

CONSERVATION W\$SE  
Sustainable Tourism Development

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**For: Planning for the Future of the Florida Panhandle**  
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**Sustainable Tourism Development**

- Use cultural, heritage and natural resources as economic development tools.

**Destination Life Cycle.**

- exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and either decline or rejuvenation  
an area moves through stages as more and more tourists come, until it meets or exceeds carrying capacity.

**Sustainable Tourism Development:** The right idea at the right time for The Florida Panhandle  
New tourism product for STATE (different from attractions in South/Central Florida)

**"Green Industry"**

Alternative for Rural Communities that have lost their economic base  
Alternative type of tourism that considers first the community and residents. **More not always better.**

**STATISTICS:**

**TOURISM STATISTICS ( WTO, FLA/USA and TIA 2001)**

- Tourism is a 4 trillion plus industry ....the largest industry on earth
- Employs 11% of the worlds working population
- In US 582 Billion

**Florida**

- 50 Billion worth of taxable sales, 3 Billion dollars in sales tax and 355 Million to local option taxes derived from tourism
- One percentage point increase in tourism creates 7000 jobs.
- 870,000 persons directly employed.
- 69.8 million visitors per year to Florida with approximately half going to Orange County.
- Tourist Spends on average \$128.00 per day.
- Going to the beaches is top activity of all visitors that come here. A majority of the visitors are on vacation and drive here and are families. A third of these visitors come in the summer. The most popular beach destination is.....the Northwest followed by the southeast and central west.
- **7 MILLION PLUS VISITORS TO NORTHWEST FLORIDA AREA**

**CURRENTS:  
NATURE BASED TOURISM**

- Fastest growing segment of tourism, growing at 15-20% per year, compared to 2-4% for conventional tourism. (pre 9
- 11 expected to recover to 2000 levels by late 2004)
- Generates 7% of international travel expenditures. (1997, Lundberg)
- 40-60 % of tourists are attracted to coral reefs, savannahs, beaches and forests.
- In Florida 48% of travelers surveyed list nature as important to vacation plans.
- Green travel gaining ground, 83% of all travels say it is important to them and they pay on average 6.2 % more for services provided by environmentally responsible suppliers.
- Activities growing in participation include bird watching, bicycling, walking, camping, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, backpacking, water skiing, snorkeling, off road biking, RV camping, day hiking, caving and swimming
- Outdoor activities. Visitors who participate in outdoor activities stay the longest averaging 7.4 nights . One third stay in tents, RV's ( RV rental and sales up 30% this year, predicted reaction to 9/11)
- 100 million people or more have taken an adventure

vacation in the past five years, this market is growing 20-30% per year.

## **CULTURE AND HERITAGE TRAVEL**

- 92.7 million travelers include culture on their trips, Approximately 65% of adult America.
- More people visit culture and historic sites than visit casino's, theme parks and cruises COMBINED!!!
- Trend is for more culture and historic travel as boomers take to the road and travel in their retirement over the next 20 years.( T&T Executive Report #9, 1997)

## **Statistics on travelers that include culture events on their trips compared to other U.S travelers**

- Travelers seeking Cultural and Historic experiences spend more \$631. per trip vs. the average traveler at \$ 457, excluding transportation to the destination. These travelers are more likely to take longer trips, fly, participate in more activities and stay more often in hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts. The South, Atlantic and Pacific regions of the US are the most popular regions for historic/cultural travelers. (TIA 2002 )
- Have households incomes over 50,000 46% versus 40 percent for U.S travelers.
- Have completed college 33% vs, 28%
- Of the 47% of Floridians that took a vacation in Florida other than where they reside, 57% participated in culturally based activities such as visiting museums, science centers, and performing arts events.
- 61% participated in a history based activity such as historical museums. Memorials, old homes, historic villages Indian sites.

## **TRENDS:**

1. **Generic** (bpfla/usa) If everywhere looks, feels the same..... why travel?
2. Vacation Deficit Disorder ( working more, less un-obligated free time...Kids too)
3. Need to Escape Strongest motivator only 27% take 5+ vacation days at a time, 70% increase in long weekend travel

4. Women making 70% of travel decision and Safety is key
5. Green is Good
6. Oldies but Goodies 14.% growth in 55-64 age group in last 10 years.
7. Married households with children decline to 23% .
8. Participatory Experiences that are Rewarding, Enriching, Authentic and Learning (REAL)
9. Seeking Meaning, Over-consumption not making us HAPPIER Rise in sale of Spiritual Books
10. Internet, leveling the playing field. Making it easier for small destinations to promote products

