree of pollution, large number of forests and lakes, wilderness, reasonable accessibility, snow and lots of activities to offer. According to travel statistics nature is the most remarkable attraction among

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foreign tourists (Finnish ... 1999).

Forests, waterways and local culture are emphasised when marketing and developing tourism in rural regions (Maaseutumatkailun ... 1996), which cover 99 % of Finland's area (Silvennoinen et al.1997). According to Borg (1997) rural tourism is defined as tourism which takes place outside of densely populated communities and tourist centres. It is often considered small-sized and connected to farm industry and outdoor activities offering the quests individual service (Borg 1997).

Although Finland is known as a nature tourism destination, the tourism industry focuses on densely populated southern provinces, where the nature is not the main attraction. (Tilastokeskus 1999). The major part of registered overnights, especially by foreigners, is business travels and directs to towns in Southern-Finland (Table 1). Leisure tourism has bigger significance elsewhere in Finland, but the volumes are still small. Demand in rural regions is still low. For example half of the hotel units in Finland employ less than 30 persons, 35 % less than five employees. Other kinds of accommodation establishments are micro-sized (less than five employees) with average turnover about 500 000 FIM. These enterprises are active only seasonally (Harju-Autti 1998).

Table 1. *Some statistical figures about Finnish tourism demand and supply.*

REGION	*Nights, all*	*Nights, domest.*	*Nights, foreign*	*Nights, leisure*	*Nights, leisure foreign*	*Regist. accomm. establ. total %*	*Beds in reg. accomm. establ. total %*	*Beds/est. in regist. accomm.*	*Beds in rural tourism establ.*	*Z*
	A	*A1*	*A2*	*B*	*B1*	*C*	*D*	*D/C*	*E*	*E/D*
SOUTHERN FINLAND	*33 %*	*25 %*	*54 %*	*25 %*	*38 %*	*295 19 %*	*36 667 25 %*	*124*	*4 600*	*11 %*
WESTERN FINLAND	*14 %*	*16 %*	*5 %*	*14 %*	*8 %*	*274 18 %*	*23 683 16 %*	*86*	*4 900*	*18 %*
LAKELAND	*38 %*	*44 %*	*22 %*	*43 %*	*25 %*	*638 42 %*	*62 426 42 %*	*98*	*22 400*	*26 %*
LAPLAND& KUUSAMO	*12 %*	*11 %*	*13 %*	*15 %*	*20 %*	*251 16 %*	*21 025 14 %*	*84*	*5 900*	*22 %*
ÅLAND	*3 %*	*3 %*	*5 %*	*4 %*	*9 %*	*70 4 %*	*4 797 3 %*	*68*	*No data*	*No data*
FINLAND	*15,3 milj.*	*11,7 milj.*	*3,7 milj.*	*9,5 milj. (62 % of all nights)*	*2,1 milj. (57% of all for. nights)*	*1 528*	*148601*	*97*	*37800*	*20%*

Z = Beds in rural tourism establishments/ total amount of beds in accommodation establishments. Sources: Harju-Autti, 1998; Maaseutupolitiikan yhteistyöryhmä 1997; Tilastokeskus 1999.

Three quarters of the 3600 rural tourism enterprises has originally been farms. Most of the tourism companies in rural regions are part-time enterprises: tourism is the main source of income only for 15 % of the rural tourism enterprises in Finland. Capacities of rural tourism enterprises are small (the average amount of beds is 11 per company). One third of the companies offers accommodation and organised activity services, other one third offers only accommodation and the rest offers other combinations (Maaseutupolitiikan ... 1997).

Most of the companies, which offer different kind of activity services are located in the countryside. Over 60 % of these about 400 companies were founded in 1990's. The number of companies specialised in nature- and adventure-excursions, fishing services etc. has been significantly increasing since 1993. Almost a quarter of these enterprises do not have a full-time personnel, 44 % have less than two employees (Aalto et al. 1999).

Most important partners for these activity service companies are hotels, other activity service companies and local tourism organisations. Major part (71 %) of the companies have participated marketing or development projects, which most often are more or less financed by regional funds supported by the European Union. Common opinion among the entrepreneurs is that the projects are not long enough, continuity is not well considered and the results of the co-operation are quite poor. More than the half of the activity service companies (61 %) consider co-operation between the tourism companies very important and only four percent consider co-operation unnecessary (Aalto et al. 1999).

We may argue that the rural and nature tourism industry in Finland is characterised by part time tourism entrepreneurs, limited financial resources and entrepreneurial skills, low level of commitment to co-operation and long term development of the businesses. While the nature based tourism industries have low barriers to entry many new businesses are created as a result of identifying an opportunity following experiences of neighbours, or new businesses build back of a hobby or interest. The industry is still today characterised by lack of professionalism, which also have negative implications in terms of sustainable developments in nature based rural tourism in Finland.

2 Region as a tourist destination

According to Middleton (1989) the term tourist product is used at two different levels. One is the specific level, which is that of the discrete product offered by a single business such as sightseeing tour or an airline seat. The other is the "total" level, which is the complete experience of the tourist from the time one leaves home to the time one returns. The total level is synonymous with the components model (Medlik & Middleton 1973) meaning that the tourist products

are bundles of activities, services and benefits that constitute the entire tourism experience. This bundle consists of five components: destination attractions, destination facilities, accessibility, images and price.

These definitions of tourist product represent the marketing perspective to product development. If we take a regional tourism approach we may accept the definition of the total tourist product as a starting point meaning that the destination per se can be seen as a total tourist product. By definition tourists' destinations range from purpose-built resorts to capital cities and entire countries (Laws 1995). Terms resort and destination are sometimes used interchangeably, both have been applied to extensive areas and also to quite localised developments. Resort can mean a town or a region with several holiday centres. Even individual hotels sometimes promote themselves as resorts. A tourist resort can also be defined as a destination area that typically provides a wide range of tourist attractions, facilities and services (WTO 1994). In this article the administrative region of North Karelia is seen as a destination as well as a total tourist product from an incoming tourist's and promoter's point of view.

Components of the total tourist products offered by destinations are mainly produced by small businesses. Because their budgets are too small to make a major impact on customers perceptions, they should have a great interest in collaboration and co-operative marketing. Also relevant to smaller businesses is marketing co-operation between different sectors (especially accommodation and attractions) in which each can act as a promotional and distribution point for the other. Such co-operation may lead to the possibility of co-operative product formulation, advertising and promotion campaigns, joint representations at workshops etc. (Middleton 1989).

Both the public and private sectors have important roles in developing tourism destinations and the both sectors are tightly linked. In marketing and production there is both competitive and co-operative function for all the interests, if efficient operations are to result. The individual actors are independent of each others in decisions and actions, but at the same time there is an interdependence notably in the context of a common destination, which they serve. The vertical trade organisations often are good, but horizontal co-ordination in a destination is often lacking (Boedlender et al. 1991).

Interdependence, small size, market fragmentation and spatial separation are factors which lead to a willingness of combined action and willingness to achieve common goals. This makes the need of tourist organisations inevitable. Interdependence has caused the formulation of destination organisations meaning organisations located in a specific geographic area drawing together different sectors of the industry. Planning, development and marketing are all functions, which are seen to be in the goals of these organisations (Pearce 1992, Boedlender et al. 1991).

According to Pearce (1992) there is a distinct need to promote destinations *per se,* that is places in their own right. Place-specific images have to be communicated to stimulate an awareness of the desirability of particular

destinations so that individual products can be sold, such as hotels, excursions or activity packages. "However, general destination promotion tends to benefit all sectors of the tourist industry in the place concerned; it becomes a public good. — The question of "freeloaders" thus arises, for they too will benefit along with those who may have contributed directly to the promotional campaign. Why pay if someone else will bear the expense" (Pearce 1992, p.8).

3 Planning and managing the sustainability at destinations; the question of issue-based co-operation

3.1 Creating the image of destination

Destinations hold images in tourists' minds meaning that every place's image is a sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people have of the place. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with the place, for example information of the sustainability of the tourist destination. A stereotype suggests a widely held image that is highly distorted and simplistic and that carries a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the place. An image, on the other hand, is a more personal perception of a place and it can vary from person to person. Different people can hold quite different images of the same place (Kotler et al. 1993).

Marketers must consider image as a major influence on a buyer's choice. Strategic image management is the ongoing process of developing a place's image among its audience. For an image to be effective, it must meet the following criteria: it must be valid, believable, distinctive and simple, and it must have appeal (Kotler et al. 1993). The creation of an image is the part of the entire tourist destination development process. It demands a good strategic audit, determined improvement of the total tourist product and creative invention of the promotion.

3.2 Management for sustainable tourism

According to Middleton & Hawkins (1998), to date, where sustainable tourism has been identified as an important issue by national governments, it tends to be treated primarily as a matter for policies and planning at national level, usually involving national tourist boards. Promotion, planning and development policies are normally handled from macro analysis of economic, social and cultural impacts. There is, however, a growing recognition that the regional and local destination

is the only logical basis for understanding the specific impact of tourism for developing the tools for sustainable tourism development.

Tourism management means procedures to influence five primary variables concerning sustainable development: 1) location, 2) timing, 3) access, 4) products and 5) education and knowledge. Tourism management focuses on ways and means to influence visitors' choices of location, access, timing and product provision and to develop local understanding and knowledge of tourism. Community-led planning may influence the three first mentioned variables, but the products and education/knowledge also involve the private sector actors.

According to Middleton & Hawkins (1998, p. 90) the importance of developing partnerships to achieve synergy between the private and public sector is inescapable: "Partnerships for sustainability means jointly negotiated and agreed approaches to tourism management in which the goals are mutually defined and endorsed, and the techniques designed to achieve matching of demand and supply are jointly operated".. Building of an image of "sustainable destination" could be an issue, which could call for the need of common goals and collective actions (Middleton & Hawkins 1998).

3.3 Organising the network

Tourism industry in a region can be seen as a network of actors, who operate in different sectors of business in order to produce the total tourism product of the region. In regional tourism businesses a network can be defined as a group of independently owned and managed firms and other interests that agree to co-operate in order to achieve some common goals, because each partner's individual success is tied to the success of the overall network. Nets are defined as local concentrations of a network. Thus nets are considered as parts of a wider network. In everyday talk these terms are often used interchangeably.

In the Finnish rural areas the local and regional development programs in tourism are often organised in form of projects partly funded by public authorities and the European Union. The projects are based on an issue, which may be for example product development, local development or marketing. The actors in the project may also form an issue-based net or a network, where the actors share a common vision of the issue as identified and activities are based on co-operative relationships (Brito 1997). These nets and networks are not meant to be life-long but to exist for a certain time-span and purpose. Some are often of a short term nature, others may function for several years. After the project the net or the network should continue without external support.

The success of a network also requires actors' commitment to co-operate with the other actors involved. The level of commitment to the issue-based nets and networks differs between the actors. Brito (1997) argues that in issue-based networks a small subset of interested actors are leading the collective

action process and the bulk membership may be made up of a mass of passive actors not directly committed to the collective effort though supporting it for future possible benefits.

Commitment to the network is defined as the company's willingness and ability to accept the goals of the network and to make efforts (Anderson & Weitz 1992, Dwyer et al. 1987, Nummela 1996) in order to participate in implementing the goals with a long term orientation (Ganesan 1994, Moorman et al. 1992, Shamdasani & Seth 1995). The actor's commitment to the network is also a process that ties the actor to the network and relationships within it. The maintaining factor in this relationship is co-operation, and commitment is a series of ongoing small decisions sometimes manifested by investments (Andersson et al. 1997, Komppula 1998).

4 Commitment to the development process – some entrepreneurial aspects from North Karelia

4.1. Commitment of the enterprises to North Karelia Tourism Strategy

North Karelia is an administrative region in north-eastern Finland. It includes thirteen rural districts and five towns. The Regional Council of North Karelia owns 90 percent of the regional tourism marketing enterprise, North Karelia Tourist Service Ltd. The function of the firm is to join forces with local enterprises and municipal tourist boards to market the area as a tourist destination.

The private tourism industry is composed of about 260 companies (e.g. 50 hotels, 12 camping sites, 18 small holiday centres, around 150 farm tourism enterprises). More than the half of the companies operate only part-time in the tourism business. About two thirds of the companies are small family enterprises, which employ only family members. The major attractions in the region are based on nature activities.

For tourism marketing the region is divided into four sub-regions, which have their own characteristic profiles, specialities and co-operative arrangements. There are also several local and community tourism organisations in the region (Komppula 1997).

During 1995-1996 a regional tourism strategy was made for the regional tourism network. The goal of the strategy work was to define the competitive position and the strategic development areas of the region and then to set up a development programme with common goals for the period 1996-2000 (Komppula

1997).

Commitment to the regional tourism network strategy was sought by implementing a bottom-up method in developing the strategy. Participation to the workshops and the process of setting the goals was thought to strengthen the commitment to the strategy. Commitment to the goals of the strategy would mean that the companies would develop their own strategies following the network goals, which was supposed to lead to the strong commitment to the implementation of the network strategy. Development of sustainable tourism was one of the ten principles of the strategy.

When constructing new strategies for regional tourism development the actors' commitment to the actions is crucial. In the spring 1997 we made a survey of the 260 tourism companies in North Karelia and listed the ten major goals in the network strategy. We asked, to what extend the companies were ready to invest in their own operations in order to implement the goals of the strategy. In case of three particular goals more than the half of the respondents were ready to make moderate investments in order to develop their own operations. In the case of five other goals (including the sustainable development goals) more than the half of the companies had no intentions to any investments. The two remaining goals were equally divided between high, moderate and no willingness to investments (Komppula 1997, Komppula 1998). The goals of the strategy were found good, but most of the companies saw them as being too general.

The results of the study showed that especially the small companies did not perceive the regional network strategy as their own strategy. The small entrepreneurs did not see themselves as direct members of a regional tourism network, but they merely felt themselves as members of some local nets composed of tourism businesses in a town or village producing total tourist products in their local environments.

In a regional scale it was very difficult for a small entrepreneur to identify itself as a part of a network, if he/she did not personally know the other members of the network, if the time-scale of the commitment was not known in advance or, if the goals and objectives of the network were not clear and concrete. Most important was that if the outcome of the co-operation could be seen in advance, the benefits of the commitments were significant.

The companies seem to commit themselves to either dyadic or triadic business relationships or on multipartner level to projects with a given goal and clear objectives. In a network context the target of commitment seems to be the idea of co-operation in order to achieve some goals, not the individual relationships with other partners. So the "issue" is more important than the members of the net.

But do the companies commit themselves to local or issue-based nets? What are the factors affecting the company's commitment to a common goal, for example the sustainable development in a local destination context.

4.2. Developing a new nature tourism enterprise - case MF

MF is a network of seven small family enterprises and a group of wilderness guides. The importance of MF is not equally felt by the member companies: most of the companies get only a small part of their income from MF productions, whereas some of the guides are dependent on the network.

MF operates in North Karelia. They have developed tourism operations in harmony with both nature and according to unique local traditions and culture. Their products include activities like white-water rafting, canoeing, fishing, hiking, husky safaris, snowmobile safaris, snowshoe hiking and Icelandic horse riding tours. They also arrange meals in the forest, nature photography, film and video opportunities and wide-ranging evening programmes. The most important perceived values within the network are responsibility towards nature conservation, sustainability and a respect for the local traditions. Warm hearted customer service and hospitality is a core value.

The antecedents of MF network are the long lasting nature tourism development works of the municipal tourist service in the home town of MF. In the beginning of 1990s a wilderness guide P was employed for the tourist service. She had a strong vision of sustainable nature tourism and came with many creative ideas of realising this vision. In 1993 an international sales workshop was organised in the area. Ms P was responsible for organising the pre- and post-tours, which were planned and produced according to her ideas of respect for nature, traditional food and catering, wilderness guides wearing traditional clothing etc. After that successful event the first meeting was held to establish the process and "spirit" of the MF network. In the early meetings there were only independent guides present, all of whom were working part time for the tourist service and the other companies.

