NATURE TOURISM ON BANKS PENINSULA: ISSUES AND PERCEPTIONS OF PEOPLE FROM THE RURAL COMMUNITY

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to my family and friends who have encouraged me with this project. Special thanks to the eight study participants that made me welcome and gave up time to be interviewed.

1. ABSTRACT

This research report, based on a Banks Peninsula's rural residents survey, is written as:

1) A discussion document on the potential for nature tourism on Banks Peninsula, aimed at its wider community; and

2) A research report as a requirement for completing the 1994 Kelloggs Rural Leadership course (Lincoln University).

Banks Peninsula was selected as a study site on the basis of the author's familiarity with the area, as well as being an area where nature tourism is growing rapidly. The report is written outside the author's regular workplace.

A small sample of rural residents is interviewed for this study and their responses summarised. An assessment is also made of a 1994 Banks Peninsula tourism marketing plan in context of the interviews. The discussion document concludes that there are a range of outstanding issues for nature tourism on Banks Peninsula which should be addressed as soon as possible to overcome potential problems. It is timely to involve the wider community fully in planning for future nature tourism. This will help ensure that both the life-style of Banks Peninsula residents is maintained, along with the Peninsula's unique natural environment.

2. BACKGROUND

Banks Peninsula is located east of Christchurch, comprising two large harbours (Lyttelton and Akaroa) of volcanic origin. The Peninsula rises steeply from the coast, with a dramatic landscape of high coastal cliffs, towering rock outcrops, and extended valleys and ridges. It is known for its sweeping, panoramic views across the harbours, and steep hills which plunge into often-isolated bays.

The ecology of Banks Peninsula is much modified through human use, even from 150 years ago. The once extensive podocarp and red beech forests are now only remnants, hidden in the valley bottoms, on steep valley sides and in reserves. The fragmented landscape now comprises a scattering of lowland podocarps, red beech, subalpine tussock and revegetating shrublands- including many introduced weeds that sometimes predominate. The marine life of the Peninsula is also a distinctive environment which is rich and diverse.

Valued by both Maori and European, Banks Peninsula has undergone a range of landuses from timber milling, to a thriving cocksfoot grass industry. There is an even wider range of landuses today. These include farm forestry, life-style blocks and grape-growing and garden industries. There is increasing pressure of recreational developments and a plethora of sub-divisions further changing and dividing the Banks Peninsula landscape.

Banks Peninsula has had a significant history both for early Maori, and later the European settlers. It remains a focal point for Ngai Tahu settlements. The Peninsula is lightly populated (with the exception of Lyttelton) with small settlements concentrated in the valleys. The scattered nature of settlement may be one reason why there is a relatively large number of small, sometimes fragmented, communities. It appears that residents have a strong sense of local identity in these small communities. An indication of this is with the many community groups that have a separate cultural, sporting or recreation grouping. There are as many as 92 "interest groups" listed for the Peninsula, and there are probably more informal groups that exist.

The main economic activities are tourism and agriculture. The primary visitors are from Christchurch and surrounding Canterbury, although both national and international visitor numbers are increasing. Nature tourism is a growing industry on the Peninsula, one which is specifically attracting both regional and national visitors, and more recently, a small number of visitors from overseas. Although the Peninsula is not well known to international visitors, it does have a growing reputation for walking opportunities, wildlife and scenery (Deloitte p.3).

Visitors are attracted to Banks Peninsula by its sense of tranquillity, its reputation for friendliness, relaxed pace of life, natural setting and wildlife. Akaroa Harbour is popular for opportunities to see the rare Hector's Dolphin, penguins and seabirds. A boat launch, "The Canterbury Cat" (catamaran) runs most day of the year taking people to see the marine wildlife. There are many short walks available, and longer walks such as the 'Banks Peninsula Track, which attracts steady numbers of trampers over the summer months. A more recent track, the 'Southern Bays Walkway' also offers another tramping experience in the western sector of the Peninsula.