**QUALITY OF LIFE BENEFITS** (Florida Eco/Heritage Advisory Committee Report. 1997)

- Provides economic payback for protecting those resources that are important to the residents protecting nature and heritage enhances urban, suburban landscapes and architecture.
- Residents derive a sense of pride from it's historical significance, unique culture and pride.
- Cultural and recreation often key to corporate relocations.
- Well developed network of visitor opportunities educates Floridians and visitors to lessons of history, diversity of our culture, and the wide spectrum of natural, coastal, historical and cultural resources available in NW Florida
- Increasingly natural resource accessibility and recreation resources are tied to the community's health and the availability of physical activity for mental health.
- Visitors consider smaller less populated places and heritage and nature based activities as safe. (especially important since 9/11)

**EXAMPLES of ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF OPEN SPACE** (prepared by the Trust for Public Land in 1999)

- Rank by small businesses of open space/parks and recreation among factors used in choosing a new business location. #1
- 40 billion estimated value of outdoor recreation in the US economy in 1996.
- 20 million annual economic contribution of whitewater

- rafting on West Virginia Gauley River .
- 150,000-200,000 Estimated value of all economic benefits generated by one single acre of wetland
- Of 240 measure on state and local ballots in the November 1998 concerning land conservation, parks and smarter growth 72% were approved by voters.
- 401 million annual revenue to local businesses from visitors to US national wild life refuges in 1995. Jobs supported by these visitors, 10,000 : \$162.9 million value

### **Other Economic Benefits of Promoting Nature, Culture and Heritage Conservation**

- In 1994, Florida cultural industry contributed over 1.1 billion annually to the states economy and created approximately 18,000 full time jobs. (Eco/heritage Tourism Advisory Report c-6 1997)
- For every \$1.00 paid to canoe outfitters, customers spend \$ 5.00 for other trip related expenditures such as gas, food, lodging (1991)(Eco/heritage Tourism Advisory Report c-8 1997)
- The 32 mile Pinellas Trail attracts approximately 1.1 million out of area visitors a year ( 1996, Florida Trend , Herb, Hiller)
- Damascus Virginia , population 300, developed a thriving cycling economy based on it's natural resources. It supports a pro cycling shop, six shuttle services and numerous bed and breakfasts. (Economic Development Digest, Sept. 2000)
- In 1995 the Treasures of the Czars exhibit in St. Pete/Clearwater area contributed 62,287, 476 to the local economy. ( Eco/heritage Tourism Advisory Report c-7, 1997)

### **BREZINA'S CHECKLIST OF TELL- TALE SIGNS OF COMMUNITIES WITH A HEALTHY TOURISM SECTOR.... THAT IS SUSTAINABLE.**

- Real/authentic communities that promote cultural/historic and nature based activities  
**Vs.** the imposter man made tourism culture communities/models or affluent housing projects.
- A majority of the adult population has a job ( and works

- at on average, five days a week)
- The age distribution of the population follows a normal population distribution, not heavily skewed in one direction (ie. 50 plus.)
- The community is not seasonal | It may have busier times, but it works well all year long.
- The people that work in the service , manufacturing and technology industries can afford to live in that community. (real estate values have not been driven out of the reach of the residents who live there.
- The key festivals and celebrations in the community have a historic/cultural tie to the people in that community ( not staged or borrowed as a way to bring in tourists)
- The tourism industry is the icing on the cake, part of a diverse economy, not the dominant economy (< 40-50 %)
- The residents do not stay away from events in the community because the tourists have taken over...they are engaged.
- The local residents own a majority of the businesses that tourists frequent /use .
- Friendly attitude on behalf of the residents toward tourists who are viewed as welcome guests that appreciate what the area has to offer. Not a hostile them vs. US attitude. We like tourists and the money they bring to our community. The community has not allowed tourism to change or degrade the area for the worse.
- It is not tourism culture that drives the decision making, but quality of life for residents. The realness and unique diversity of the community in the long run continues to draws the tourists to the area. Best compliment a community can receive by a tourist: "Wouldn't this be a great place to live!"

## **STAKEHOLDERS**

- Governments, businesses, the tourism industry and local residents must all be part of the decision making process for sustainable tourism development to work.
- Partnering to Conserve: Example from GCPEP,1000 FRIENDS, MAIN STREET , Local Business Owners and Universities.

**Conservation of are natural, historic and cultural resources is  
ECONOMICALLY:**

- S ustainable
- M arketable
- A ttractive to local residents, government, environmentalists and business community
- R esource based and creates a REAL experience for the tourist
- T rend Responsive!

**THE FLORIDA PANHANDLE HAS CULTURAL,  
HISTORIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN  
ABUNDANCE.**

**LET'S MAKE THEM WORK FOR US BY PLANNING TO  
CREATE A BETTER FUTURE FOR NORTHEWEST  
FLORIDA RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS THROUGH  
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT!!!**