Initially these companies were not very enthusiastic about sustainable tourism ideals. Quite quickly however, they learned that this was the trend especially as incoming foreign tourists and leisure users had an increasing awareness and respect about the sustainable tourism ideals.

The product development phase lasted about two years and by 1995 Ms P had a ready concept of sustainable nature based activities which she gave the name MF. She mapped out the entrepreneurs producing these nature based services and selected suitable companies for co-operation. Some of them were the only producers of that service, but for some products there were a number of providers, from which she choose network members. She had her own criteria: the company must show special local kind of hospitality and personal character, willingness to adapt to the rules of sustainable tourism, willingness to adapt to the local traditions etc. These criteria or the rules were not written, but she personally discussed these values with the entrepreneurs individually.

The formation of this network took two more years although all of this

time numerous activities were implemented in the name and spirit of MF. Most of the companies were implementing the activities following the advice of Ms P, but there was not any in-depth discussion about the values. The key companies were still working as they had done before their product was sold under the brand of MF. The MF activities were for most of the companies only a minor part of their turnover. The guides had in fact internalised the values of MF mush better than the companies had.

The main motive for the companies to participate in the MF network was that they expected to gain more customers through the activities of the tourist service and the marketing of the brand as a whole. The product development and brand building took several years and the companies were expecting significant outcomes on the sales side. The brand became famous in Finland, numerous articles were published and it achieved publicity on TV stations and especially amongst tourism professionals. The companies were waiting for paying customers to increase, however, press groups and visiting tour operators did not give an immediate increase in turnover.

In practice, all the monetary exchanges concerning the visitor groups were processed through the tourist service which was the responsible agency. The companies were in practice it's subcontractors. The fact that the network was actually operating under the governance of the municipal tourist service caused many problems: those companies which were not accepted as members of the network found it unfair that the municipally owned tourist service supported one group of companies and apparently discriminated against the others. This attitude and additional problems caused by conflicting personalities, made it necessary to transfer the responsibility for the MF for a development project.

During 1997-1999 MF was organised as a public funded development project. One of the part time guides was invited to work as the co-ordinator of the project. The objectives were to extend marketing operations and continue brand building. One of the project goals was to build a criteria list for MF products and entrepreneurs, together with some kind of written rules of how to produce tourism products in a MF "spirit".

Before the development project there were neither written commitments, membership fees or other financial inputs in the MF network. MF was a product based network and the co-operation between the members of the network was based on subcontractor basis and informal social exchange. MF was a loose co-operative arrangement run by a strong leader, Ms P. Co-operation and exchange between the guides was active, but there were no regular meetings for the whole group of entrepreneurs. Links were mostly dyadic between an entrepreneur and Ms P and co-operative activities concentrated in the operative production of MF products. Discussions about the companies' needs and expectations about the network were rare. There was some kind of a network strategy, but this was not written. There were no discussions about how to incorporate it into the strategies of member companies.

The companies' commitment to MF can be described as fairly low at the

beginning of the development project. Most of the companies had not invested in the product development themselves, but trusted on Ms P's ability to organise activities, guides and the needed equipment for MF operations.

After more than five years operations the discussions about the values of the network had begun amongst the companies, but not earlier than during the development project, when the regular common meetings had started. Because the strong leader Ms P was no more running the network the members were unaware about the original goals of MF. One factor, which lowered the commitment to the network was the mistrust some companies felt towards the new co-ordinator: the lack of written strategies and rules and goals gave the co-ordinator the opportunity to "adapt" the rules which meant that there occurred sometimes confusing situations.

When the new co-ordinator began to work, her objective was to develop marketing communication and the sales as well as the product itself. Very quickly her activities focused on founding a company (in the name of the network), which would specialise in selling the MF brand products. The members of the original company network were not interested in joining this new company. The new sales company had taken the name of the network after the agreement of all the members of the network. The company was now committed to using the network as its subcontractor, when selling the brand products. Interestingly, the new sales company also now sells the products of other companies, too.

The other main goal of the project was forgotten. After the founding of the sales company, the development of the original network and the operations of the network companies was left (in practise) to the director of the municipal tourist service, who took the responsibility to lead the project till it's end. Some of the companies were by now, however, only interested in sales activities and were considering weather to commit themselves to the new sales company instead of the old project. The director of the municipal tourist service saw the new company as a new channel for selling the MF products and believed that the role of the municipal tourist service would still be to continue developing the network of MF product producers and to continue the sales of the MF products as previously.

5 Factors effecting the willingness and ability of enterprises to invest in network to the common activities

In tourism businesses in rural areas 20 % of the companies produce more than 80 % of the tourist turnover. Big and small companies have very different needs and both should be taken in account. But how to realise this aim, that is one of

the key questions, which once more brings the problem of freeloaders in the picture.

The company's commitment to the issue-based net is not a part or a result of the co-operation process, but a simultaneously developing element during the co-operative process, which begins from a need to co-operate and demands evidences of the results of the co-operation to become stronger. The need for the co-operation can either be based on the actor's values and goals, which are similar to the values and the goals of the net, or the actor thinks to achieve goals better by co-operation than acting individually. The actor's commitment can be divided into two types: 1) the commitment to co-operation or 2) the commitment to the "issue", the goals of the net. In both types of the commitment a behavioural and an attitudinal dimension can be observed.

The attitudinal commitment to the "issue" (values and goals) means the actor's willingness to invest in the activities concerning the goals of the net. If the actor's attitudinal relation towards the co-operation is positive, then it can be assumed that the willingness to invest in common activities is high. The behavioural commitment refers mainly to the actor's capability to invest either in the values and the goals or in the common activities in its own action and /or through common activities.

The company's willingness to invest mainly influences its own goals, which are also influenced by the characteristics of the enterprise and the entrepreneur. The goals of the network known in forehand and information available during the activities of the network is the second factor effecting to the willingness to invest. The company characteristics such as the small size were underlined in the results of this research (Komppula 1998). The company's dependency on the tourism industry was a remarkable factor: companies dependent on tourist turnover were more desirable to invest in co-operation and issues than those not dependent.

In the small and micro-sized companies the personal characteristics of the entrepreneur were emphasised and there was a clear connection between the qualities of the enterprise and of the entrepreneur (see also Johannisson 1995). To the ability to observe the goals and the complexity of goals of the net and the own enterprise were affected also by the know-how related to the entrepreneur's occupation and field. The know-how was effected by the education level of the entrepreneur and the experience from the field. The entrepreneur's age and the health condition effected to a willingness to develop the enterprise and on the other hand the willingness to commit behaviourally to common activities of the nets: If the entrepreneur did not have a family member to continue the company after him/her, he/she was not interested in developing the activities and the resources in the company.

The attitudinal commitment to the issue includes elements related to the set of values of the enterprise and the entrepreneur. As far as the goals of the network are based on values (like in the case MF) the importance of the attitudinal commitment of the actor is emphasised. The personal characteristics

of the entrepreneur (personality, attitudes, know-how) effect on the formation of the goals of the company.

The attitudinal commitment to the network's goals is highly dependent on what kind of information is available at the founding stage of the net and on the other hand how the information about the activities and the results of the activities reaches the actors. In the central position is the leader of the net and the actor (or actors) of the inmost core of the net. Trust towards the leader is a precondition to the attitudinal commitment. The trust towards the leader focuses both on the person, when the measures of the trust are professional skills and personal interaction skills, and the organisation he/she represents.

The attitudinal commitment to the co-operation relates to the company's perceptions concerning the other actors of the network and a general attitude towards co-operation. Our results show that though the company's attitudinal commitment to the network's goals in the beginning of co-operation was little, the actor's attitudes could develop during the co-operation through learning: the positive experiences strengthened the trust towards the benefits of co-operation, which strengthened the willingness to invest in co-operation. The ability to perceive the possible benefits of the co-operation is effected by the actor's personality and the earlier experiences of the co-operation.

The impact of personal relationships between the actors especially concerning co-operation among small-sized companies is significant. Different procedures between personalities are learned to tolerate better in situations, where the benefits of the activities can be seen.

The attitudinal commitment both to the issue and to the co-operation develop during the co-operation process. The high attitudinal commitment could be described also to be an enthusiasm to the issue or to the co-operation. According to the results can be claimed that actor's enthusiasm to the co-operation remains or even increases in the net, when the actor experiences to get benefits inside an expected time. If there is a delay concerning the activities or the benefits, the enthusiasm goes down and the willingness to invest decreases.

The behavioural commitment means that the actor invests resources to achieve the goals of the net or of the co-operation. The behavioural commitment requires that the company is attitudinally committed at least either to the goals of the net or to the co-operation. The behavioural commitment is affected by the company's willingness to invest and especially the company's ability to invest.

The company's ability to invest in the activities of the net is affected firstly by the company's resources. Lack of economical resources decreases company's possibilities to invest money to the common activities or to the development processes related to the goals of the net. Lack of time to co-operate seemed to be critical in North Karelia case. Especially the size of the company and the dependence on the tourism turnover effected to the time resources. In the small full-time tourism enterprises the lack of time seemed to be even more significant than the economical resources (see also Svensk 1998). The lack of know-how effected so that the possible benefits of the co-

operation were not perceived or there was not knowledge about the possible partners. The ability to invest were effected by the characteristics of the company and the entrepreneur as well.

The behavioural dimension of commitment was emphasised in opinions and images of the companies related to the concept of commitment. The actors interviewed measured the actor's activity in the net by the amount of participation to the common activities and by the economical investments. The companies considered the economical investments to be the best measure of the commitment. The research supports Gundlach's et al. (1995) results, which suggest that the credibility and proportionality of the investments in co-operation are critical in terms of measuring the commitment to co-operation. The credibility means that the investments are remarkable compared to the actor's resources and that the investments do have some impact on the co-operative arrangement. The proportionality means that all parties invest equally compared to their resources.

The behavioural commitment may also be possible without the actor being attitudinally committed to both the issue and co-operation at the same time. The actor can be attitudinally committed to the issue and invest in the common activities, because in that way he/she gets such benefits, which were not available in any other way. In these cases the behavioural commitment is described usually as an economical investment to the common activities, but the actor does not spend time to common decision making nor to social contacts.

In practice the behavioural commitment may also be influenced by independent external factors, such as legislation, which can prevent or promote the company's action in some net. The effective factor concerning the behavioural commitment is also the actor's functional alternatives available.

Our results showed that the actors usually belong to several issue-based nets and under circumstances of limited resources they have to make decisions related to the temporal and the financial investments. The actor's dependence on the other actors of the net, the activities of the net and naturally the business-field, effect to the number of their investments. According to Baldauf & Cravens (1999) the dependence on a partner as well as on the high mutual dependence predict higher trust and commitment.

6 Discussion

Typical features for the tourism industry are an easy access to the industry and an easy beginning as an entrepreneur. Many tourism entrepreneurs in Finland launch their business as an occasional job at the beginning. The motives for the access to the industry are based either on a hobby or for example on rural accommodation business tangent with farm production. For this reason the

entrepreneur's experience on the industry often is non-existent and both the business education and experience are insufficient in the tourism enterprise. These factors have their impact on planning procedures of the company. Typical for the small tourism companies is a reactive planning approach and the short planning scale. The activities are planned in the dimension from one to at most two years. Enterprises' ability for strategic planning affects their ability to engage in the long term co-operation, which, however, would be necessary for a sustainable destination development.

The attitudinal commitment to the sustainable development requires knowledge about the issue as well as commitment to the values of sustainability. On the destination level the process of building the sustainable destination image call for co-operation between all the stakeholder groups.

In order to get the small companies committed to sustainable development, local development nets are necessary. Small company's ability to begin the development work in its own activities requires the willingness to accept the ideals of sustainable development as well as trust on the economical benefits of the development work. The goals of the issue-based co-operation towards sustainable development should be based on the actor' own developing problems, with help of the activities of the network

The role of project leaders becomes often crucially important because many issue-based networks in tourism industry receive external financing. These leaders could be called community entrepreneurs (Johannisson & Nilsson 1989), who are not necessarily entrepreneurs themselves, but are those, who work in projects in order to develop co-operation between enterprises. The project leaders see the development of a community as their personal objective. They assist entrepreneurs both to develop their self-respect as well as abilities and support entrepreneurs to create and to exploit relationships to the authorities and other external stakeholders. The project leaders combine their own personal networks for the benefit of the community. A good project leader trusts himself in what he/she do and at the same time makes entrepreneurs to trust and commit themselves to the project (Johannisson & Nilsson 1989).

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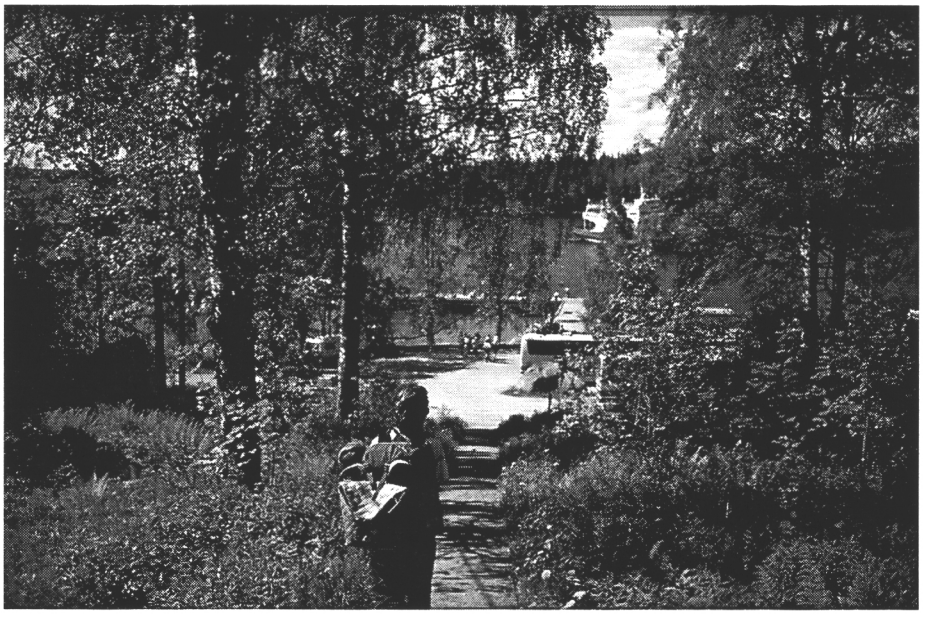

Ferries, owned by local enterprises, carry nature tourists from Koli National Park over the lake Pielinen to the town of Lieksa, Nurmes and Joensuu.
Photo: Finnish Forest Research Institute - Tuomo Saarelainen.

Snapshots of the history of nature-based tourism in Finland

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Abstract

This paper approaches the changing meaning of nature in tourism and its increasing importance from the perspective of nation building and as a nationalistic tool for an evolving state. The re-direction of tourism towards nature is also discussed in the context of gender and age issues. Travel was at one time a male activity dominated by young people, but modern tourism has caused changes in both of these aspects. The tourism industry may still be controlled by men, but in terms of present-day tourist numbers it is not a male-dominated activity. Likewise, senior tourism is expected to grow quite rapidly in the near future. Finally, the impact of technical advances in photography on nature tourism is briefly considered.

Keywords: Nature-based tourism, recreation, nature experience, travel.

1 Introduction

The history of the touristic use of nature in Finland is as long as that of modern

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tourism itself. Tourism in its true and modern form, as "a movement of masses" and a product of the industrial society, started in Finland at the turn of the 20th century. The number of tourists at that time was not substantial, of course, but it was then that travelling and travellers started to be organised in a touristic manner.

The first real growth in tourist numbers was faced after the First World War, in 1920's and 1930's, while a second phase of development, including that of nature-based tourism, started in the 1960's and early 1970's. The fastest and most visible growth began in the late 1980's, however, when many of the present resorts and other touristic landscapes were designed and constructed.