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is:

- To report back to the wider Banks Peninsula community on a sample of residents' perspectives on the potential for nature tourism

Objectives are:

1. To interview a small sample of rural residents, summarise their perceptions of key issues associated with nature tourism, and report on their aspirations for future nature tourism on Banks Peninsula;

2. To assess the 1994 Deloitte Tourism Marketing Plan for suggestions on nature tourism;

3. To make a set of general recommendations about the potential of nature tourism on Banks Peninsula.

4. DEFINITIONS

Nature tourism is tourism that is nature-based. Visitors are attracted by opportunities to see wildlife and to experience and learn about their special features. According to Lindberg and Hawkins (1993, p.136):

> "Hundreds of nature tourism destinations exist worldwide, but examples of communities which have successfully pursued the dual goals of community development and environmental protection are sparse."

Ecotourism is not just nature tourism, but differs in that it involves active responsibility from tourism operators towards the natural environment and neighbouring local communities. To quote:

> "Ecotourism, in other words, incorporates both a strong commitment to nature and a sense of social responsibility... Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people."

> "Ecotourism is about creating and satisfying a hunger for nature, about exploiting tourism's potential for conservation and development, and about averting its negative impact on ecology, culture and aesthetics," (Lindberg and Hawkins, 1993, p.8)

In New Zealand, nature-based tourism has existed for a long time (imagine the early visitors to Tongariro National Park and Whakarewarewa). Our nature tourism market is affected by the significant increase world-wide in natural history tourism since 1980 (mentioned by Lindberg and Hawkins, 1993, p.32). In parts of the world, ecotourism has emerged from the same basis as nature tourism, but it is significantly different in its focus on environmental commitment and responsibility for the welfare of local communities.

It may be said that there are yet no example(s) in New Zealand of <u>authentic</u> ecotourism, although there are numerous examples of nature tourism opportunities throughout the country. My study, therefore, is of nature tourism on Banks Peninsula. Suggestions are made for the potential of ecotourism on the Peninsula.

5. METHOD

In-depth interviews were the chosen method of this study. Eight rural residents were selected to participate in this research work, and their written permission gained to publish the results. The range of people was chosen on the basis of their involvement or interest in the nature tourism industry. A mix of women and men were interviewed, people with both recent and relatively long involvement in the industry, and people interested in a variety of nature tourism activities.

Constraints. The research was undertaken from Wellington, which placed both a time and financial constraint on how much could be achieved with this study. Therefore, my study does not profess to be a representative sample of residents' views. Despite these constraints, I am confident that the interviews provide valuable insights into a sample of residents' perceptions and aspirations for future nature tourism on Banks Peninsula.

A recommendation is that a more representative study be implemented. A wider group of people could be interviewed, and further in-depth research done into the future of nature tourism on the Peninsula.

A set of eleven questions was asked in each interview (detailed in Appendix 1) from which the following key issues were derived.

6. KEY ISSUES

Social impacts

When interviewees were asked about any known social impacts, a few mentioned the impacts on local services and facilities during the higher visitor numbers in summer months, especially the load on Akaroa as a key destination on the Peninsula. One person said that, "The biggest problem with Akaroa, is Christchurch using the place as a 'dumping ground', by pressurising it with many bus-loads of people, and sending the profits back to Christchurch."

Six people expressed relief that the winter provided a lull from tourists. One person believed that there would be a "backlash" sooner or later if local people's privacy was invaded too much. Furthermore, they said, the winter lull provided an opportunity for walking tracks to recover from continued volume of foot traffic in the low season- described as "the healing time." Two others differed in their views of the quieter winter months. They were more concerned with encouraging tourist activities in order to overcome this lull, and to boost the economy in winter.

It appears that the source of such impacts could be solved in addressing visitor seasonal fluctuations. If this problem could be tackled, and options developed, growing impacts may be quelled.

Environmental impacts

When it came to known environmental impacts, most interviewees said that they did not have enough information or research to fully know of any impacts.

One person, however, had growing concerns about the affects of motorised boats on dolphins. The major concern was the possible impacts if people swam with the dolphins in the harbour and handled or touched them while doing so. While there is some current research on dolphin behaviour in contact with people, it is too early to say what the impact on the dolphins may be. This person recommended more cautious behaviour in the presence of dolphins.

Of similar concern to this person, was the behavioural impacts of some people with other wildlife. One problem mentioned, was the tendency for some tourists to handle penguins once they had located them in the various bays. Some visitors go so far as having their photo taken while holding the penguin.

Six people suggested there was an urgent need to educate people on how to behave while near wildlife. A handout would be an essential piece of information explaining the different species breeding, feeding or other habits. As one person said, "The people just go 'ga-ga' when the dolphins are about on a harbour cruise. They become desperate to see them or sometimes swim with them, and many feel this way about penguins too."

