

EXPLORING ECOTOURISM: THE WHAT, WHY, WHO AND HOW



What is Ecotourism ?

- ◆ Relatively unknown ...
 - ◆ industry,
 - ◆ business,
 - ◆ practice,
 - ◆ concept,
 - ◆ phenomenon ??????
- ◆ What do you think it is?



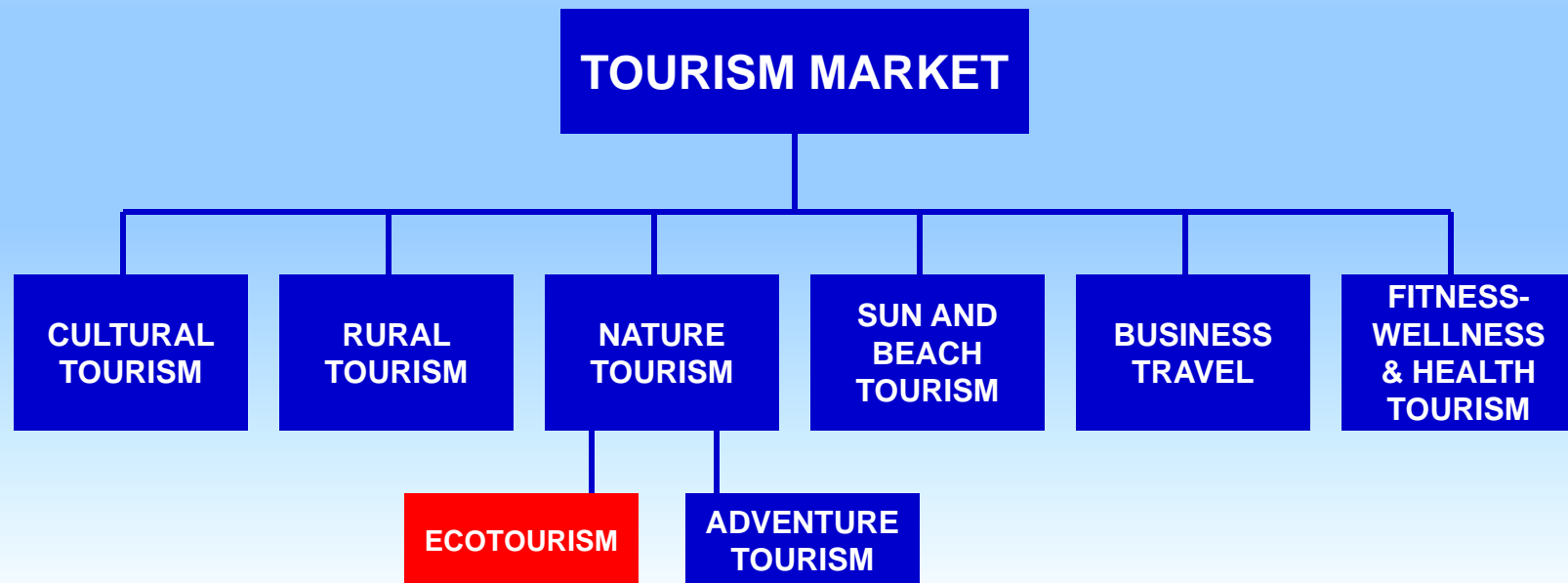
“Official” Definition for Ecotourism

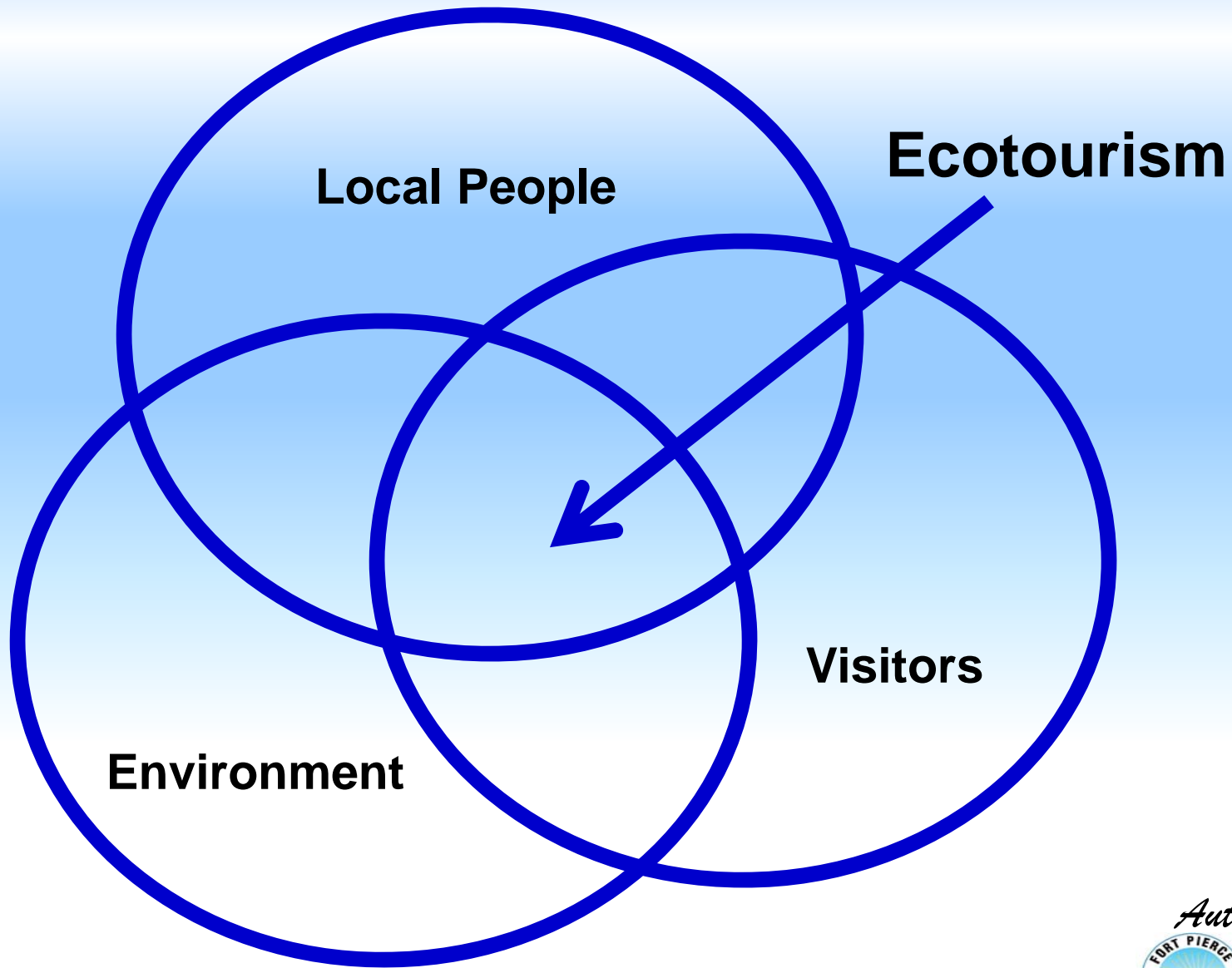
“Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people.”

- The Ecotourism Society



Ecotourism as a Market Segment





Ecotourism Provides



- ◆ Benefits to Local People
- ◆ Benefits to the Environment
- ◆ Benefits to Visitors

Benefits of Nature-Based Recreation



- ◆ Enjoying nature is one of, if not the most important experience reported by ecotourists.
- ◆ Ideal setting for relaxation
- ◆ Provides many forms of aesthetic pleasure

Types of Benefits

- ◆ Personal
 - ◆ Psychological
 - ◆ Physiological
- ◆ Social
- ◆ Economic
- ◆ Environmental



What kinds of businesses fall into the ecotourism category?

- ◆ Outfitters - birding, hiking, boating and camping gear
- ◆ Restaurants - local cuisine
- ◆ Craft sales, pottery, clothing, local artwork & souvenirs
- ◆ Bed and Breakfasts
- ◆ Hotels
- ◆ Others?



Who else benefits from ecotourists?

- ◆ Guided nature and marine tours, canoeing, hiking, birdwatching
- ◆ Cultural tours-historical, archeological
- ◆ Farms (Agritourism)-livestock, citrus, herbs, organic



From a functional viewpoint, ecotourism is:

- ◆ Mostly small-scale tour groups (< 25) and hotels with < 100 beds
- ◆ Operated by small and medium-sized companies in natural areas
- ◆ Businesses concentrated on leading and accommodating small groups in natural areas in an educational manner



Who are these people???