The attractiveness of many early popular tourist places such as Koli, Punkaharju, Aulanko and Petsamo was based on their natural settings, but they were also cultural landscapes, reflecting the history and identity of people and land. Nature and culture are more or less interlocked elements in tourism, and the distinction between them is sometimes an artificial one. Even the conceptual difference between the terms nature tourism and cultural tourism or eco-tourism and ethno-tourism can occasionally be quite problematic.

Nature tourism, or nature-based tourism, is conceptualised here as a form of tourism that is based mainly on the attractiveness of nature and touristic activities situated and performed in a natural environment. The role of nature is thus in a central position in nature-based tourism. Nature itself as a tourist attraction can nevertheless be understood as a social construction; for what we see and value in a natural landscape in tourism is in many ways a product of the culture and societal values and meaning system of the time (see Urry 1995).

The purpose of this article is not to provide a solid history of the touristic use of nature in Finland, but rather to take a few snapshots of the history of nature-based tourism. It must be noted, however, that the term itself is quite young in the Finnish context, having become popular and widely known only in the early 1990's. The paper discusses the touristic use of nature from a current perspective using the present concept of nature tourism or nature-based tourism. The purpose is to examine some of the key issues regarding the changing role of nature in past (and present) tourism and the meaning of nature in tourism. These are naturally not the only key topics, and not always necessarily the most important, either. For example, the role of the development of transportation, technical improvements in hiking equipment and the consequences of post-Fordist production and consumption for the tourism industry are not widely discussed here.

In actual fact, the present wide use of the term nature tourism, or nature-based tourism, and the many other "new forms" of tourism, such as agro-tourism, eco-tourism, ecological tourism, ethno-tourism and risk tourism, are connected with development in society as a whole and the evolution of post-Fordist production (Munt & Mowforth 1998, see Rojek 1993, Urry 1995). The shift from mass consumption to post-Fordist consumption indicates consumer-driven and more consumption-dominated markets rather than markets controlled by producers.

Also, almost all aspects of social life can be commodified, and consumption can be highly politically charged (Urry 1990, Sack 1992). All these features are quite evident in present-day tourism, but at the same time it must be noticed that tourism has always been a politically and ideologically loaded activity.

2 Historical reflections on nature-based tourism

2.1 Nature as an early tourist attraction

Before the 19th century and the era of modern tourism in Finland, nature in itself did not occupy a central role as a tourist attraction or motivation for travel. It was depicted in various ways, of course, but quite often it was taken to imply unpleasant elements and obstacles for travellers. The famous late 18th century Swedish scientist and traveller Carl von Linné (1889/1969, p. 68, see also Hallikainen 1993) describes his experiences in Lapland and his attitudes towards nature there in the following way:

"The whole land of the Lapps is nothing but mires, and its right name should be Styx. A chaplain can never describe hell that would be worse than this. Never have poems portrayed Styx as ugly as the land here."

The early travellers, sometimes even natural scientists such as Linné, were more concerned with the cultural and social features of (present-day) Finland than with its thousands of lakes, forests, eskers, mires and fells. Some elements of nature, such as the midnight sun, were nevertheless evident in the motives and descriptions of the early travellers (see Acerbi 1804/1984, Grot 1846/1983). The midnight sun was "spatialised" to certain places, e.g. Aavasaksa, a hill in South-West Lapland that was a popular site from which to observe it. Some features of culture were also socially spatialised in certain physical and natural environment, e.g. the Sami people and their cultural features were sometimes treated as a part of the local flora and fauna of Lapland (Saarinen 1999, see Gothus 1555/1973, Regnard 1731/1982).

2.2 Nature tourism images as a source of national identity

During the 19th century the role of nature at the societal and cultural level changed. Many European nations searched for a cultural and national identity,

and the idea of Finland as a national entity was conceived and constructed and an identity for this as yet "unborn", imagined state, nation and "community" was sought from the wild natural environments of Karelia, the eastern part of Finland (see Halila & Rommi 1986, Paasi 1996, Häyrynen 2000). The land and its various parts and ethnic groups were explained to people by many authors of travellogues and popular scientific works. One of the most influential of these works was Sakari Topelius' Book of Our Country (*Maamme kirja*) published in 1875 (see also Topelius 1845/1980). This book inaugurated the division of Finland into regions and treatment of its people, nature and history, and was a widely used introductory textbook in schools and later as a basis for regional tourism marketing (Topelius 1875/1932).

In the changes that took place in the early 20th century, especially after the First World War, domestic and international tourism started to grow. The rise of international tourism was a product of the post-war political stability and economic growth in Europe and the development of transportation facilities (Syrjämaa 1997), while additional stimuli in the case of domestic tourism were to be found in Karelian and nationalistic thought and ideas.

The growth of tourism served clearly nationalistic purposes before Finland gained its independence in 1917, and formed part of the process of socialisation of the people to the idea of a new state – nation – and its rich natural and cultural features. Similarly, the main reason for developing international tourism after independence was to introduce the country to international community and to obtain foreign currency. Thus tourism was used an ideological tool both home and abroad, efforts in which the government played a central role. The Finnish Tourist Association, for example, and its resorts and their marketing in different parts of the country were funded by the government.

The role of nature in tourism became still more important after the civil war in 1918, as was evident in the tourist literature and the marketing approaches employed. The war was a not only a struggle between the "Whites" and the "Reds", but at the same time one between the North and the South, or between the Periphery and the Centre, Rural and Urban Finland, although the distinctions were in practice not this simplistic or clear-cut, of course. It was significant, however, that the government made no particular effort to stress socio-ethnic or cultural distinctions and differences after the war or to encourage the building up of these, nor was any such policy followed by official institutions at any level in society, not even the tourism organisations or the tourist literature or brochures. Thus, the role of nature in tourism became more and more important. Looked at simplistically, Finland was produced and depicted as a solid nation occupying a territory with a rich and wide variety of natural features and landscapes. The only real exception to all this was the northern Sami culture, which was used quite visibly in international and domestic tourist advertising and travel books as an "other" (and still is).

There were also other political changes and structures that led to nature occupying a key role as a tourist attraction. The Petsamo area – a gateway to

the Arctic Sea – was incorporated into Finland under the Treaty of Tartu in 1920, and by the time of the Second World War both the area and the route to the sea had taken their place among the most popular attractions for both Finnish and international tourists (see Manninen 1936, Hirn & Markkanen 1987, Ilola 1997). One famous Finnish writer, archaeologist and traveller praises Petsamo's tourism potential in these words:

"Petsamo is our best hiking terrain. Actually, it is the world's best hiking terrain. It is wild and beautiful, rugged and bracing¼ And at the same time it is modern and comfortable, easy to see and quickly visited if necessary. Petsamo is good place for travellers in every way" (Pälsi 1931, p. 7).

Pälsi depicted the place as suitable for a modern tourist, who is inspired by speed, multiple options and opportunities, activities and ease, but at the same time by challenges (see Rojek 1993, Syrjämaa 1997). The increasing touristic role of Petsamo also made Lapland and the Sami culture touristically more important than in the previous decades. Earlier the nationalistic eye was set to gaze on Karelia, but now it started to search for a new object.

The new touristic (and nationalistic) direction towards the north and Petsamo created a basis for many of our present-day tourist sites and destinations in Lapland, e.g. Saariselkä (see Saarinen 1998). From the Finnish perspective at the time, Lapland was a new territory – "colony" – and the Sami were socially and politically a quite unproblematic issue. The Sami people represented a marginal ethnic group and a harmless opportunity for social and ethnic distinctions in marketing and nation building. Topelius, among many others in the late 19th and early 20th centuries did not see Sami as a Finnish "tribe" or a part of the Finnish sphere of culture (Lehtola 1997a, Topelius 1875/1932). At the start, Lapland was treated more or less like a frontier and a separate part of Finland (Lehtola 1997b). Later these distinctions and the uneven use of ethnicity have caused ethical problems in the development of tourism in Finland, and especially in Lapland (Aikio & Aikio 1993, Saarinen 1999).

2.3 Gender and the experience of nature

During the late 19th century and early 20th century nature was viewed as representing the identity of the Finnish people and their history and culture. Touristically, nature was represented through natural and ideal landscapes. It was more differentiated regionally than the people (except for the Sami), but the growth of tourism produced other kinds of social differentiation in tourist landscapes as well.

Travel and early tourism were clearly male-dominated activities, but its modernisation and growth, and especially the rise of nature-based tourism, brought

women onto the scene, not only as company for the men, but also as independent tourists in their own right.

Kaarina Kari and Anna Lehtonen were two of the pioneers of nature-based tourism in Finland, who participated in and led many of the first guided nature trips to Northern Finland and Lapland in the late 1920's and 1930's (Kari 1978). They and their groups visited the fells of Salla, Pallas, the Kilpisjärvi area and Paanajärvi, for example, and even funded and built a cottage on Pallas fell in 1934 to serve as a base camp for skiing schools for women. The cottage itself played an important role in the development of tourism and conservation in the Pallas area (Fig. 1). Later, these skiing schools and trips organised by the Finnish Women's Exercise Association formed an example and basis for the notion of children's winter school holidays (see Nähdä tunturit¼), now one of the peak tourist seasons in Lapland.



Figure 1. The cottage built by the Finnish Women's Exercise Association at Vatikuru in the Pallas area in 1934, inside the present Pallas-Ounas National Park (established in 1938).

The early journeys of Lehtonen and Kari reflected the nationalistic discourse associated with tourism. Kari refers to the works of the Finnish geographer J.G. Granö in the 1920's as an inspiring force that made her attempt those early journeys to the unique fell landscapes of Lapland:

"*Professor J.G. Granö's statement affected me very strongly and joyfully; I even felt pride. Finland had such a valuable and unusual terrain.*" (Kari 1978, p. 4).

Lehtonen and Kari's journeys to Lapland were ideological in two ways, involving issues of both gender and nationhood. The groups were more aesthetically driven than many other segments of tourism at the time – but at the same time quite physically and bodily oriented (see Nähdä tunturit¼). The focus was on physical outdoor recreation and experiences of nature without any other recreational functions or activities such as hunting or fishing, which were the dominant features of male hiking and the "masculine" wildernes tourist experience at that time and very much later on. Kari's groups also made careful observations on the Sami culture and the everyday life of the people (Kari 1978).

Women as tourists were not a common sight for the local people or for the other nature tourists in Finland, in the early decades of the 20th century. Kari states that the Sami were astonished at the sight of women in trousers (Kari 1978, see Nähdä tunturit¼). Even in the late 1950's, the Finnish writer Kullervo Kemppinen pondered in his hiking book *Lumikuru* over the possibility of taking a woman as company on a hiking trip and wonders at the role of women on an excursion into the wilderness:

"*A woman is a good and useful help in a man's company. This is also the case in Lapland. Through the eyes of a woman many elements of the environment, which a man would never have noticed, become explored and examined and enrich the experiences of the whole hiking group. ¼ In a men's group, eating tends to mean simply bread with coffee or a plate of porridge, and – if you are lucky – the cooking of fish, but when you have ladies with you, it is in a way quite different to arrive at the camp from a fishing or hiking trip on the fells when a delicious smell of soup announces the coming enjoyments for the stomach¼*" (Kemppinen 1958, p. 27).

Kemppinen's description stresses the sensitivity and experiential role of a woman tourist towards nature and activities in nature. It also reflects the general gender relations and roles in society at the time. One can state that females might be more sensitive tourists or that they are better cooks than males in general, but naturally, both features represent the socially constructed ideas and roles of man and women in society. The gender roles in nature-based tourism activities, may have been more equal than in society in general, but for Kemppinen the woman's role as a tourist was still to act as a companion, or an object, waiting for the man to arrive.

2.4 Colourful nature; more effective images by new technology

Nature has been an object of tourist experiences and descriptions for a long time, so that written and drawn illustrations have formed a basis for touristic representations of nature and landscapes for centuries. The invention and

development of photography caused a change in the representations of nature in tourist literature and advertising.-Photographs were more powerful than the earlier sketches; they were "realistic" and they were easier and faster to produce. Thus, they provided more effective support for the growing modern consumption of tourism and touristic products and quite soon they became one of the central products of tourism and the tourist experience. Nowadays, buying postcards and taking photos is almost an obligatory part of a tourist's practices at his destination and on route.

Photos were and still are widely used in the tourism industry, and photography and especially the techniques of developing photographs, had a real and positive impact on the growth of tourism in Finland. Photos and "moving pictures" were used in tourism advertising and "political propaganda films", the latter serving the development of both Finnish and international tourism (see Lampio & Hannikainen 1921, Karmo 1932, Katainen 1993).

The impact of photography was very visible at some destinations, e.g. the Punkaharju area, for although this was already a well known tourist attraction long before the touristic use of photography began. However, aerial photography made the whole place and its complex esker landscape more interesting and understandable for people and was more effective in creating a need to experience the place.

Black and white photographs were not equally suitable for all tourist descriptions, however, as they tended perhaps to make churches, castles, boulevards and other human constructions more visual and interesting than trees, rivers and lake views, although they were widely used for natural landscapes in winter tourism (Museovirasto).

Up to the 1960's and 1970's, winter or early spring formed the main (nature-based) tourist season alongside the summer. The development of colour photography, however, placed nature in a new focus (see Lounimo 1965) and altered the role of the seasons in tourism. In fact, it actually assisted in the creation and production of a brand new tourist season: *ruska*, the time of the autumn colours. Before that, the colourful autumn season was depicted in many ways with words and B&W photos, but without having any major effect on tourism growth in autumn.

In the 1950's colour photographs began to be used more widely in printed materials. Kullervo Kemppinen (1958), for example, used numerous colour photos in his book Lumikuru, and some of the book's photos were reproduced later as postcards of Saariselkä and Lapland. Kemppinen's book with its colour photos described the wilderness region of Saariselkä as optimal hiking country and almost as a paradise on earth. Interestingly, this was just "the same land" that Linné (1889/1969) had described as a land of the dead (Styx) and a worse than hell. Thus, it took about 200 years to change the landscape from hell to paradise. Naturally, the landscape itself remained relatively same and "untouched", but political and technical progress and socio-cultural structures had altered the scene, calling for new interpretations of the landscape and its meanings and values.

The book Lumikuru had a influence on tourism development in Lapland in general and especially at the site itself. While the average annual increase in hikers in the 1950's was about 38 %, the Saariselkä area faced a 100 % increase in tourism in the year following the publication of the book (Saastamoinen 1982). Nowadays tens of thousands of tourists visit Saariselkä during the two weeks of *ruska* and the resort has a capacity of over 7 000 beds with several hotels, restaurants and bars. In spite of its built-up character, the place is nevertheless still marketed largely through images of wilderness, nature and outdoor activities (see Saarinen 1998).

3 Concluding remarks

The history of tourism in Finland in its modern sense is largely based on the attractiveness of nature and natural landscapes, and this remains the case in spite of the recent development of a tourism infrastructure.

The most important tourist destinations nowadays in terms of numbers of overnight visitors are admittedly situated in urban areas, but the tourist image of Finland still widely reflects the importance of nature, so that even cities and urban destinations such as Helsinki and Rovaniemi are marketed by reference to their natural settings. Even the high-technology city of Oulu refers to wilderness environments nearby in its advertising.

Nature-based tourism activities are largely located in the northern and eastern parts of the country and in the rural and natural areas of southern Finland and the archipelago. The activities involved vary according to the area, of course, but some of the most important at a general level are fishing, hiking, cycling, canoeing, cross-country and slalom skiing, and snowmobile driving. It is these activities that form the present economic basis for nature-based tourism.

Nature-based tourism in Finland has just recently gained momentum economically. Nature activities produced a direct income from international tourism of almost 200 million Ecus in 1994, with an employment effect of 1 700 full-time and 1 450 part-time jobs (Kauppi 1996, see also Saastamoinen 1995), and at present they account for over 250 million Ecus out of the total direct income from international tourism of about 1 700 million Ecus. Although this means that nature-based tourism produces less than 20 % of the total income, it may play quite an important role in the tourist economies of some regions. In Lapland, for example, it represents about a half of the total income from international tourism.