Two people believe that scenic tourism is no longer the only attractive factor, stacked up against nature tourism and experiential tourism. One person explained this by saying that people are seeking more in-depth experiences and opportunities to learn more about the natural world (including animals, plants, birds, marine species, insects and so forth). For example, they may want to know more about how the land was formed, how the bird or animal survives, who the early settlers were, and what cultural differences may exist.

More obvious environmental impacts include sewage disposal from camper vans which is an on-going concern for most people. One person mentioned that because of the lack of education and facilities for sewage disposal, camper vans dispose at "convenient" sites such as Okuti and Kaituna Scenic Reserves. Yachts too, empty out raw sewage directly into Akaroa Harbour, and worse still, into enclosed inner harbour bays where material does not get flushed out into the wider ocean. It was suggested that this is partly a problem of educating people, and partly a lack of disposal sites at the Akaroa wharf.

A further problem is with water quality and drinking water. One person said they made sure that they now only drank boiled or filtered water in Akaroa. Also mentioned, were people's poor hygiene habits, and the chances of spreading bacteria if they did not wash their hands.

Infrastructure

A common concern to most of the group interviewed (and often voiced in the Banks Peninsula fortnightly newspaper, The Akaroa Mail) is the strains on the local facilities during high visitor use in the summer months. At these times, the toilet facilities are at capacity, along with limited water supplies. One person said that the Akaroa sewage scheme manages well throughout the year, but over summer sewage facilities can barely cope at peak times.

Often it is necessary to enforce water restrictions, especially when drought conditions prevail. There is a perception that residents are "carrying" both visitors, bach and boat owners who may liberally use water. An example cited, was of boat owners washing down their boats with fresh water after boating at sea, while local water supplies are in limited supply.

Quality of road, track and place signs are another concern amongst rural residents. Some standard signage is now appearing. However, lack of road and track signs, and the poor quality of some signs continues to be a point of debate.

Who should provide toilets away from the town facilities, was another question raised. it would be fair to say that most organisations do not want to provide toilets on the short walks, due to the costs and long-term maintenance problems. Questions for debate are: who will provide toilets, and who will maintain and upkeep them? Clearly, there is no one organisation that is proactive in addressing this question.

A first step could be a full assessment of the problem, and identification of where/ who/ and which organisation is responsible for provision of toilet facilities.

Standards

Some people are concerned that there are no accepted standards for controlling the quality of service that a nature tourism operator may conduct, although several operators use Kiwi Host and may try to reach ISO 9002 standards. While there appears to be a level of satisfaction amongst those interviewed about the quality of service currently offered, some people are concerned that standards of service may drop (e.g. in education/ interpretation) with increasing numbers of tourists and operators.

As one person said, "Emphasis also has to be given to good quality information and interpretation. Information centre workers need to be well-trained and well-versed."

Management planning

While two residents mentioned the potential for improving the economic base of the Peninsula by attracting more visitors, most said that they realised the influx of visitors should be carefully managed through planning controls that lie with the regional and district councils, and the Department of Conservation. One person would like to see the local councils develop policies to set standards and parameters for what can and cannot happen with tourism activities. This person suggested there was a need to develop a framework for planning with sustainable management of the natural and cultural environment carefully put into practice. To this person, nature tourism is an opportunity for local residents to work together to maintain the special and unique features of the Peninsula. The scope was enormous for "gentle tourism."

The majority though, said that planning should be done by the local people. There was almost unanimous agreement that people living outside the Peninsula should not be suggesting what residents should do with the Banks Peninsula region. While two people were willing to listen to outside opinion and advice, the majority believe that skills lie with the local residents in planning their own future.

Is there a need for an specific tourism plan?

While two interviewees agreed with the need for an integrated plan for tourism on Banks Peninsula, the majority were wary about the benefits of such a plan.

Three people believed the plan could be co-ordinated by the Banks Peninsula District Council in conjunction with a representative group of residents. The suggestion was to outline all possible economic, environmental, social and cultural problems, and suggest methods to overcome these. There was also agreement that a co-ordinated brochure was a prerequisite for good marketing of tourist activities on the Peninsula.