- ◆ Age: 35-54 years old
- ◆ Gender: 50% female, 50% male
- ◆ Education: 82% college grads
- ◆ 60% travel as a couple
- ◆ 15% travel with families
- ◆ 13% travel alone

Who are these people???



Ecotourists are more likely to select from a range of intimate, adventure-type accommodations such as cabins, lodges/inns, camping, bed and breakfasts, or ranches.

What do they spend ?

- ◆ Expenditure:
\$1,000 - \$2,000+ /trip



The Green Premium

- ◆ 83% of U.S. tourists are inclined to support “green” businesses and are willing to spend on average 6.2% more for services and products provided by environmentally-responsible suppliers.



How long do they stay ?

- ◆ Trip length: 8-14 days

When do they travel ?

- ◆ North American ecotourists prefer to travel in the summer, however experienced ecotourists will travel during the off season.

What do they want ?

- 1) Wilderness setting
- 2) Wildlife / Marine-life viewing
- 3) Hiking/trekking
- 4) ***See and experience recycling techniques, environment protection and restoration in action.***



Why do they do it ?

Defining the Ecotourist

Adventurers?

Families?

Seniors?

Hunters?

Backpackers?

Marine Enthusiasts?

Bird Watchers?

Foreign Visitors?



Ecotourist Motivations

- ◆ Enjoy Nature
- ◆ Small Groups
- ◆ Family Relations
- ◆ Reduce Tension
- ◆ Escape Physical Stress
- ◆ Share Similar Values
- ◆ Independence
- ◆ Introspection
- ◆ Be with Considerate People
- ◆ Achievement/Stimulation
- ◆ Physical Rest
- ◆ Teach/Lead Others
- ◆ Risk Taking
- ◆ Risk Reduction
- ◆ Meet New People
- ◆ Learn New Things
- ◆ Creativity
- ◆ Nostalgia
- ◆ Agreeable Temperatures

How do you bring them in?



- ◆ Marketing to the ecotourist
 - ◆ Remember - they are different than other tourists
 - ◆ They want nature-oriented, environmentally friendly, smaller-settings and are willing to pay for it

How do you keep them?

- ◆ “Linking” ecotourism businesses to provide a diversity of experiences in an easy-to-access manner.
- ◆ Training and education for ecotourism providers, managers, and community members so that visitors get a top-notch experience.



- ◆ Example:
Birder-friendly communities

Example: Birding

- ◆ Birders and wildlife watchers spent \$3.1 billion in Florida in the first half of this decade.



- ◆ Add the potential economic impact of hiking, camping, cycling, kayaking, fishing, hunting and other outdoor activities, and the potential payback to businesses and to entrepreneurs who cater to ecotourists is enormous.

What are the impacts of ecotourism?

- ◆ To the resource?
- ◆ To the community?
- ◆ To the visitor?



Impacts will occur



And they
occur
quickly.

How do you control negative impacts?

Monitoring

- ◆ Repetitive sampling of the same thing over time to document a change.

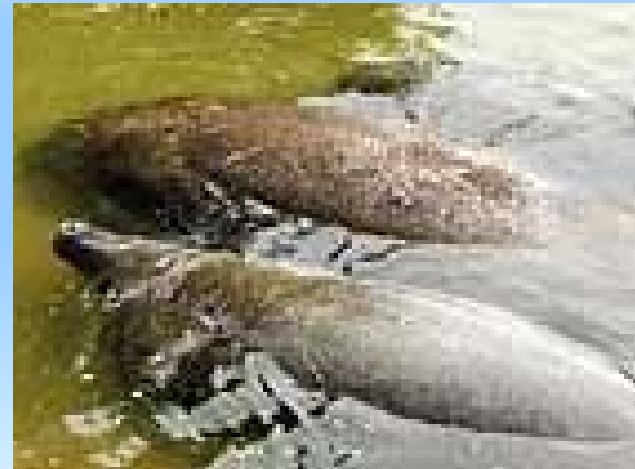


Why Monitor?

- ◆ Predict future (identify patterns),
- ◆ Identify potential problems,
- ◆ Prove changes are occurring, and
- ◆ Design lower-impact trips.

Plan

- ◆ Think about the methods and consequences BEFORE you bring in the visitors - ecotourism is more than “heads on beds.”



Educate



- ◆ Teach decision-makers about the potential benefits and impacts from ecotourism
- ◆ Teach operators about how to run a sustainable business while protecting the resource
- ◆ Teach community members how to welcome visitors and provide a positive experience

Responsible Ecotourism

Responsible ecotourism should feature programs that minimize the negative aspects of conventional tourism on each specific environment.