The economic importance of nature-based tourism is estimated to grow faster than that of any other segment of tourism in the future (see Hall & Page 1999, Mowforth & Munt 1998). It has also its challengers, however, such as urban tourism and heritage tourism, and so far it has not entirely been able to

capitalise on its growth potential, at least not in Finland. The situation may be different internationally, and the Finnish tourism markets will most probably follow the wider tendencies in this respect.

The World Tourism Organisation estimates that international flight tourism will grow from the present 700 million passengers to 1.6 billion (see WTO 1997). Thus it is quite evident that tourism will grow in the future, but the role of nature and its share of the growing Finnish tourism market are still open questions. The history of nature-based tourism indicates that its future development depends greatly on the social, cultural, economic and political environment in which tourism as a whole takes place. The crucial element in the future growth of tourism will be its impacts on the physical and cultural landscapes, and the industry's ability to develop truly sustainable operating practices.

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Tourfor – award for quality of tourism, forests and the environment

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Abstract

This paper outlines the development of a sector-specific Environmental Management System and proposals for a pan-European award - Tourfor - to manage the environmental effects of such co-development. The research and development aspects of this project are reviewed and the project outcomes are presented and discussed along with conclusions and recommendations.

Keywords: Forest tourism, sustainability, environmental management system, award.

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1 Tourfor and its aims

Tourfor is a project part-financed by the European Commission's DGXI (Environment) and part of its 'LIFE' programme to promote sustainable development (Commission of the European Communities 1992). The project aims outlined in the original Tourfor proposal were as follows: "The project provides a paradigm for consolidating sustainable tourism and forestry management by analysing three representative areas within the [European] community. This synergistic approach to the key areas of economic and environmental importance will result in published guidelines and criteria to support the introduction of a pan-European Awards system."

From these aims the following project objectives were developed:

* to promote a collaborative working group across EU member states;
* to identify ways in which tourism can support management of sustainable forestry;
* to monitor sites of tourism activity in forest areas in the United Kingdom, Portugal and Finland;
* to identify costs and benefits of tourism activity in forest areas;
* to establish criteria for sustainable tourism development in forest areas;
* to identify methods of promoting sustainable co-development of tourism and forestry to maximise benefits and minimise costs;
* to produce appropriate guidelines to encourage such development based on best practice;
* to bridge the gaps between theory and practice, and
* to promote the benefits derived from the project.

The Tourfor development team was drawn from three institutions in three EU countries, chosen on the basis of their representation of a variety of tourism activities and forest types. The institutions are Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College in United Kingdom, Estação Florestal Nacional in Portugal and North Karelia Polytechnic in Finland. In addition to this partnership relationships were developed with a number of other stakeholders. In the UK these included The Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe, The Forest of Mercia, The Crown Estate (Swinley Forest). In Finland partners included the Finnish Forest Research Institute/Koli National Park and the Huhmari Holiday Centre. In Portugal partners included The Tapada de Mafra, and the Parque Ecoligico de Monsanto.

2 Background and context

The importance of Tourfor is related to two key factors. First, forests are high on the environmental agenda. As well as their productive functions, they contribute to global carbon cycles and biodiversity. Second, tourism is moving up the environmental agenda. Its rapid growth has forced attentions to its negative impacts as well as its contribution to economic growth. The potential exists for co-development across these sectors: Forests could absorb more tourism by increased recreational provision, and tourism could benefit forests by providing social use valuations as well as direct income.

Forests provide a setting, where many types of tourism and outdoor recreation can take place (Font & Tribe 2000). A high quality natural environment is essential for most of these activities. Without it they would find it hard to function and many could cease to exist. The last three decades have seen a dramatic growth of participation in outdoor recreation and tourism activities. This has resulted in a large increase in the volume of people demanding access to the countryside and placed considerable pressure on the forest environment.

For some forest sites, tourism and recreation are not appropriate activities, perhaps because of the special sensitivity of a site or indeed because of hazards arising from timber production uses. Elsewhere, tourism may sometimes threaten sustainability of forests and their local environments, but it also has the power to support them.

With a positive approach to tourism and recreation management, a harmonious relationship between the visitors and the forest environment can be formed. If managed carefully, tourism and recreation can help to maintain the environment, rather than inflict damage on it. There exists a relationship of mutual interdependence between tourism, recreation and the forest environment. They increasingly rely upon each and because of this, management is important.

The Environmental Management System (EMS), which is the centre of Tourfor, is linked to an award and guidelines for environmental management, which recognise such interdependence. It seeks to reduce conflict between tourism, recreation and the forest environment and create a symbiotic relationship (Budowski 1976).

It seeks to encourage forest tourism and recreation, which is managed to maximise the benefits and minimise the costs to the environment in which it takes place. Benefits can include contribution to the viability of local economies and provision of support for environmentally sound timber production. Negative environmental impacts to be minimised include overcrowding, diminution of aesthetic appeal, loss of tranquillity, destruction of natural features, loss of biodiversity, overuse of resources and production of waste products.

Tourfor is a sector-specific response to Agenda 21 (WTO 1997) aimed at environmental improvement at the corporate level. It uses the EMS approach to implant sustainable aims into organisational missions and encourage systematic

delivery of sustainable practices. It has unique features including:

* development in partnership with EU countries;
* compatibility with other management systems and has partial compatibility with the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) (Department of the Environment 1996) and ISO 14000 (British Standards Institute 1996) approaches;
* emphasis on locally set agendas for environmental improvement;
* its sector specific focus;
* the collection, consolidation and codification of good practice;
* its use of general principles of sustainability ;
* its underpinning by a series of case studies of good practice;
* its design as a management tool and based on a management systems approach;
* its emphasis on environmental assessment and improvement, and
* its inclusion of performance target setting and monitoring.

The Tourfor EMS, in emphasising the responsibility of management at the micro level of the site or organisation, interprets the concept of sustainability widely. It recognises that different priorities will exist in different areas, but suggests that systems should take account of four key aspects of sustainability. These are:

* the visitor impact on the immediate tourism site;
* the off-site impacts of running the site;
* the contribution to improvement of non-tourism environmental goals like sustainable forest management (Aplet *et al.* 1993), and
* the contribution of site activities to the sustainability of the local economy.

The key aim of the Tourfor EMS is to ensure that its principles are incorporated into the corporate management system of the target organisation. Amongst the benefits that such an approach can bring, over and above environmental improvements, are additional information to consumers, assistance in marketing, and help in the reduction of costs.

Environmental impacts are evident across forest sites in Europe. But they manifest themselves in different ways. For example overcrowding is a key issue in the densely populated UK, rural development is a key issue in Finland, and public awareness is a key issue in Portugal. Hence the importance of an EMS which can respond to the range of conditions evident across forest sites in the EU.

The EMS approach is one of a variety of different instruments to encourage sustainability (Wight 1998). These may be summarised under the three categories of regulation, economic approaches and soft tools, and are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. *Categories of environmental instruments.*

Regulations	Economic approaches	Soft Tools
* *laws and regulation*	* *taxes, subsidies and grants*	* *community programmes, national and local networks*
* *special status designation*	* *tradable rights and permits*	* *tourism ecolabelling*
	* *deposit-refund schemes*	* *environmental management systems*
	* *product and service charges*	* *certification/award schemes*
		* *guidelines, treaties and agreements*
		* *citizenship and education*

Environmental management is a concept that has been around since the 1970s. Its development has been assisted by the introduction of environmental legislation and pressure on organisations to improve environmental performance from employees, the public, customers, the government and a range of international groups. Environmental compliance audits were one of the first management developments. These were primarily aimed at assessing a company's compliance with legislation. As the environment has become a bigger issue for industry, a more holistic approach has been developed in the form of the EMS.

The key standards already existing are the business industry's EMS, the International Standards Organisation 14001, and the European Commission's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). These are designed to be used by all types of organisations. Tourfor is designed to transfer the principles of these generic standards into a usable structure for the forest tourism sector. Tourfor bridges the gap between the industry EMS standards and other initiatives for sustainable forest management and sustainable tourism management to create a focused EMS with guidelines designed specifically for the forest tourism sector.

The Tourfor EMS and award proposals fall under the category of soft tools. It has significant merits to recommend it. In particular its strengths are to be found in its adaptability and transferability across a range of situations. It is able to offer solutions, which are responsive to changing circumstances and sensitive to local conditions. Additionally its locally negotiated nature should encourage the development of environmental programmes, which are acceptable to an organisation's employees and wider stakeholding community. At the same time its focus on the management systems enables a relatively low-cost route of external verification and accreditation.

However the limitations of such an approach also need to be noted. Primarily these relate to the difficulty of a site-based EMS having influence on some of the key effects and impacts caused by tourism and recreation in the countryside. For example, one of the most important aspects of countryside tourism and recreation is use of cars to access the site. Car use has many important environmental effects. These include pollution from carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide emissions and diesel particulates, consumption of non-renewable energy resources, and the related effects of countryside erosion by roadbuilding programmes.

An EMS can influence car use. For example it can instigate a programme publicising public transport access, integrating it with walking and cycling routes and by provision and pricing of car parking. However these will be of marginal importance. It is instruments such as taxation and legislation that are necessary to provide a comprehensive approach at a national and international level to deal with the environmental effects of tourism, which are outside the direct influence of tourism providing organisations.

Important developments in the course of the project include a tourism industry-wide approach sponsored by Green Globe (1999), which is developing a EMS-based award. However the Tourfor results demonstrate good compatibility with this scheme and offers a detailed account of the issues specific to forests and rural areas. Additionally some large forest tourism operators have elected to use ISO/EMAS schemes. For example the Finnish Forest and Park Service, the largest landowner providing organised tourism and recreation in Finnish forests, was certified under the ISO 14001 standard in 1998. Center Parcs were certified under ISO14001 in 1999 (Collins 2000).

3 Project methodology

The main methodologies deployed by the project were:

* desk research to identify key environment/tourism/forest issues in each country;
* desk research to compile comparative review of Tourfor EMS against other tools;
* desk research to generate a structure for the Tourfor EMS;
* desk research to scope potential forest sites;
* field research to consult on proposals;
* field research to generate case studies;
* field research to compile state of the art issues, and
* desk work to synthesise and publish results.

4 Project innovations

A key innovative aspect of TOURFOR project is its linkages between tourism and sustainable forest management. Sustainable forest management has been identified by a number of frameworks, notably the Statement of Forest Principles agreed at the Earth Summit. This was built on at the Helsinki Conference (Helsinki Conference 1993) where the General Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe and the General Guidelines for the Conservation of the Biodiversity of European Forests were adopted. The follow up to the General Guidelines are being developed in the Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management (Ministerial Conference... 1998). Many national frameworks are also being developed following similar criteria (e.g. Forestry Authority 1998).

Sustainable Forest Management means "the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems." (Ministerial Conference... 1993). Tourfor will help to fulfil a number of these criteria. Accounting for socio-economic functions includes tourism, recreation and access, rural development, community involvement and increased awareness and participation. Tourfor also encourages consideration of national and global aspects of forests.

The Pan European Operational level guidelines (Ministerial Conference... 1998) recommend that "adequate public access to forests for the purpose of recreation should be provided taking into account ... the effects on forest resources and ecosystems as well as the compatibility with other functions of the forest". Also "forest management operations should take into account all socio-economic functions especially the recreational function". The UK Forestry Standard (Forestry Authority 1998) also identifies these criteria as part of sustainable forest management. It recommends that opportunities for access and recreation are enhanced and suggests that evidence is shown that recreational pursuits are considered and that these activities do not compromise future benefits of the forest or nature conservation.

Tourfor focuses on tourism and recreation and so provides the detail for managing these activities which is not provided in these standards. In contrast the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the main forestry certification body, only briefly refers to 'social' benefits in its principals and criteria (Forest Stewardship Council 1994). Tourfor will complement this scheme by addressing an area, which FSC does not have the scope for, while promoting the other forest uses such as sustainable timber production.

Other innovative aspects of the project relative to the state of the art are:

* use of and compatibility with existing EMS frameworks (e.g. ISO 14000 and EMAS);
* provision of detailed sector-specific guidelines for implementation;
* consultation with target sector;
* its applicability to a range of European contexts;
* linkage of EMS with award/eco-label/proposals;
* interdisciplinary development across forest/tourism/environmental sectors, and
* potential for inclusion within existing award schemes (e.g. Blue Flag).

6 Results

6.1 The Tourfor award proposals

The key result from the Tourfor project is the production of proposals to develop an award scheme to recognise good environmental management practice of tourism and recreation in forests. The award is based on an EMS. The requirements of the EMS for forest recreation and tourism are divided into five management areas, which form a plan-do-check-act cycle. The five EMS elements are illustrated in Table 2 and form a closed loop system of management so that the audit and review elements link back to the policy and the cycle continues. The five elements are designed to lead on from each other in a logical and practical sequence.

Table 2. The components of the Tourfor environmental management system.

Environmental Policy	The first stage of developing the EMS is a statement of the overall environmental aims and commitments for the site and its management.
Site Review	This is a survey of the current environmental condition and management of the site, resulting in a baseline from which all future changes can be measured.
Programme	This should prioritise significant issues, set targets for improvements and specific actions to achieve them.
Operations	Actions are operationalised and responsibilities of staff and resources necessary to implement the programme are determined.
Audit and Review	The EMS is assessed and its performance reviewed.

Two documents have been produced to underpin this:

* A Tourfor award pack professionally published and widely distributed worldwide (1000 copies to 45 countries to date). This document has been produced in English, but the Finnish and Portuguese partners have translated summarised to be used to their consultees.
* The award management proposals; an internal document for DGXI where two scenarios to take the Tourfor project forward are outlined. Discussion are taking place with the Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe (FEEE) to develop and market the award.

6.2 Competition and Interim awards

A competition was organised in the UK, Finland and Portugal to discover sites, which had made good progress towards implementing an EMS for forest recreation and tourism. Five winning sites were given interim Tourfor awards.

6.3 The Tourfor manual

The Tourfor manual "Environmental management for rural tourism and recreation" is the key document for tourism and recreation sites in forests, and by extension, all rural settings, to implement an Environmental Management System (Tribe et al. 2000). This manual is full of case studies, practical advice, and checklists. The manual has been professionally published by Cassell, with offices in the UK and the US, and wide international coverage of academic and practitioners. The initial print run is of 1400 copies.

6.4 Consultation

The UK, Finland and Portugal carried out scoping (Department of Environmental Affairs 1992) exercises to evaluate the number of potential sites interested in the Tourfor award, each country according to their budgets. Databases were developed from the scoping lists, and a consultation exercise to over 400 sites and stakeholders was carried out to determine the feasibility of using an EMS to manage their environmental impacts and their interest to work towards an award such as Tourfor.

From the results of this consultation, the Tourfor team developed the manual to introduce an EMS and subsequent checklists for sites that wanted to assess their performance. These checklists have been available on the Tourfor webpage and distributed in printed and software versions to sites, and became the basis

for a competition to highlight good practice in the area. The EMS has also been developed in conjunction with pilot sites.

6.5 Support case studies

Case studies were developed at two levels:

1) All three partners collected case studies through their consultation exercise to include in the manual and published the case studies in the national Internet pages.

2) A 300 page book and initial print run of 800 was edited, titled "Forest tourism and recreation: case studies in environmental management", and reflecting the international state of the art in the year 2000 in 16 extensive cases (Font and Tribe 2000). This book examines:
   - the impacts of tourism and recreation in forest areas,
   - the issues faced by forest managers introducing tourism and recreation,
   - the management approaches used by organisations such as the Forestry Commission, the National Trust and their equivalents in other countries, and the solutions achieved.

This book has brought invaluable international expertise and examples to the attention of the Tourfor team, who have benefited from stronger overseas contacts and the development of forest tourism as an area of research attention.