The other people said that a plan could only work successfully if someone was prepared to see the plan carried out. Furthermore, enforcement of aspects of the plan may be necessary, and there were suggestions that this is often where plans are not effective. Several people said that there may be too many ulterior motives of central and local government. One person said that people's biases and prejudices affect their level of good decision-making. "The locals do not want to get hooked into further bureaucracies", is how another person expressed it. The strong independence of local communities is evident in this comment.

One person summarised this general feeling by saying that, "People only have energy for their own vision."

7. VISION

The eight rural residents interviewed have a clear vision for the future of nature tourism on Banks Peninsula. Put briefly, they are interested in encouraging more visitors but not at the expense of the natural environment, nor to the life-style and peacefulness of the Peninsula. This point is the basis on the final recommendations in this discussion document.

While the rural residents may differ in their views of HOW that vision will be achieved, their aspirations are remarkably similar. The following sections expand on their vision for future nature tourism.

A bright future in nature walks

The majority of people interviewed suggested that there was a bright future for nature walks, both short and long, day and overnight, on Banks Peninsula.

All people interviewed observed that the region does not currently rely on any one unique draw-card for tourists. Tourists are attracted for an amalgam of reasons based around the region's scenic beauty. The majority suggested however, that walks could be marketed as a way of focusing diverse attractions:

Seven people suggested that tourism should focus on walks, across both public and private land as the unique feature of the Peninsula. A network of tracks linked with one another could meet the needs of walkers of all levels, and capabilities. Walks across open farm country, pockets of bush, along coastal fringes and along the hill tops are sought out for variation. One person said that both the existing private walkways (including Banks Peninsula Walks, The Southern Bays Walkway and walks in Hinewai reserve) are examples of successful and environmentally sensitive operations. This person also said that a wide range of walks could be promoted to suit a wide range of people- young, old, people in wheelchairs, people with prams, or walking sticks. The potential for a range of walks is still untapped according to this person.

Retain quality of natural environment AND retain quality of lifestyle

A point that was raised and supported by each person interviewed, was that more visitors were welcome to the Peninsula, but **not** at the expense of the natural and social environment. All interviewees clearly expressed a desire to enhance what the Peninsula already had, encourage appreciation and education about the region's special features, without creating any major new facilities. One person said,

> "I believe the emphasis must be put on quality rather than quantity. Numbers can certainly exceed appropriate levels. Nature experiences are also threatened by inappropriate development .... "

Also "Don't develop inappropriately, such as helicopter 'services'. Keep the experiences offered low-key but efficient, green, minimum impact on landscapes, vegetation, water, fauna, waste disposal, and so on...."

In all interviews, people expressed the need to maintain a careful balance of tourism development along with promoting existing special features. They did not want to compromise either the lifestyle of residents, nor the peacefulness of the natural environment. One person said that, luckily, the geography and the climate "saved the place." In other words, the hilly drive to Akaroa kept many tourists away, as well as the cold, harsh winters that the Peninsula is prone to. Another person differed by saying that the hilly drive is part of the attraction to some, and cold, harsh winters are not frequent to the Peninsula.

The plea for retention of the Peninsula's special qualities is one that has often been expressed by articles in The Akaroa Mail. A letter (8-4-94) titled "The tacky trap" was concerned:

> "about the prospect of our lovely Akaroa being converted from the quaint, picturesque village that it is to a tacky tourist trap such has happened in other towns in this beautiful country (Queenstown for example).... It frightens me that the uniqueness of Banks Peninsula could be spoiled in the search for the almighty tourist buck....We urge the District Council to continue to exercise strong restraint against those who seek profit at the expense of the community."

In the interview, another person's said:

> "Nature tourism should be emphasising low-tech, low-key, high quality of information experiences- walking rather than vehicular transport, lots of good information available at the Information Centre, Museum, in guide booklets. And keep out inappropriate development like the helicopters, gondolas and so on. 'The Canterbury Cat' is a good example of its kind though- it is well done, not over the top, well-researched information, taking a lot of people to nature experiences with minimum impact."

Need for tourists to spend more time

Of the residents interviewed, all expressed a need for tourists to take their time to enjoy the natural and cultural attractions. One person said that while the Peninsula will never be a mass tourism destination, visitors will be always be attracted by its opportunities to rest, relax and enjoy its natural features. Another suggested that people could be persuaded to stay on the Peninsula to spend quality time involved in one or two key activities, taking their time to do so.