It is important to practice responsible ecotourism, which includes energy conservation, water

conservation, recycling, and engaging in activities that do not harm the natural setting or interfere with local culture.



This is perfect...

What can go wrong?

Provide Information for your customers

- ◆ Thoroughly inform tourists about the scope of the trip for which they've signed up.
- ◆ Tour Operators/Guides must provide full disclosure of what tourists can expect in terms of support and equipment.
- ◆ Operators/Guides must keep tourists informed of their safety status and upcoming challenges.

This is perfect... What can go wrong?

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST – Be sure to make your own Pre-Departure Checklist that best fits your venture – *AND USE IT BEFORE EACH TOUR.*

Here is an EXAMPLE of a checklist for a marine venture:

- ✓ **Life jackets:** Examine each personal flotation device for condition. Ensure you have the correct number on board.
- ✓ **Weather:** Check the weather forecast for the timeframe you will be boating.
- ✓ **Float plan:** Be sure to leave a float plan with someone on shore.
- ✓ **Fuel:** Make certain you have enough fuel and know where you can refuel.
- ✓ **Battery and fire extinguishers:** Be sure the engine battery and fire extinguishers are fully charged.
- ✓ **Boat check:** Make sure your boat is in safe, operable condition.

Conduct an pre-departure safety discussion with passengers:

The discussion should include:

- The location and proper use of life jackets (PFDs), fire extinguishers, visual distress equipment and first-aid kit.
- Emergency procedures; rules prohibiting discharging waste overboard, etc.
- Other items such as the weather and/or water conditions, anchoring procedures, docking and line handling, and the dangers of falling overboard and being struck by the propeller.



This is perfect... What can go wrong?

Tips and Cautions

- ◆ Take special measures to free yourself from liability if an accident or other unforeseen event arises.
- ◆ Prepare your travelers for the specific conditions in the target venture area.
- ◆ Include safety tips.
- ◆ Have them sign liability release forms.



Informed Consent and Liability Waivers

- ◆ Should be well-written by a lawyer.
- ◆ The intent must be very clear and written in language a normal person can understand. The Guide should go over it verbally, and ask for questions to ensure understanding.
- ◆ It must be presented for signing prior to the start of the trip and in circumstances that do not make it appear that the tourist is being compelled to sign against his or her will. The tourist must be free to decline and have an alternative to taking the trip.

This is perfect...

What can go wrong?

Insurance

- ◆ Every tourism business needs insurance to protect personal assets and provide peace of mind.
- ◆ Specialty liability insurance coverage is available for specific activities.
- ◆ Usually, insurance companies divide adventure tourism activities into groups with similar risk levels.

Here's what business insurance can do for you:

- ◆ Repair or replace lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed business property and equipment.
- ◆ Pay for medical treatment or emergency evacuation.
- ◆ Pay for a lawyer if you are sued by someone after being on one of your trips.
- ◆ Pay the award if a lawsuit against you is successful.
- ◆ Defend you in the case of a lawsuit if a court issues a judgment against you.
- ◆ Get you back into business quickly if you suffer a loss.
- ◆ Provide treatment and compensate clients if they are injured or suffer a loss.



Types of Insurance

- ◆ Property insurance protects “things” that the policy holder may own: buildings, vehicles, boats, and equipment, against financial loss due to perils, like accidents, break-downs, thefts, fires, floods, etc.
- ◆ Casualty insurance protects from loss due to legal liability if a client is killed, injured, or emotionally harmed or suffers loss or damage of property or possessions.

Examples of Ecotourism Ventures in Florida:



**Florida Eco-Safaris
St. Cloud**



**DP Nature Tours
White Springs**



**O'Toole's Herb Farm
Madison**



**Ginnie Springs Outdoors LLC
High Springs**

**Shoal Sanctuary
Mossy Head**



Examples of Web-Based Ecotourism Marketing in Florida:

FloridaSmart.com

http://www.floridasmart.com/attractions/outdoors_ecotour.htm

Ecotourism.gordonsguide.com

<http://ecotourism.gordonsguide.com/florida.cfm>

Floridaecotours.com

<http://www.floridaecotours.com/>

Southwestfloridaecotours.com

www.southwestfloridaecotours.com

Florida Eco Tours

<http://www.florida-eco-tours.com/>

Florida Ecotourism Directory

http://florida.uscity.net/Eco_Tourism/

East Coast Tours and Shuttle

<http://www.eastcoasttourandshuttle.com/tours.html>

Realadventures.com

http://www.realadventures.com/vacations/3855_ecotour-florida.htm




Examples of Web-Based Ecotourism Marketing in Florida:

Updated: 1 month ago

[Paddles and Saddles Package](#)
 by Central Florida Nature Adventures
www.kayakcentralflorida.com

Duration: 2-3 Hours Each
 USD 119.00 per person


United States:
 • Mt. Dora, Florida



[Paddle through Blackwater Lake](#)
 by Central Florida Nature Adventures
www.kayakcentralflorida.com

Duration: 2-3 Hours
 USD 59.00 per person

United States:
 • Blackwater Lake, Florida • Eustis, Florida



Updated: 1 month ago



Florida Nature Tours & Ecotourism Vacations - Sarasota Florida

Dolphins, Manatees, Gators, Deer, Bobcats in Sarasota Florida



Finish up your Sarasota stay with a champagne toast on a romantic sunset cruise - in a canoe. Or how about a guided and interpreted nature walk, kayak or camping trip customized to your interests and time frame. Walk on the Wild Side (941-351-6500), offers small group trips to most bays, estuaries and rivers in west central and south west Florida.

See diverse botanical life, abundant bird life, dolphins, manatees in season, gators, deer, bobcats, and river otters in areas not generally accessible to the general public.

You don't need previous canoeing or kayaking experience - the guides provide instruction if you need it. Prices start at \$30.00 per person and are \$65.00 per person for a sunset outing with wine and cheese.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau has an updated list of additional guided boat tours, fishing expeditions and

[Walk the Wildlife on the Wild Side](#)
 Central Florida Nature Adventures
www.kayakcentralflorida.com

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TOURS

SPECIAL DESTINATIONS

- Canaveral Seashore**
One of the best kept Florida secrets! After this remarkable hike, you will be forever touched by... [read more](#)
- The Gold Coast Tour**
The tour begins at New Smyrna Beach where we will wind our way up to the Historic Kingsley Plantation... [read more](#)
- The Quiet Rise Tour**
Step back in time and rise with us to the oldest inland city in Florida, Micanopy... [read more](#)

Day/Night of Lights St. Augustine
 Possible tour of historic Plaza de la Piedad for sunrise and sunset views



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Things to Do

ECO TOURISM

The Space Coast is a unique place that offers more than 250 square miles of protected wildlife refuges with spectacular landscapes and a rich diversity of rare and endangered plants and animals.

- Eco Tourism**
The Space Coast is a unique place that offers more than 250
- SEBASTIAN INLET STATE PARK**
- CAMP HOLLY**
- BARRIER ISLAND SANCTUARY**
- ARCHIE CARR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

DOLPHIN GIRL
 CRUISES & ECO-TOURS

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DolphinGirl Cruises & Eco-Tours is no longer offering boat tours. We apologize for this inconvenience. We highly recommend visiting one of our friends:

- Wild Side Tours:** 321-799-5495
- Space Coast River Tours:** 321-652-1052

We will continue to offer:

- Project Sea-Life:** A marine-based educational field trip experience for public, private and home school groups.
- Marine Adventure Camp:** A summer camp focused on marine biology and the environment of Florida. For kids 9-13 years old.
- Mini Marine Adventure Camp:** A marine biology summer camp experience

Conceptual Drawing – Ecotourist Hospitality Destination



Heritage Fishing Village at Fort Pierce



L
1/4
1/8
1/16



Authentic
Fort

PIERCE

Next Steps: *(NOT all inclusive)*

1. Complete Nomination Forms for each prospective venture.
2. Determine venture locations; establish ½-day, day, and multi-day packages, as needed; determine costs
3. Finalize Ecotourism Plan (can be amended, as needed)
4. Create Authentic Fort Pierce Advisory Board and Policies
5. Nominate Board members for City Commissioner's approval
6. Collaborate with County to evaluate County holdings as potential destinations
7. Develop list of educational partners
8. Recruit and train venture guides
9. Collaborate with City to produce promotional materials, design website, tickets, establish advertising venues, etc.
10. Address issues, including:
 - a. Transportation
 - b. Insurance
 - c. Funding (grant opportunities)
 - d.
 - e.



For more information, please contact:

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