6.6 Dissemination

A dissemination strategy was first devised, and this has been developed and adapted according to opportunities. The Tourfor web pages (www.tourfor.com) in English, Finnish and Portuguese, have been instrumental to the international dissemination of the project. The UK page, for example, has received 595 different visitors in January 2000, 35% from the UK, which demonstrates the success of this communication method. A conference was organised in High Wycombe (UK), which was well attended and strengthened links with the major UK organisations in forest tourism.

The Tourfor team organised events in all three countries to present the outcomes of Tourfor. The UK event took place at the Millennium Dome on 20th January 2000, with a very good attendance record and feedback from participants. The Finnish team organised a conference on Responsible Nature Tourism at Koli National Park, the national landscape of Finland and a collaborating site of Tourfor, and the renowned European Forest Institute and Finnish Forest Institu-

te were involved in the management of the event and publication of proceedings. The Portuguese team organise their presentation event in Lisbon during Spring 2000, involving the Ministry of Tourism and Agriculture and Forestry.

6.7 Positioning

All three countries wrote initial positioning papers to ensure good understanding of issues and differences across countries of forestry, tourism and environmental management.

7 Cost/benefit analysis of the project proposals

The Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe (FEEE) have shown an interest in progressing the idea of the Tourfor award. That would involve testing the award in five European countries. If the FEEE was to run this award, the expected co-ordination cost for the first year is £50.000, and thereafter the cost of managing the award and verification would be around £500 per application, with a minimum threshold of 50 sites. Therefore the cost/benefit analysis will vary depending on the percentage of the cost that sites are expected to pay and the collaboration received from sponsorship and grant support to part-fund the verification body. Focusing Tourfor only on forest tourism and recreation sites may make the cost-benefit analysis unfeasible. It is therefore recommended to broaden the scope of the award to all countryside tourism and recreation sites to ensure a wider appeal of the award.

If sites are expected to pay the majority of the £500 it will cost for an application, the awarding body will have to provide a package of benefits. Achieving the award for sites with an operational EMS should be the culmination of the benefits. Yet applying for the award will be much more beneficial for sites if, as part of the application, they can gain expert advice in implementing an EMS, take part in training opportunities and develop in-house expertise.

External funding will be necessary to create the infrastructure within the awarding body and to initially establish the award within the participating countries. If Tourfor is to be developed as an award, EC funding opportunities need to be explored to meet these costs. Alternatively, the EMS developed by Tourfor could be applied to a project such as Pan-Parks (developed by WWF in Holland) or to a currently running award, to strengthen the proposal.

Tourfor developed its Environmental Management System (EMS) intending to make it fully transferable to all outdoor recreation sites, whether in

forests or open countryside, and throughout Europe. Primary research was carried in 400 forest recreation and tourism attractions in Britain, Portugal and Finland out as part of the consultation, showing there is a great interest by sites to learn more about EMSs. Almost 60 % of sites have the components of an EMS or could implement them in the near future, with some support. The majority of those that are not in this position acknowledge an interest in the subject, but lack the knowledge of an EMS requirement to say whether they would be interested in implementing one.

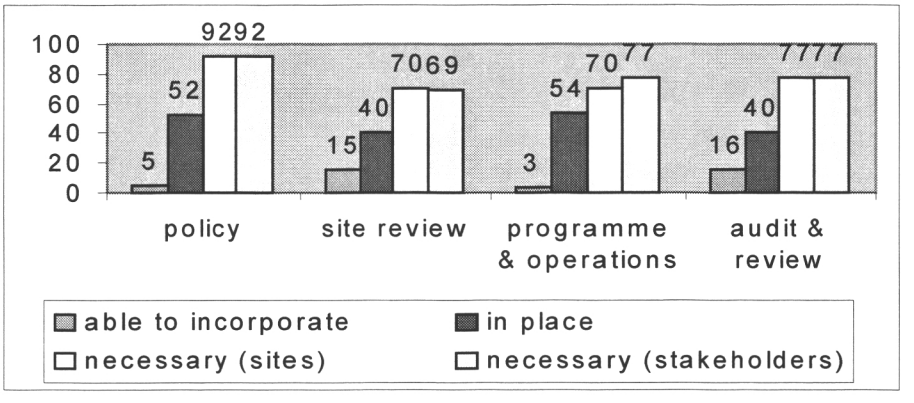

Figure 1. Current implementation and importance of an EMS.

Although the award may only be tested in five countries to start with, the EMS has been devised to be fully transferable to every country, since an Environmental Management System is a generic framework, and it is the responsibility of the site's management to make it site specific. The differences between Finland, Portugal and Great Britain have demonstrated that companies in all three countries can apply for the award, and that it is not the country location that limits the interest in applying for a tourism EMS. However it is believe that sites in countries with higher visitor pressure on the environment and high environmental awareness will be more likely interested in implementing an EMS. Some examples of such countries are Great Britain, Holland, Germany and Austria.

The barriers to implementing an EMS or applying for the Tourfor award will basically relate to the perceived trade-off between the time of trained staff needed and the expected benefits. Sites are more likely to benefit from the Tourfor EMS, if they have an identifiable boundary, identifiable management, a focal point for visitors such as facilities or infrastructure, organised or fee paying activities and a significant number of visitors per year.

8 Conclusions and recommendations

The emerging key issues and distinctive features of the Tourfor -award proposals and EMS are as follows:

* Tourfor is relevant, where tourism and recreation, forestry and the environment are all significant issues;
* there is a mixed reaction to the proposals from potential sites but with a substantial core of interest;
* the project has established a structure, network and market for such an award but needs pump-prime funding to enable it to be put into effect;
* like the Blue Flag awards (UNEP, WTO, FEEE 1996) Tourfor has a strong potential to:
* raise public awareness of environmental issues in the countryside;
* provide information to assist consumer choice;
* offer marketing benefits to recipients;
* provide a vehicle to drive improvements in environmental standards, and
* provide a control mechanism to promote tourism development in the countryside that is managed for sustainability;
* it is based on established EMS systems, particularly EMAS;
* the guiding environmental policy at the heart of a Tourfor EMS is locally devised but informed by existing environmental concepts and guidelines;
* the award and EMS encourages a flexible response in the light of differing circumstances throughout Europe;
* it lays a strong emphasis on practical advice for implementation and the sharing of experience;
* it operates as part of a wider suite of environmental instruments: EMS-based awards do not ascribe tourism a clean bill of environmental health. Indeed aspects of tourism such as transport require control through other methods;
* Tourfor is not *the* management system for sustainable forest management; rather it contributes to sustainable forest management where tourism and recreation are significant activities;
* for forests where tourism and recreation is the primary activity, the Tourfor EMS may be the site EMS. In multi-purpose forests, the Tourfor EMS may be embedded in a wider EMS;
* the potential exists to widen the scope of Tourfor to encompass tourism and recreation in a wider context of countryside activities and destinations and
* the potential exists to rationalise award schemes operating or planned for tourism and the environment. A possible development would be collaboration between award providers to develop and market an umbrella award that encompassed specialised approaches to different sectors. This

would reduce confusion, improve public recognition and interest whilst retaining specialist support mechanisms crucial to improving practice.

The Tourfor team recommends that DGXI (the Directorate General of the European Commission with responsibility for the environment):

* provides funds for the next phase of the Tourfor award, enabling of the development and marketing of the award in conjunction with FEEE;
* promotes the adoption of an EMS structure to the management of environmental awards, both in tourism and in other sectors;
* broadens the Tourfor award as an enviro-mark for rural tourism and recreation;
* supports a strategic initiative to encourage the rationalisation of environmental award schemes in tourism and position Tourfor, or a rural tourism award scheme within a rationalised framework of awards, and
* works towards one single ecolabel for recreational and tourism land management. This would involve examining the link between Tourfor and other complementary initiatives such as the WWF Holland PAN-Parks project and some national schemes.

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Forest landscape in Koli National Park contains high scenic values evaluated as national landscape quality in Finland.
Photo: Finnish Forest Research Institute - Tuomo Saarelainen.

Environmental assessment as a planning tool for nature tourism

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Abstract

Tourism, as well as other activities linked to it, may have severe environmental impacts. When aiming for sustainable development in tourism, careful planning is needed both on the project level as well as on the strategic level. Environmental impact assessment is one useful planning tool. This includes assessment of ecological, cultural and socio-economic impacts. In many countries, EIA is mandatory for activities within the tourism sector. This paper recommends the elements and the spirit of environmental assessment to be included on a voluntary basis into the planning process of even small scale nature tourism activities, if not required by law. This is justified by the facts that EIA makes the planning more structured and open, enhances mitigation of environmental impacts and helps the tourism industry to remain sustainable. The paper describes methods of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and lists the aspects to be assessed when planning nature tourism. The role of traditional knowledge, analysis of values of the local people as well as the importance of participation of different stakeholders are discussed. The exclusion of the assessment process from the early phase of the planning as well as the non-ambitious participation are seen as the

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main challenges of present environmental assessment in nature tourism planning.

Keywords: Nature tourism, environmental assessment, EIA, SEA, sustainable tourism.

1 Introduction

In the Oxford Advanced Learner´s Dictionary from 1995, tourism is defined as business of providing accommodation and services for visiting places. As we know, the forms this business expresses are highly variable. Tourism is a link between several industries such as transport, commerce and lodging. This is particularly the case with nature tourism, which is commonly brought into areas isolated from urban or semi-urban facilities. Apart from the link to facilities, nature tourism consists of a combination of many activities ranging from small scale hiking to the use of motorised vehicles such as snow mobiles and helicopters. When aiming for sustainable development in tourism, careful planning is needed both at the project level as well as at the strategic level. Apart from the parks themselves, questions concerned with roads, facilities, border crossings and strict protected areas have to be solved when a thriving and sustainable nature tourism is aimed for.

2 Environmental assessment as a tool

Systematic planning in tourism industry has been encouraged only during the last twenty years or so (Ellul 1996). Environmental impact assessment is one useful planning tool, when developing sustainable tourism. It includes assessment of ecological, cultural and socio-economic impacts. The two main assessment processes are the EIA, which is meant for well defined projects and the SEA, which is performed in preparation of plans, programmes and strategies (Table 1). In many countries, EIA is required by law for tourism activities of a certain scale, either at the project level or at the strategic level for public sector. The legislation and practice of EIA vary from country to country. The newly proposed EU directive for SEA requires assessment, when preparation is carried out on national, regional or local level to be adopted through a legislative procedure. Tourism is mentioned as one of the sectors where, according to the proposed directive, the SEA should be applied.

Table 1. List of tasks to be undertaken in a strategic environmental assessment process for nature tourism (see e.g. Ympäristöministeriö & Sisäasiainministeriö 1999). The tasks are not meant to be carried out in a chronological order; they may equally well be worked in parallel or one issue may be included into another one.

* linking a participatory and assessment plan to the working program (when building a tourism plan for a national park network);
* producing a description for the area about the state of the environment (including an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and possibilities of the area with respect to nature tourism);
* studying the environmental impacts of plans that have already been implemented for the region or for the nature tourism sector;
* defining the aims for sustainable development for the sector in the regionïs nature tourism;
* analysing alternative action paths in the light of selected sustainable development criteria;
* including environmental aspects to the content of the plan;
* reporting of the environmental impact assessment; and
* monitoring.

2.1 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

For a certain well-defined project or activity, such as one hotel with outdoor activities, EIA has a clear form and defined procedure e.g. in legislation or in requirements of investment banks, consisting of two phases: a scoping phase and a reporting phase. Depending on the legislation, the public may or may not be invited to participate and comment either on the latter or on both phases.

2.2 Environmental assessment for plans, policies and programmes (SEA)

When planning a strategic project or program, in which several stakeholders, spatial areas or sectors are involved, the assessment takes a different structure. Table 1 lists the tasks that form the backbone of a strategic environmental assessment process.

3 Environmental impacts and nature tourism

Green and Hunter (1992) write: "The environment is a key tourism resource and consequently its conservation and management are vital both to the future of the tourism industry and to society as a whole." This is particularly the case in nature tourism. There is a close link between environment and nature tourism and the industry can easily eat up its own resource. Tourism is brought into an area due to the high nature values on the area, often with an image of a pristine area. If the tourism on the area is carried out uncontrolled, the image of a pristine area disappears by time. On the other hand, people living in the area of nature tourism tend to have a close connection to nature through their culture, livelihood and every-day life. This situation is also easily hurt, if not taken into consideration while planning the tourism activity.

Environmental assessment helps in avoiding deleterious effects to take place in the environment, and additionally assists the tourism industry itself to remain sustainable. It is valuable to assess the positive impacts as well. This makes the assessment more objective and may help gaining support from the authorities, governments and investors. In many countries, where EIA is not required for a certain activity, the developer is still obliged to be aware of the environmental impacts of the planned activity and take them into account in the planning process. Therefore, in nature tourism cases, where EIA is not required, the elements and the spirit of environmental assessment are recommended to be included into the planning process on a voluntary basis even when the project is small. This makes the planning process more systematic from an environmental point of view.

4 What needs assessment?

Many criteria for sustainable tourism have been developed , such as those by the WWF-Arctic programme (1998) for the arctic circumstances and those being developed by the World Tourism Organisation on a more general level. The criteria give the direction for the elements to be included in assessments. Table 2 lists the aspects that should be considered in the phase of analysing the present state of the environment as well as the possible impacts.

Table 2. Aspects to be considered when assessing the present state of the environment and its suitability for nature tourism.

* What is the present state of the environment? e.g.
  - sensitive habitats,
  - social structure, and
  - visitor pressure.
* Would the area be suitable for nature tourism? e.g. (modified from Hirch 1996)
  - does the location interest tourists?
  - are there enough or valuable enough elements to be experienced?
  - are there local capacities to control and finance the business available (sanitary, waste disposal, transport, catering, lodging)?
  - how easily is the area reached (visitors, supplies, waste)?
  - how suitable are the geographical features for nature tourism (water supply,
  - sensitivity to erosion and disturbance to wildlife)?
  - what is the nature conservation status of the area (rare and endangered species and habitats)?
  - what are the legal aspects to run nature tourism activity in the area (physical planning, permits)?
  - how does the activity fit into the national/regional tourism strategies?
* What positive features would the nature tourism bring into the area?
* How could the environment cope with alternative types of tourism activities, including the no tourism alternative?
* How could the environment cope with different volumes of the tourism activity?
* What would the impact of tourism be on its own viability? e.g.
  - changes of landscape?
  - changes of authentism?
  - changes of visitor density?
  - changes in the jobs available?
* What is the connection between impacts from other present, past and future activities of nature tourism or other sectors and impacts from the planned nature tourism?

5 Traditional knowledge

In addition to scientific information, traditional knowledge is often available when dealing with people living in an area where nature tourism is planned. In the context of environmental assessment in nature tourism, traditional knowledge stands for accumulated knowledge of indigenous and local communities on their environment, and the management of its resources for present and future generations. This could include information on sensitive habitats, migration routes of wildlife (Huntington et al. 1999, Mymrin et al. 1999) or on social impacts (Ross 1992). This knowledge is useful in planning and running nature tourism and should thus be collected, respected and used in the environmental assessments. This means, that the information pool that is used in the assessment should be a combination of traditional knowledge and information that has been collected by the means of western science (Stevenson 1996). Combining the different information pools requires new approaches and suitable methodology, such as the GIS-technique (McConchie 2000) and qualitative evaluation (Marshall & Rossman 1995).

6 True participation or eye wash participation

Since EIA is to support a political process, in addition to scientific information, values of the different groups of stakeholders need to be analysed. Preferably, environmental impacts are assessed in close co-operation with people, who are affected by or linked to the planned activity. Local people should be given a chance to discuss the previously mentioned issues from the angle of their set of values. There is methodology available to systematically gather and analyse the input from the public, described by Hampton (1999) in general and by Green et al. (1990) for tourism specifically. Questions could be formed such as:

* Which are the types of changes in the environment that local people could accept?
* How would the different alternative forms of tourism correspond with the different values of local people?