One person's opinion was that:

> "People who travel slow, it all happens for them. They are the ones that see what is happening in nature. They are also the ones that get invited in by locals for a cup of tea, or even to stay." Another said that "the tourists who come here at great speed, are just so disoriented! They are almost on the verge of being 'tipped over'. They are just 'had it' from continual, non-stop travelling."

"Akaroa Harbour Cruises" are an organisation that realise the benefits of providing a service that allows for slow, relaxing enjoyment of the marine environment. When they first started their business eight years ago, their tourist boat was too small, open and fast. Now they purposely provide a service that allows people time to take in the scenery and enjoy the wildlife.

To another interviewee, there were no incentives for visitors to stay longer on the Peninsula. Instead, these people sped through the area, tense and pressured from continual travelling.

Other potential and complementary nature activities

Six people suggested that further activities could be enhanced to attract the growing backpacker, adventure and nature tourism markets. One person suggested the link between Little River, French Farm, along with a boat ride, walk and further boat link could be a great opportunity to explore.

Farm parks, farm visits and open gardens are also opportunities for visitors that enjoy nature. These, along with short and long walks, and bird-watching tours are all potential markets that could be explored, but not exploited. Also tours that focus on the region's natural and cultural history, are needed. One person said that some visitors will sit and watch the swans, geese and blue herons for hours at a time. The potential for bird-watching also seems unrealised.

The Herb Farm at Akaroa is an example of a place that draws large numbers of people. A focus of the Herb Farm has always been centred around a strong philosophy of respect, love and nurture of the natural environment. It was suggested that here the potential for education is enormous.

Acknowledgement of the special status of tangata whenua

Although no Maori people were interviewed, one person clearly stated that the tangata whenua of the Peninsula were highly responsible for the natural environment. He said, "They are careful kaitiaki of the region's well-being." This person suggested that the Crown should continue to acknowledge how able the tangata whenua are as kaitiaki.

Cautions

The vision for the future for one person was less optimistic than other interviewees:

> "People are too good at spoiling things. I am not overly optimistic that the future for tourism on the Peninsula will be good. Unless planning controls are put in place, nature will be spoilt and exploited here. We must remember that the tangata whenua will be better protectors than us."

Five people mentioned that a frequent draw-back to tourism, was the lack of activities to do on a rainy day. While some people may enjoy walking whatever the weather, there are many that dislike venturing out in poor conditions. There is a perception that there are limited adventure activities which young people can do on the Peninsula. However, all people said that the peacefulness of the Peninsula was one of its greatest assets, and that marketing should be in keeping with this theme.

Another person warned of the need to distinguish between business and life-style, saying that people often start a tourist operation, not realising the many difficulties and pitfalls along the way. The stress on most operators to maintain a viable operation can be enormous, and this is likely to take a toll on their health, unless careful steps are taken to remedy this fact. The life-style that the operator planned to maintain, may often suffer as a consequence (especially in a place with such a seasonal flow of visitors).

This person was equally cautious about impacts on the natural environment. Tourism at Kaikoura served as an early warning of what could happen at Banks Peninsula, with many operators setting up in a small region, causing much in-fighting, stress on people, and stress on the environment. Like others, this person was mindful of maintaining the character of the Peninsula and working hard to keep the waterways clean and free of any possible disease or bacteria.

Another need was to establish good planning controls to reach environmental and social standards. One person said that they believed the Resource Management Act "is merely sandcastles in front of the tide."

8. REVIEW OF THE 1994 DELOITTE TOURISM MARKETING PLAN FOR BANKS PENINSULA

At the same time as I was developing my project, a parallel report was being completed by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu on behalf of the Banks Peninsula District Council. In early 1994, Deloitte completed a Banks Peninsula Tourism Marketing Plan, with the purpose "To promote sustainable growth in tourism activity which strengthens the economic base of Banks Peninsula and is compatible with residential lifestyles."

It is my belief that my research is complementary with, and serves to elaborate on some of the objectives raised in the Deloitte Plan.

First, the Plan acknowledged that Banks Peninsula is slowly becoming known to international visitors for its walking tracks and wildlife. Akaroa appeals most strongly to visitors from Germany as an overnight destination, and it is clearly popular with backpackers and people that do not use traditional hotel or motel accommodation (Deloitte pp 5-7).