Assessment of social impacts is one element of the EIA in nature tourism planning including consideration of changes in the employment patterns, immigration of secondary workers and the possible rise in the cost of living due to inflation (McLaren 1993). Social impact assessment is not, however, a substitute for participation. Participation is a process of its own, where stakeholders are actively

involved in the ongoing assessment or the planning process. Finding the most suitable methodology for participation and for conflict solving will support the participation process to be successful in the assessment.

7 Early start

EIA with its distinct conceptual links with sustainable development is often used in proposals seeking for financial support to projects that have a close connection to nature. I have proof from a handful of real cases, where these expectations have not materialised. Once the project gets started, environmental assessment is seen as heavy and complicated, and thus it is not taken into consideration in the starting phase, when many other matters have to be organised and initiated. This is the pitfall; EIA carried out at a later stage and as a separate activity is not worth the effort. Optimally, the EIA or SEA should start by linking a participatory and assessment plan to the planning program of the activity or strategy. This could include decisions about:

* the objectives of participation, the dates of events in the planning and the methods to be used for participation;
* the phase of planning in which the alternative paths are weighed;
* who are the target people or who are the people/organisations forming the participation groups?
* how the outcomes from the participation will be used?
* how material will be distributed and gathered?
* what are the means used in the assessment, its time schedule and the rules for reporting?

8 Conclusions

When carefully integrated at an early stage into the planning process, environmental assessment can help in keeping the planning process logical, open and transparent. Eventually, when the results of the assessment are included in the final plan, it can provide tools for making nature tourism prosperous in the long run instead of witnessing it die out before getting started.

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Teaching integrated sustainable tourism development strategy with reference to the North Karelia area

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Abstract

The paper describes the module on regional planning for rural tourism, being developed by a number of Finnish and Dutch Polytechnics. The module will be taught 'on distance' to students with a background in tourism, rural development and/or forestry and who need an insight in the integrated aspects of rural sustainable tourism. The process the students will ideally follow, is explained in the paper. In the paper the concept of sustainable rural tourism is explained, since it forms the basis for the module development.

Keywords: Sustainable, rural tourism, planning, distance learning, case study.

1 Trends in rural development

1.1 Past and present

North Karelia seems to be a good example of a region that is a victim of (non-)sustainable tourismdevelopment. During ages communities used the woods, those impressive primary forests, to collect firewood, to cut timber for the local industries and to allow grazing for animals. Life in this near Arctic area was hard and people had to work hard to earn a modest living, mainly based on subsistence. This traditional way of life respected the natural heritage, partly because there was a mutual dependence between man and nature, which created a respect for this heritage, partly because people had no other options. In doing so, the primary forest, this unique heritage for mankind, has been conserved for ages. But now the communities seem to be punished for it.

Sure, logging had become big business and a lot of local people earned a good living in the timber industry. Modern machinery was introduced for logging, new techniques to replant the hundreds of acres of wood that had been cut. New technology, but also pesticides, herbicides and other chemical products made the harsh life of the people earning their living in the woods a lot easier. The primary forests represented an immense value of high quality timber.

Also, cattle grazing and other agricultural activities modernised like in other rural areas in Europe, but although modern agricultural enterprises seemed to offer a new perspective for the future, the employment rates for people working in agriculture went down steadily. Unemployment rates went up in this part of Finland like in many other rural regions of Europe. But the growing international competition and EU legislation caused a lot of new problems. The profitability of family-managed agricultural enterprises went down considerably. Nowadays people are no longer satisfied with living on a subsistence base, they want their legitimate share of progress.

Tragically, at the moment the unemployment rates in North Karelia are so high, the remaining primary forests are protected and form several protected areas, thanks to national but also international pressure. The use of the forests for economic motives has been limited seriously, which both affects traditional and modern economic activities. So the question is: what to do? Is there a way to give new economic value to nature, and if so, could tourism form part of this solution?

Should all people abandon their traditional activities and re-school to become tourist guides, waiters and employees of snowmobile and ski rental enterprises? Do we need more skiers, snowmobiles, more tourists driving around in their cars in order to contemplate during the day the unique landscape and to leave in the afternoon to spent their money elsewhere? Or do we want more ice cream stands and souvenir shops, more second homes? Does one really believe that tourism could give the communities a new identity, new pride and

solve the unemployment problems? Do we want the community to be another tourism resort? Is this the future we want for our communities, ourselves and for the future generations?

1.2 The future?

The Protected Area Network (PAN) Parks initiative may offer an example of an other approach. PAN -project started some three years ago and is an initiative of the WWF and the Molecaten -group, a Dutch leisure enterprise. The idea behind PAN is to form a Europe wide network of National Parks that form a quality brand which stands for outstanding conservation and management, and for high quality, nature based tourism. PAN is a marketing and communication concept that aims at attracting quality tourism. This approach to tourism will learn the Europeans to be proud of their natural heritage and by doing so, create increased political support for conservation goals. But the PAN concept also includes a close co-operation with the communities, the people that live in the neighbourhood of protected areas. The main goal is here to give economic value to nature protection and conservation.

One of the potential protected areas is Abruzzo National Park in Italy. This region does not only meet the conservation criteria for an area of outstanding beauty, but is especially interesting for its extensive experience in involving local communities in the tourism business, generated by the millions of visitors that come from all over Europe. Communities offer services to the NP, but also to tourists. Local accommodation, village restaurants, guiding services, but also the sale of high quality local products. Tourism brought new life to the small mountain villages and offered new employment perspectives, especially for young people and women.

This is the method to make communities feel proud of their natural heritage, because it forms part of their future perspectives.

2 The concept of sustainability

Sustainability is based on a sustainable use of the natural and cultural resources of an area. Resources should be used in such a way that they are safeguarded, thus passing on those resources to future generations.

Sustainability can be looked at from three different sides:

* *Ecological sustainability*: The conservation and responsible use of ecological resources.

* *Social sustainability* : The right of local communities to determine their own future and to make a responsible use of the human capital, the cultural heritage and the other resources of the region, maintaining their own traditions, culture and identity.

* *Economic sustainability*: A responsible use of the natural, cultural and human resources of a region in such a way that it creates a sound economic future perspective for the community.

Those three aspects are closely linked; they form part of a dynamic system. The natural and cultural heritage, the traditions, culture and identity form the main capital of tourism. Sustainable tourism development includes maintaining and regenerating these resources.

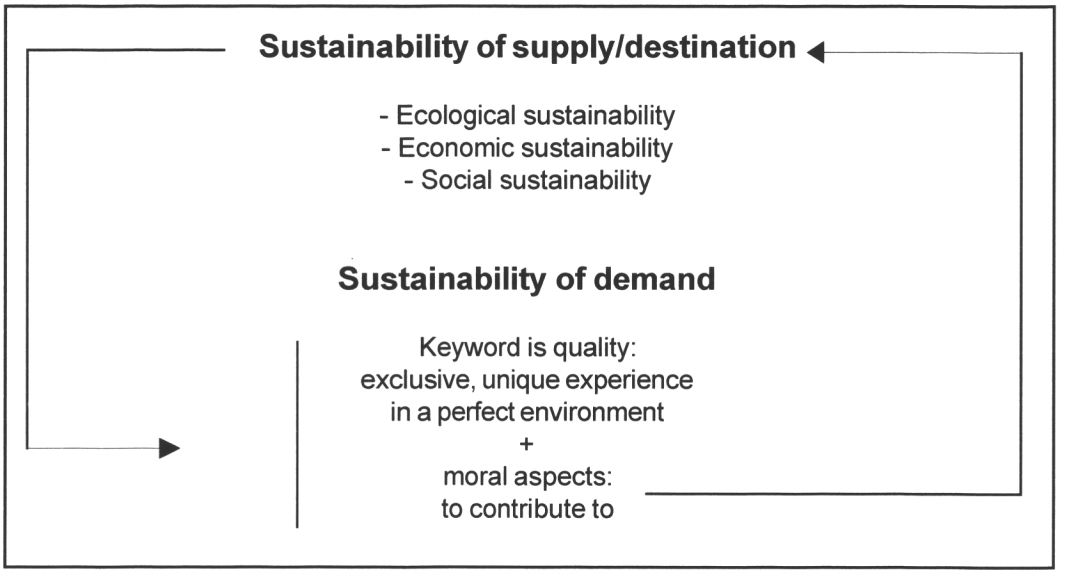

Figure 1. Framework of sustainable tourism development.

Tourism can never be sustainable if it turns into a mono culture. Tourism alone can never give a community a sustainable future, since it would take away part of its identity. Rural tourism for example is based on lively, healthy rural communities.

This explains why we depart from the idea of an integrated development, which means that we systematically look for a synergy between all economic and social sectors and activities.

3 The planning strategy for sustainable tourism

The following steps/phases are needed to develop a management and development strategy for the integrated sustainable tourism development of regions.

* *A preliminary organisation,* or at least a team, will need to be created to realise the pre-project phase, taking care of funding, budgeting and providing the manpower needed to realise the first 5 steps of the strategy. In other words, commitment to planning

* *Prefeasibility study of tourism development* including analysis/ estimation of an area's tourism potential, tourism capacity and potential tourism markets in order to find out if tourism would be a feasible option.

  The results of this study form the base for a "go or no go" decision. In case the result would be "no go" the following steps should serve to formulate a strategy towards sustainable development in which the role of tourism will be limited or non existent.

* *Overall analysis at regional level, including "sustainable feasibility study"* of area's ecological, economic, social and cultural resources and their strengths and weaknesses (SWOT analyses). Based on the SWOT-analyses the sustainable development potential of the region can be established. First the potential of the different resources should be established and then a systematic check on the actual and future relationships with other sectors, looking for synergetic effects and possible contradictions or frictions. The results of this analysis should serve to complete the analyses of tourism potential and capacity (economic, ecolo gical, social and cultural impact assessment).

  At the end of this phase we have collected and analysed all the data that we need to complete the panorama of the region's resources and its potentials and capacities for sustainable integrated development and of the possible role of tourism in this development.

* *A market analysis* based on the tourism potential and its tendencies in order to establish our target groups. How do we get to know our potential target group(s), how do we select them and how do we create a supply that meets their expectations and provides them with a unique quality experience, keeping in mind the strategic goals that we want to reach?

  We now know and understand our (future) guests, we know what they are looking for and dreaming of and we have to use all our creativity and imagination to design products that guarantee our guests a unique

quality experience.

* *The phase of strategy formulation* through discussion of future scenario's for integrated development. This includes the possible scenario's for tourism development, with an emphasis on how tourism could be used as a tool for ecological, economic, social and cultural regeneration.

Now we know what possible future perspectives we can offer to the community. The question is now to choose the most promising and realistic perspective.

* *Choice of optimal scenario* for integrated (tourism) development. The judgement is based on a detailed feasibility study as sketched above; establishing goals and overall strategy. The strategy definitely will have to be formally approved by all participants and especially by political instituti ons, who approve the physical development plans and formalise and concretise their active support in an official document.

  At the end of this phase we dispose of a complete strategy for integrated sustainable tourism development, reflected in a detailed map of the region, agreed upon by all actors who commit themselves to the overall goals, the strategy and to an active participation. The project also counts with the active support of all political institutions involved.

* *The phase of establishing the (management) structure of the project and of formulation of the policy of the project organisation.* We now dispose of a management structure and a project organisation; so everything is prepared to start the implementation phase. We know where we want to go, how we are going to get there and who is going to do it.

* *The phase of implementation of the strategy* by preparing the management plan.

4 The case of Regional Planning Course for Rural Tourism

The sustainable development strategy described above is also the approach that is chosen for the distance learning programme on 'planning for tourism development' that is constructed presently by a number of Polytechnics in both the Netherlands and Finland.
Actively involved in the development are:

* The NHTV, the National Institute for Tourism and Transport Studies, Netherlands;
* The International Agricultural College Larenstein, Netherlands;
* Seinäjoki Polytechnic, Finland;
* North Karelia Polytechnic, Finland, and
* Oulu Polytechnic, Finland.

The module in which the students are taking part, has the objective to guide them through a systematic and integrated approach to regional planning for sustainable tourism. The students will be asked to act as consultants along the following lines.

Students will work with their colleagues 'on distance'. Groups of equal size will be formed in each of which the students of only one institute take part. For the elaboration of the assignment, students will work with only one group of students in the other country, to be called counterpart group. During this course, students will have tasks to perform for their own group and for their counterpart group. Both groups together are called teamed groups.

The students will act as consultants who will elaborate a plan for a certain area, either in Finland or in the Netherlands. They will each perform the tasks as described in the following Terms of Reference:

Tasks

Formulate a regional plan for rural tourism for the area which should have the following characteristics and contain the following elements:

* All activities to be suggested will need to be sustainable in social/cultural, organisational, economical and ecological terms.
* The plan consists of the following chapters:
  - conclusions about the tourist potential derived from the SWOT;
  - choice of the potential in possible scenarios for tourism development;
  - elaboration of one or more tourism development scenarios including the relation-ships with broader regional perspectives of the other sectors, and
  - elaboration of one activity/plan/development in the form of a logical framework; the activity may be chosen by the consultant as a pilot for presentation to the relevant funding agencies.

During the process the students will further provide information to their (teamed) consultant at request. They will decide for themselves to what detail they react to the requests.

Results

The consulting activities will result in a report of max 40 pgs (excluding annexes) in which the students will describe the outcome of their activities to such an extent that it can be used for further development. The pilot activity needs to be more detailed.

Quality of information

A description the area is required in terms of physical and natural resources, economic development, regional situation, cultural and historical features and other relevant information. The information is as much as possible digitized; GIS data bases do exist for some features.

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Social impacts and nature tourism - case of Karelian Parks Development -project

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Abstract

Tourists are more and more interested about the environmental and cultural impacts of tourism and how tourism could benefit local societies. In this respect a common question is, does backpacking tourism have social impacts at all. Although tourists do not spend much time in local villages they usually require some services there. The interaction with local people starts right away, when an outsider comes out of the bus. From the social and cultural point of view, tourism influences the life style, culture, economic and employment structure of local people and communities in many ways. Different factors are connected to each other: the environmental impacts have economic and social dimensions as well.

Keywords: Social impacts, nature tourism, nature conservation areas, Republic of Karelia, Russia.

Lovén, L. (ed.). 2000. Responsible Nature Tourism.
Finnish Forest Research Institute, Research Papers 792: 139-144.

1 Principles of socially sustainable tourism

Socially sustainable tourism means that development of tourism is based on the needs of local people. During the planning and implementation processes the initiatives, expectations and priorities of local people have to be taken into consideration. In this respect the key questions are: what is the social carrying capacity of an area and what are the impacts of tourism on the economic and social structure of an area? As an example the following issues could be used as a measure to minimise the negative social impacts of tourism:

* use of local public transport;
* use of local services;
* proper salary for local workers and payments for local services;
* local people and entrepreneurs have to be taken into the process of planning and implementation of tourism;
* benefit for local societies;
* support to conservation of local natural, historical and cultural objects and to development of tourism infrastructure and management;
* respect to local culture, and
* co-operation with local entrepreneurs.

2 Socio-economic assessment in the Karelian Parks Development -project

2.1 Project description

The Karelian Parks Development Project started in April 1999 as a part of the TACIS Cross-border Co-operation Programme on Environment funded by the EC. The Project aims at improving the livelihood of people across the Finnish border by developing nature related tourism, and safeguarding biodiversity conservation by establishing a network of protected areas in western Karelia in Russia (Fig. 1). The field activities are carried out in five areas: Paanajärvi NP (existing) and Kalevala, Tuulijärvi (Tulos), Koitajoki and Ladoga (including Valaam) proposed protected areas. All of these areas have attractive natural, historical and cultural objects, which makes the plans of the establishment of nature conservation areas and development of tourism reasonable.