Local operators consider the following as the main strengths of the Peninsula as a tourism destination and for day visits (Deloitte Appendix 2):

* outdoor activities/ scenery
* historical interest
* wildlife
* unique environment with clean, green image
* walking tracks
* relaxed atmosphere

While Akaroa hosts only a tiny proportion of New Zealand's overseas visitors (1.3% of the 4,752 visitors interviewed for the International Visitor Survey 1992/93), Deloitte researchers believe that there will be a spinoff from the Christchurch visitor market. They say that if visits to Akaroa increase in proportion to the Christchurch rate, it will host about 26,000 international visitors in the year 2000 (Deloitte p.8).

At this point in the Deloitte Plan, there was a statement that, "The task for marketing Banks Peninsula is to attract visitors with the most positive economic impact but least social and environmental impact," (Deloitte p.8).

Here, my own research may elaborate on what I believe is not just a 'task' for marketing Banks Peninsula, but a definite 'challenge.'

The many special features of Banks Peninsula provide the potential to meet future economic needs. Equally, the problem may be that tourists could detract from the very features that they have come to see. With careful management, careful marketing, and integral involvement of the various Banks Peninsula communities, tourism growth may contribute to positive environmental and social impacts.

It is my belief that a region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats should each be worked in tandem as part of "careful, good management." For example, the strengths and opportunities of the Peninsula, such as its scenery, wildlife, walkways and history/ culture can be used for marketing and education/ interpretation. The weaknesses and threats must be overcome e.g. careful planning for much-increased use of roads, water, sewage systems; and greater attempts to bring the many communities of Banks Peninsula together, **to involve them as fully as possible in their own, and their children's futures, and to gain their support, dreams and aspirations for the Peninsula.** It is the local people that host, look after visitors, and upon whom the level of visitor satisfaction will mostly depend. Put in marketing language, "In many ways, local communities are the visitor product" (Deloitte p.34).

Not enough is known either of resident's opinions, or of the state of resources on the Peninsula. Further surveys and studies would greatly benefit long-term planning. An inventory on the condition and potential use of the Peninsula's infrastructure should be an important part of long-term planning for both tourism and local needs. The limits to capacity for accommodation, sewage, transport, water supply, roading, signs and attractions would greatly benefit from a strategy for their current and potential use. Problems and issues could be overcome by planning which organisation or group takes responsibility to maintain and enhance these facilities and services.

Finally, it is worth ensuring every good effort is made to ascertain what local communities want in terms of future tourism for their region. They may wish to promote and encourage tourism and its possible economic growth, but simultaneously ensure that future tourism is well managed, well provided-for, services and facilities are kept in good condition, and impacts on the people and the environment are minimised.

One local operator expressed this about their vision for tourism on the Peninsula:

> "To encourage more visitors, but not at the expense of the environment."

9. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

To plan more effectively and carefully for either nature tourism or ecotourism on Banks Peninsula, the following is recommended:

1. Ensure (through marketing and planning) that the local tourism industry is not developed at the expense of the natural environment nor quality of life.

2. Involve local residents and communities of Banks Peninsula from the outset to ensure they are integral to future tourism planning on Banks Peninsula.

3. Regularly survey local communities, take notice of their opinions, and hold further public meetings to ascertain the future aspirations of local residents.

4. Represent the full range of local residents on Banks Peninsula tourism marketing groups, such as farmers, tourist operators, local Maori, community groups etc.

5. Develop a marketing theme (in conjunction with the local community) associated with the peacefulness, tranquillity, wildlife and walking opportunities of Banks Peninsula.

6. Complete an inventory of Banks Peninsula's facilities and services, and regularly monitor their current state of condition.

7. Project anticipated pressures and limits on capacity, the effects on facilities and services, and plan for their appropriate maintenance or further expansion. That is for:

   accommodation
   toilets/ sewage facilities
   water supply
   roading/ signs/ transport
   attractions
   shops
   visitor services
   quality of interpretation/ education
   crowding (psychological carrying capacity)

8. Acknowledge existing problems (including threats or weaknesses), and develop options for solutions with the local residents to overcome such problems.

9. Develop educational packages for tourists to better understand and experience wildlife.

10. Develop guidelines and standards (involving local people) which take into consideration the ecological, social and economic factors of nature tourism or ecotourism on the Peninsula. An excellent example is "Points for guidelines review" from Lindberg and Hawkins, 1993, p.37 (attached).