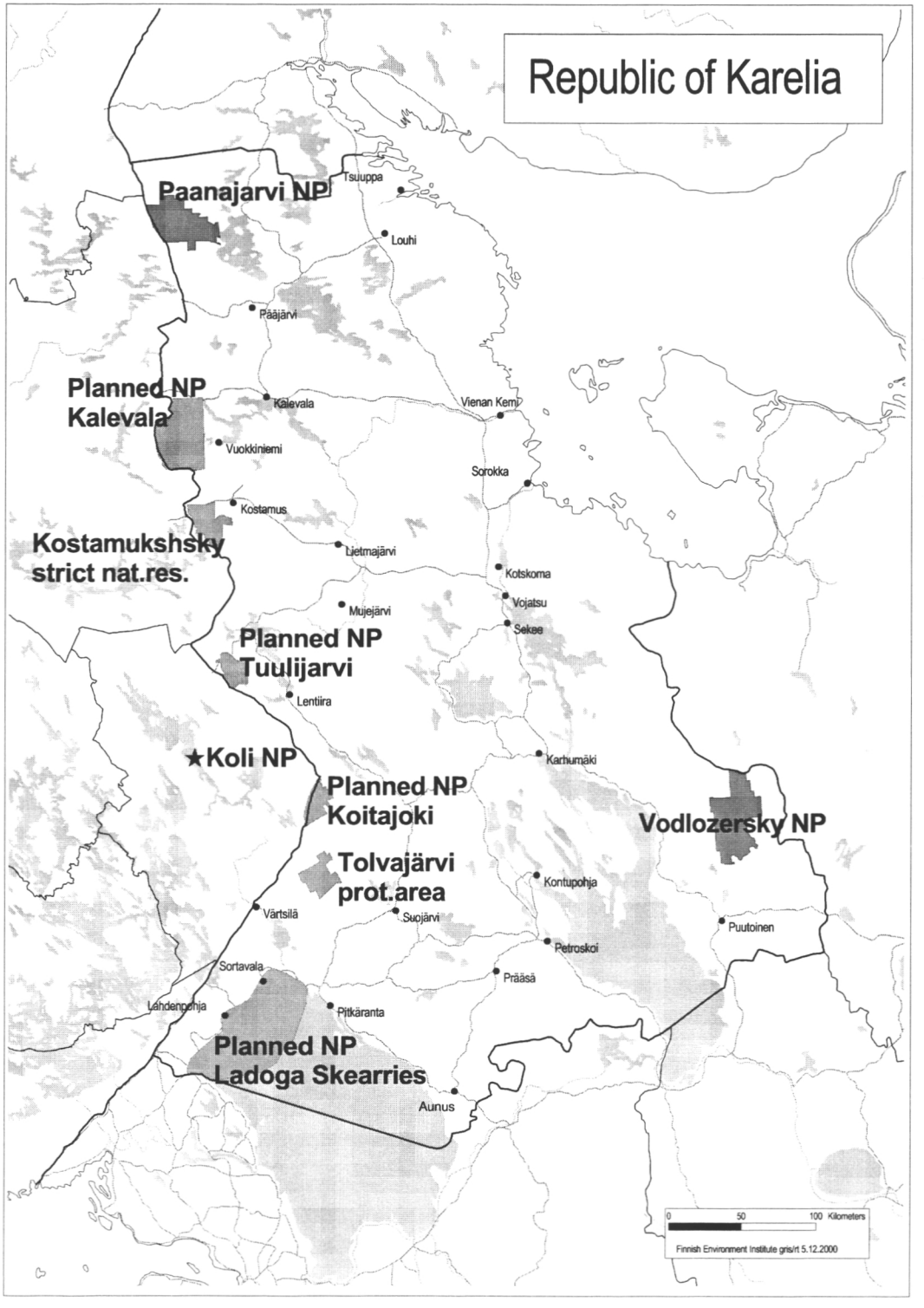

Figure 1. *Network of protected areas (existing or planned) near the border to Finland in Republic of Karelia in Russia.*

At the beginning of the project in 1999 a socio-economic assessment was carried out in the above mentioned territories. The aim of the assessment was to collect basic information on the socio-economic situation, to assess the role of national parks and tourism in the development process of the territories and to identify tourism development potentials. The field works included interviews and surveys on three levels:

1) regional and local administration;
2) local entrepreneurs, and
3) representatives of local people, both men and women.

2.2 Main socio-economic problems in Karelia

The border between Finland and Russia is one of the sharpest borders in living standards in the world. There is a deep economic crisis in the Republic of Karelia as well as in the whole Russia. The economic structure of the regions in Russia is concentrated on one sphere of production, in Karelia mainly on forestry. Mainly due to the crisis in forest sector, life in remote towns and villages has become difficult during the last few decades. Unemployment is the most serious socio-economic problem, especially in the countryside, although during the last two years the situation has, if not improved, at least stabilised in many regions.

Table 1. The amount of active labour and persons without work in 1992 and 1997 in the western districts and towns of Karelia.

Territory	**Number of working persons**		**Number of persons without work**	
	1992	1997	1992	1997
Districts				
Kalevala	5 310	3 467	161	665
Louhi	10 705	7 827	58	335
Muezerskii (Muujärvi)	9 183	5 898	56	408
Pitkäranta	11 016	7 913	291	977
Suojärvi	12 254	9 215	101	503
Lahdenpohja	7 817	4 723	20	276
Towns				
Kostomuksha (Kostamus)	15 068	13 990	54	699
Sortavala	16 310	11 166	251	818
Total	**87 663**	**64 199**	**992**	**4 671**
Change in %		**-27%**		**+371%**

In many villages the avaibility of basic services is limited. The number of working age population in the villages has decreased and the share of old people has increased during the nineties (Table 1, Statistics...1999). In this situation the questions of nature use - logging, nature conservation and development of nature tourism - are of vital importance for the local societes.

2.3. Tourism development potentials

The question of the establishment of a nature conservation area is controversial in alla territories. In this particular situation the interests of nature conservation and nature tourism are close to each other. If not nature tourism, what are then the alternative sources of livelihood for local people? Usually it is forestry. There is a clear connection between the support to the establishment of national parks and plans to develop tourism. At the local level (in villages and towns) there are expectations to organise and increase tourism around the national parks. At the administrative level the idea of the establishment of the national parks was supported by the preparation of tourism development programs. First of all there is a need to find new possibilities to gain new revenues to the local budget. In this respect the establishment of national parks was considered as a positive factor for the development of the areas. Many people said that they have to find some other sources of livelihood than only logging. On the other hand many representatives of forest industry considered that there is no other alternative than logging.

2.4 Challenges

The most serious obstacles to development of tourism are remoteness and/or difficult access to the areas (roads, crossing points) and the lack of even basic tourism infrastructure. Tourism could provide new development potentials and income sources for local people, although much work is needed in every area. In general, the local activity concerning tourism business is low. Many outsider tourism agencies operate in these regions, but there are only few local ones. Therefore local resources are poorly used in the tourism business, and in many regions the share of tourism revenues in the local budget is insignificant. The existing local frames and possibilities should be used more effectively in order to get more benefit to remain at the local level.

On the other hand tourism is an important source of livelihood for those people, who are involved in the tourism business and have foreign contacts. There are good examples in the Viena Karelian folklore villages, where the local people provide accommodation and catering services in their own houses. Development of tourism could have a very positive influence on the local

economic structure by creating new sources of incomes and employing local people, especially young and women. In many villages it seemed to be a problem to create work for women.

Nevertheless at the moment one general problem of the existing tourism business is the regulation of tourism. There is no local mechanism to control tourist flows and the influence of tourism. Many people were concerned about mass tourism and negative side effects of tourism. More than that, a big flow of tourists may harm the nature and change the lifestyle of the population and problems of the regulation of tourist flows may come up.

3 Conclusions

Tourism could be a real fluke for poor areas, if revenues remain at the local level. When developing nature tourism attention should be paid not only to the infrastructure but also to avoiding the negative social, cultural and ecological influence and side effects of tourism. Mass tourism is very harmful for the nature and vulnerable societies. Even small-scale tourism may have negative influence on the social and ecological environment, if it is unorganised. One has to remember that the tourist flows should be optimal: when a certain level is obtained the impact of growth turns to be negative.

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Koli National Park – site of solitude and heritage

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Abstract

In Finnish national parks a nature tourist meets sometimes both the ultimate ecological forest wilderness and diversity, but also the frontier of local subcultures. Among nature tourism destinations there are several sites, like Koli National Park, which local people have used as ancient sacred places with myths, tales and spiritual values. These complex heritage sites are very sensitive to severe conflicts between different groups of users. There is an urgent need to increase multidisciplinary scientific approaches to collect and refine all that information, which we now can reach when using our protected areas for nature tourism. This is an investment for knowledge supporting the sustainable development in the future. The national parks have the widest profile of stakeholders, which gives them a special status as "heritage laboratories". Finnish Forest Research Institute is developing scientific programs for some of the national parks in order to produce know-how and tools for park managers to maintain the heritage and also welcome the nature tourists.

Keywords: Nature tourism, national park, opinions and preferences, customers, Koli.

Lovén, L. (ed.). 2000. Responsible Nature Tourism.
Finnish Forest Research Institute, Research Papers 792: 145-152.

1 Koli National Park – a typical site of Finnish nature tourism

The main attractions in the district of Koli rise from unique nature; the geological structure of the quartzite stone hill, giving information of basic global processes occurring 2 billion years ago, the high diversity of the living nature rising up from the environment under slash-and-burn cultivation during last 1000 years and landscape so unique that it is difficult to compare it with any other formation in this country. Koli was one of the main destinations for the early Finnish natural tourism already a 100 hundred years ago.

The numbers of visitors was not too high in the beginning, on the last years of 1900th century. About 500 hundred visitors per year was a good number then (Hirn & Markkanen 1987). But something else occurred and then Koli was involved in the high policy. In the process of developing independence for the Finnish nation, Koli was introduced as a symbol of Finnish nationalism, as an icon of forests-lake landscapes, a site of Finnish solitude and heritage – as the national landscape.

The core group of first pioneers, who found and developed the Koli-image, included three Finnish artists on the period of national romanticism; Juhani Aho, Eero Järnefelt and Jean Sibelius (Muhonen 1997). They wrote, painted and composed Koli landscape on the map of main Finnish tourism sites. In the beginning Koli had almost no services for visitors. Only some 2-3 farms rented rooms for visitors. During first period of 25 years, Koli could provide as accommodation for visitors only one log hut with 12-25 beds.

2 Koli – a strong spirit in the middle of nowhere

The spirit of Koli rises up from the image of remoteness. The image of the region (Kotler et al. 1996, 1998) is depending on the point of view; for the Finns the Koli area is lying in the middle of vast forest wilderness area, behind of lakes and everything, where people easily loose their sense of space and time. For the people coming more far like from the South or West Europe, Koli lies behind the seas and forest wilderness. The Koli-spirit has over and above a special supernatural character capable to produce extraordinary mental experiences.

The analogous image has been used many times in literature. Already Homer (Chapman 1857, Homeros 1990) told 2500 years ago a story about Odysseys, when this famous hero travelled to extreme far north over the large ocean to the low shore of Pluto's kingdom, the land of the dead ones, where grows consecrated wood of tall firs and sallows that their fruits soon loose; to

the lake where waters were running into two directions, under a white rock mountain, where there was a sacred hole for sacred rituals; to give the offer for the underground people. According to this story the brave Ulysses finds the site and meets here the underground people, especially the honoured Tiresias, the reverend Theban wise, who gives him advice how to get back home to the isles of Ithaca.

The same image of extreme far north and arctic ice was given by Kurt Vonnegut (1993), who visited Koli Hills in 1977. Afterwards he told a story about the special place, meaning Koli Hills, where he had been happy and felt that there must be somebody out there who is interested of his happiness.

The area, which we today call as Koli National Park has in reality strong connections to the ancient stories. Koli lies in the far north-east on the boarder of boreal and semi-boreal forest zones. The tops of the dominantly fir-covered hills already represent the boreal taiga-forest qualities. The consistent taiga-forest can bee seen in the north east horizon from the scenic points on top of the hill. Koli has the historical heritage of sacred offers for the underground people; the sacred holes in the rock lies on top of the hill and also on the lakeside. The Lake Pielinen beneath the Koli hills has flown in last 11 000 years to 2-3 directions because of the terrestrial uplift after the glacier period (Hyvärinen 1966), and the quartzite bedrock of Koli hills is snow white like the white marble of Carrara or the Cliffs of Dover.

3 What are the motives of nature tourists to come to Koli?

Koli resort has bees an important source for recreation and tourism research already for a long period (Sievänen 1993, 1998). What are the main attractions for nature tourists to come to Koli? According to the preliminary results of ongoing visitor study the tourists are absolutely not coming to Koli for finding active night life or to find high standard program services. Also not due to the other visitors or the social activities. They come because they want to see the beautiful landscapes and the wilderness is understood to be se near (Table 1) . One of four is coming only for the silence and peace.

Nature tourists are seeking for positive and refreshing mental experiences on Koli (Table 1). These experiences are gathered mostly visually through admiring the beautiful scenes of the site. They want to eat well and see the interesting places around the Koli area. Downhill-skiing and also cross country –skiing is also important motive for Koli visits. Visitors do not so much today see Koli as a destination for hiking trips or long-distance skiing-wanderings although a small group of visitors are devoted back-backers.

Table 1. The motives of visitors to come to Koli on summer season 1997.

	% (n=852)
Beautiful landscape	64
Wilderness is there very near	48
Earlier experiences	30
By the road	28
Silence and peace	27
Near enough	25
Never been here before	23
New National Park	15
Local history and cultural heritage	9
Option for romance on holidaytime	9
Diversity of services	8
Activities for night and evening entertainment	3
Good program services	3
A lot of other tourists	2

The first mental model or image about Koli is most often the scenic beauty of the Koli landscape (Table 2). Some visitors think also such phenomenon like conflicts or peace in connection of Koli. Conflicts have been reality and public problem in the early period on Koli National Park, especially and actively distributed by the mass media. Peace is a private mental experience which some visitors seek on Koli and maybe some also find it there.

Table 2. The first image of visitors, when they here the word Koli (On winter season 1997-98).

	% (n=327)
Koli-landscape	49
Hills	17
Downhill-skiing	10
Nature	8
National Park	5
Snow	3
Ukko-Koli summit	3
Rough and wild	5
Conflicts	2
Peace	1

Nature tourists are seeking for positive and refreshing mental experiences at Koli. When visiting the site these experiences are gathered mostly visually through admiring the beautiful scenes of the site (Table 3). The visitors want also to eat well and see the interesting places around the Koli area. Exercise activities like downhill-skiing and cross country –skiing are also important motives for Koli visits. Visitors do not so much consider Koli as a destination for hiking trips or long-distance skiing-wanderings although a small group of visitors are devoted back-backers.

Table 3. *What do the visitors do on Koli on summer season 1997 and winter season 1997-98?*

	Summer % (n=852)	*Winter % (n=346)*
Admiring the landscape	*92*	*80*
Eating and dancing in the restaurant	*37*	*51*
Sightseeing around Koli district	*34*	*12*
Skiing and hiking near by the resort	*23*	*57*
Downhill-skiing	*-*	*54*
Swimming in the pool of hotel	*19*	*39*
Wandering and backpacking in the forest	*15*	*4*

The most favourite place for the visitors in Koli National Park is the summit of Ukko-Koli Hill, which is the main pole of all landscape admiration activities in the area (Table 4). This scenic point is the highest summit in the South-Finland, rising 347 meters above the sea and 253 meters above the lake Pielinen. The Paha-Koli Summit is a dramatic steep slope point, which has heritage values because of the stories about ancient law-cases, where the suspected criminals were punished by throwing them down from the top to the stony slope. If they survived they were innocent and free, but if not, they were guilty and deserved the verdict.

Table 4. *What is the Most-Favourite-Place in Koli National Park on summer season 1997?*

	% (n=852)
Ukko-Koli summit	*64*
Paha-Koli summit	*5*
Forest Trails	*4*

4 The Heritage of Koli – is it a sustainable resource for tourism?

The cultural heritage of Koli includes the mythical background of the region; Koli community is one of the last relics of ancient slash-and-burn agriculture with living talent to use fire for ecological renewing on scientific basis. The modern Koli includes also the high-cultural profile of arts and symbols of Finnish nationalism like Finnish flag waving on top of the pole in the yard of Heritage Centre Ukko in National Landscape. The natural heritage of Koli includes the rare type of quartzite stone bedrock, which is a platform for special ecotypes including to the Natura 2000 program. Vulnerable natural forest species are living in about 150 hectares area inside the park. Also National Park is a site for conserving the rare heritage-landscape meadows, which produce relatively high biodiversity after manmade management.

In the development process of nature tourism services in Koli the managers have to make choices. Tourism industry is eager to introduce to Koli all kinds of technical equipment and entertainment, which are popular in many larger tourism resorts in urban areas or in so-called downhill-skiing centres, but which easily violate the mental experiences of nature tourists. The sustainable local social development meets the issue of conserving the local cultural heritage. When people get better salaries in tourism business, they leave their traditional works and tasks. In a small scale resort like Koli, this means a rapid change in economical and social culture, which has reflections to the physical environment as rapid change in landscape and structures. Fields get desolated and start to grow bushes. Old wooden houses get ruined and new modern houses are build. Old fences and other structures of the agrarian culture get ruined and cattle and sheep disappear from the pastoral landscape.

The macro-scale scenic view remains almost constant, as seen on top of the Ukko-Koli hill, when we are looking to the east over the lakescape. The image of the east-side of the hills has always been more or less like the wilderness of Koli. The micro- and meso-scale landscape on rural surroundings on the west side of the hills however is loosing little by little the basic heritage values. If we want to maintain the basic structure of slash-and-burn oriented forest landscape, our challenge in the future is to find methods to emulate the landscape dynamics through forestry or activate the forest owners to a new revival of slash-and-burn treatment. This could be approached by developing tourism products on this process and finding proper EU-funds to support the possible economic losses in forestry and agriculture because of the conservation of the heritage.

5 Koli National Park– a multidiscipline laboratory for nature tourism development

In Finland we today have a highly developed network of natural areas, a part of them clearly designated to nature oriented tourism. Official organisation for conservation management uses public resources more than 17 mil Ecu per year and gives work annually for more than 350 persons. The investments into the basic infrastructure are important first steps, when developing especially national parks for sustainable recreational use. Koli National Park has received almost 17 milj. Ecu during last 10 years for the special projects like a new water purification system, new Heritage Centre, restoration of hotel, new arrangements for car parking, rebuilding of the harbour, restoration of heritage landscapes and buildings, development of trails and information system, development of co-operation with the local community etc.

Sustainable nature tourism development needs in the case of Koli a wide range of different skills. The development includes the rising of awareness, among public and planners, about economical, ecological and socio-cultural impact of the planned measures. Therefore there is an urgent need to increase multidisciplinary scientific approaches to collect and refine all that information, which is possible to reach by using our protected areas and especially National Parks as sensitive laboratories.

Koli National Park is one of the laboratories for developing sustainable natural and cultural tourism. Finnish Forest Research Institute and Finnish Forest and Park Service have their own scientific management development programs by means of which these organisations try to support the local park management. These organisations are also open for partners and visiting specialists and also for international co-operation in these scientific projects.

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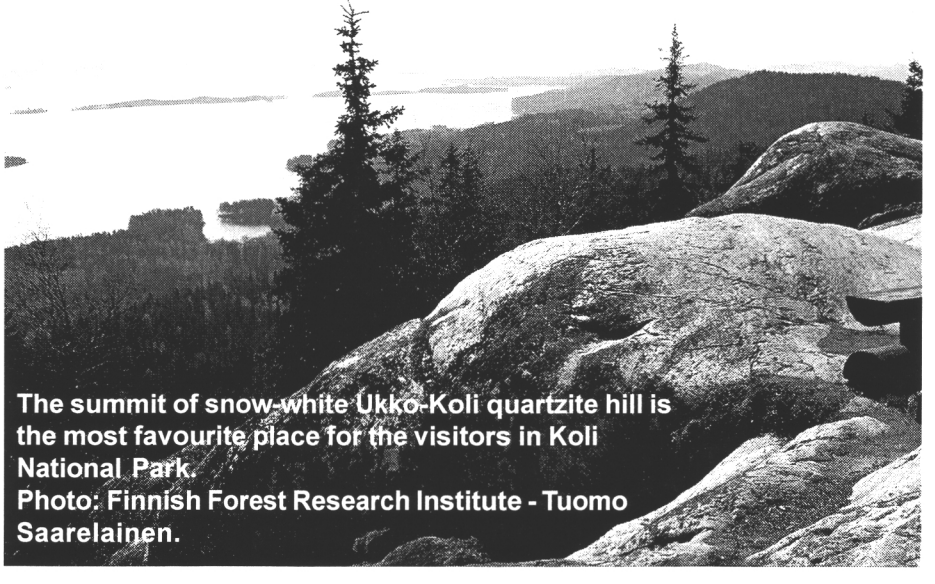

The summit of snow-white Ukko-Koli quartzite hill is the most favourite place for the visitors in Koli National Park.
Photo: Finnish Forest Research Institute - Tuomo Saarelainen.

North Karelia snowmobile trails - a development project for nature tourism

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Abstract

In North Karelia region wide snowmobile route planning process started in the late 80´s. The North Karelia Council was in charge of the operations, and as a result the Master Plan of North Karelia Snowmobiling Routes was published in 1991. At the same time various snowmobiling clubs around North Karelia started to establish trails of their own. As a result there were in mid 90´s over 1.000 kilometres of unofficial snowmobile trails in North Karelia. The management of this development work belongs today to the North Karelia Association for Outdoor Recreation Services established in 1999. Members of association are 16 local municipalities and more than 40 local companies. The association is so called "trail manager" organisation hiring trail rights from landowners. Because the planning procedure does not include the acceptance of snowmobiling trail plans by municipal environmental authority, the association have possibility to finance the trail maintenance by trail fees.

Keywords: Recreation, trail planning, environmental impacts, trail foundation procedure.

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1 Introduction

According to Vuolle (1992), people are both spiritually and physically alienated from nature during this century despite the fact, that travelling has rapidly increased and these days it is possible to experience more than before. Because of this alienation, activities in nature are more or less constructed, which means that activities like slalom skiing or snowmobiling can only take place in built environment. The amount of snowmobiles increases 6 % every year and snowmobiling has become one of the most popular attractions of winter tourism (Moilanen 1999). Zettersten et al. (1992) have pointed out that snowmobiling can give equal opportunities to move for example for disabled people and that people, who like snowmobiling, also can like and support other kind of nature activity. Those, who think that snowmobiling is a negative phenomenon in nature, argue that it is the biggest threat to nature tourism here in a northern hemisphere. They also think that the noise that snowmobiling produces, can be seen as a disturbance factor.

Twenty years ago snowmobiles were mainly used as a transport device in forestry, fishing and reindeer management. In recent years snowmobiling for recreational purposes has become more popular every year. The number of snowmobiles especially in southern Finland increases every year but good, well-maintained trails and thick snow cover are mostly situated in northern Finland. In 1997 there were 5 560 and in 1998 5 790 snowmobiles in North Karelia (Statistics ... 1998). Snowmobiling activities in the municipalities of North Karelia have been mostly supported by local clubs; each club has maintained their own trails and taken care of permissions that are required from landowners.

2 Aims of the project

The North Karelia Association for Recreation Services was founded in 1999. The aim of the association has been to maintain existing trails and build new ones so, that in winter 2001 there is a network of good snowmobile trails for recreation purposes. According to the rules "the aim of this association is to develop outdoor recreation possibilities to people who live in North Karelia. The aim is also to improve the general conditions of tourism in North Karelia by constructing and maintaining the region-wide snowmobile trail network. Association can also participate in constructing and maintaining regional hiking trails and recreation areas".

As important as it is to develop tourism in North Karelia, it is also important to provide recreational opportunities to local people. These are the two main goals of the association. Moilanen (1999) also points out that in the future snowmobiling can be the most interesting attraction, when people make decisions

where to travel. It is important to preserve nature values, but it is also important that people can drive in places, where there is something to experience and driving only on ice cover and under electrical power lines cannot provide this kind of experience. Therefore it is important that Finland and in this case North Karelia can be marketed as a place, which is able to provide high quality tourism services and also nature experiences, that are based on sustainability.

Members of association include 17 municipalities and 44 local companies in North Karelia, including safari and other kind of travel companies. The association is a "trail manager" organisation and is therefore responsible for hiring rights for the trails from landowners. Contracts between landowners and association are made for next 15 years and within this time the organisation is able to both build trails and to supervise, that these trails are used properly. Maintenance of the trails will be done by collecting fees from people, who use these trails. By concentrating snowmobile traffic to trails it is possible to avoid any serious nature damage and to make snowmobiling more safe.

When the development project of North Karelia snowmobile trails started, it had four main objects to achieve:

1) to develop equal trail foundation procedure between association and landowners;
2) to plan again the present trail network by taking both environmental impacts and the needs of local travel companies under consideration;
3) to create equal technical standards for trail construction by concentrating on the issues of the traffic security and the maintenance of trails, and
4) to create permanent and regional solution for the trail maintenance.

3 Environmental impacts caused by snowmobiles and trail planning

3.1 Emissions, noise and impacts on vegetation and animals

According to Moilanen (1999), emissions that snowmobiles produce when fossil fuels are used are mainly steam, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides (NO_x), small particles, carbon monoxide (CO) and hydrocarbon (CH). Emissions that snowmobiles produce are mostly affected by the type of the snowmobile (two-stroke or four-stroke engine), it's age and condition, filtering equipment, speed, fasting, driving when the engine of the snowmobile is still cold and weather conditions. Hydrocarbon emissions of snowmobiles are bigger than what road

vehicles produce. But as a whole, snowmobiles produce less emissions than road vehicles (Table 1).

Table 1. Emissions of snowmobiles and road vehicles in 1995 (t/a) by Moilanen (1999). Snowmobile emissions are approximated by taking into account former investigations, the amount of snowmobiles in 1995 and emissions of road vehicles.

Quality of emission	Snowmobiles t/a	Road vehicles t/a
Hydrocarbon (HC)	6 500	50 718
Carbon monoxide (CO)	13 100	304 850
Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)	100	131 763
Particles	190	7 978

Snowmobiles make noise which can disturb people, who are for example crosscountry-skiing or snowshoe hiking in forests. The noise problem is most obvious in lakes and treeless mires, where there are no hills and slopes. Noise can also disturb people living near snowmobile trails. These things can be taken into account, when trails are planned. According to Moilanen (1999), these simplified calculations of noise produced by snowmobiles are as following: when the number of vehicles doubles, noise increases by 3 dB and vice versa. When the distance doubles, noise diminishes by 6 dB and vice versa. When speed goes down from 60 km/h to 30 km/h this diminishes the noise by 3 dB.

There are very few investigations upon the effects of snowmobiling on nature. The general view concerning the possible impact on animals is that animals are more afraid of people than machines. Tormilainen (1995) has shown, that snowmobiling has certain effects on vegetation: snowmobiling doesn't alter the species composition, but when snowmobiling takes place many years in the same place, the growth form of species becomes more shallow. These consequences of snowmobiling are more obvious in moist than in dry sites.

3.2 Planning procedure

Planning of snowmobile trails started in 1999 and it has been mostly done by a local person in each municipality. Trails are so called long distance trails (Teigland et al. 1992) and together these trails form a network giving opportunities to make trips that last more than one day. Trails are also connected to other trails outside North Karelia. When these trails are planned, services along trails have been considered carefully: hotels, gas stations, shops etc. are well distributed along the trails. After the actual planning procedure, the contracts between landowners and association are done formally.

The next step is the evaluation of the environmental impacts that snowmobiling may have in each municipality. It is done according to the act on environmental impact assessment procedure. After reports of these impacts and possible alternative trails have been accepted by the North Karelia Regional Environment Centre, the actual building process can begin.

To avoid any damage to happen, snowmobile trails are mostly situated on small private roads and trails that are done, when forest owners are harvesting wood from forests. Electric power lines and the free space underneath them are also used as well as borders between landowners. Snowmobiles are not allowed in national parks, nature reserves, mire conservation areas, forests rich of herbs, wetlands for birds, glacifluvial esker formations or on other kind of areas which are protected by laws. The present Nature Conservation Act also includes the protection of important sites, which are not large enough to be protected as conservation areas, for example forests rich in broad-leaved deciduous species, hazel woods, common alder woods, sandy shores and juniper meadows. The aim is also to avoid crossing any courtship areas of fowls and to stop snowmobiling in early April in areas, which are important to overwintering species, when they arrive early in the spring.

Public roads can be used temporarily, if it is absolutely necessary and driving on ice cover is also possible. If driving on ice causes any disturbances, it can be restricted. The general rule is that the distance between routes and houses or summer cottages should be at least 60 metres. If it is difficult to avoid making disturbance either by making noise or by crossing protected areas, these things can and will be discussed appointed with local people and the authorities concerned.



Snowmobile trails are marked in terrain with official signs.

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Nature tourism services for disabled customers

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Abstract

Accessible environments and special services facilitate nature entertainment also for disabled children and their families. When we speak about developing nature tourism, it is not just question about habits and attractions of the customers. Besides that we must pay attention to special needs that rise from the needs of the users. Expansion in nature tourism needs developing of areas and contents suitable for groups of people, who have not earlier been potential customers caused by many reasons. Responsible nature tourism must include also equal participation for every people in spite of their impairments.

At the Nature Centre of Outokumpu we have tested the functionality of the area for disabled children and their families. The main activities at the area are fishing, wandering during the nature routes and paddling. The area has been developed also for disabled and elderly tourists since 1997. There is the Salmi -area, where it is possible to go fishing with wheelchair, there are opportunities for cooking and also for enjoying the great nature of the North-Karelia. Also there is a large camping centre owned by the city of Outokumpu, where there are suitable rooms, toilets and washing rooms near by the Nature Centre.

In this area we carried out two paddling weekends for families with several handicapped children (summer 1998 and 1999). These cases have been pilots in testing the area, suitable equipment and services that are needed. The paddling route includes ten ponds and lakes that consist a full circle. The length of the route is totally fourteen

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kilometres and the duration of paddling took three days including the testing of suitable equipment. The partners of the project have been the Finnish Association of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap (MALIKE-project), the development project of the Nature Centre at Outokumpu (KELO), and the Development Centre for Devices for Independent Living (ISAK). We have had ten families from all around the Finland doing the tests through real action in practice. Totally about thirty persons have been involved in those activities.

Before the paddling test the route was dredged and the suitable stands for starting and landing were made by the actors. One of the most necessary things were the suitable canoe models and individual equipment for each canoes. We attained knowledge of the special needs and manufactured individual solutions for each families and children. There were for example different seats and sitting systems, seatbelts, extra pontoons for canoes. One of the main points were the safety systems, for the case if the canoe falls around. The suitable systems were planned and made before the test started. The families took of course also their own equipment with them.

These pilots have shown us that it is possible to offer some nature tourism services and opportunities for special groups. Wide co-operation is needed between the users and their organisations together with experts of local services and technological know-how. We can see wide markets for the special tools in practice for several disabled groups in Nature Tourism.

Keywords: Services, nature tourism, disabled, customers.



Grey log hut in forest lying near the sand shore of lake Pielinen contributes the nature based tourism also for disabled visitors in Koli National Park.
Photo: Finnish Forest Research Institute - Jorma Siitonen.



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