11. Develop guidelines for tourists which address social impact, environmental impact and economic impact. For another good example, refer to "Model guidelines for tourists" from Lindberg and Hawkins, 1993, pp 50-53 (also attached).

12. Establish a monitoring and evaluating process. This process need not be complicated and costly.

    Note that when monitoring and evaluation are part of a process, measures can be made of the success of a project e.g. by measuring impacts on the natural and social environments. Without such a monitoring process it is difficult to measure impacts against original goals and objectives. Monitoring allows for adjustments and changes to be made along the way.

13. Study nature and ecotourism examples from overseas, and learn lessons from these.

    A good place to start is studying examples from research completed by the World Wide Fund for Nature. Such lessons should assist in planning for a sustainable future for Banks Peninsula into the next century.

    As one author said (in Lindberg and Hawkins, 1993, p.79):

    "Protected areas like Galapagos are worth fighting for, and worth protecting for all people, for their own sake, for all time. It is an achievable goal and one that can be set in many places. May each of us return a little of what these places gives to us to their care."

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW QUESTION TOPICS

1. What is your interest in nature-based tourism on the Peninsula?

2. What do you believe are the key issues or problems for nature tourism here?

3. How do you suggest maintaining standards and quality of experience or product?
   How do you suggest maintaining continuing quality interpretation?

4. Are there problems with infrastructure (facilities/transport/ accommodation)?
   If so, what do you suggest could be done to overcome these problems?

5. Are there any known environmental or social impacts from the current operations?

6. How would you suggest overcoming any possible impacts in future?

7. What would you suggest about becoming "too successful" i.e. tourist demand obliges the operator to run more tours than the resource is comfortable with?

8. Tourism can be "boom and bust". Small nature tourism operators may be vulnerable to a drop in tourist numbers, so how do you think operators will cope?

9. Tourists are often in a hurry, travelling long distances over a short time. Nature tourism often requires more time to fully enjoy the experience. How can operators provide incentives for tourists to remain longer with them?

10. Should there be a co-ordinated plan for tourism on the Peninsula?
    If so, which organisations/ groups are responsible?

11. What is your vision for a future of nature tourism on Banks Peninsula?

- Identify the theme or key thrust of the guidelines (e.g., environmental protection or increased cultural awareness).
- Consult with guides who lead tourists into target areas.
- Get technical assistance from scientists who have studied tourism's impact.
- Gather all the partners concerned around the table. Form a committee which may include residents, resource managers, guides, commercial operators, lodge owners, service personnel, and local vendors.
- Use guidelines from other areas as a model.
- Set objectives and formulate a way to evaluate whether the objectives have been met. (e.g., a decreased level of animal harassment or trail erosion).
- Work up the document and send it back and forth between the committee and technical specialists for review and criticism.
- Create a distribution plan for the guidelines document.

STYLE TIPS

Guidelines are written to solicit cooperation. They must be written with skill and insight into how the reader will interpret and use them. Write in a style that is friendly in tone. Avoid technical language that the reader may have to struggle to understand. If the guidelines are easy to read and written in a style that predisposes the traveler to cooperate, the time put into their preparation will pay for itself many times over. The following style tips are recommended.

- Be self-explanatory: explain why, use examples that illustrate consequences.
- Be positive: avoid language that prohibits actions. Encourage responsible behavior.
- Use figures and drawings to help explain consequences.
- Translate guidelines into as many tourist languages as possible.
- Print on recycled paper where feasible.
- Guidelines should be supplemented by tips on where and how to best view wildlife, safety recommendations, and a directory of contacts for more information. Requests for donations are also appropriate.

- The name, address, and phone number of the organization that prepared the guidelines should be clearly marked.
- A questionnaire for visitors on the effectiveness of guidelines should be considered.

POINTS FOR GUIDELINES REVIEW

Take into consideration the points (ecologic, social, and economic) listed below when drafting guidelines.

Ecologic guidelines are the backbone of a guidelines program, often designed by natural resource specialists experienced in the impacts of tourism on local ecosystems.

- Garbage disposal
- Human-waste treatment
- Firewood collection and fuel self-sufficiency
- Campfire placement
- Campsite placement
- Trail, driving, or boating behavior
- Endangered species protection
- Suitable distances for wildlife
- Viewing and photography
- Feeding or touching animals
- Pet care
- Protection of clean water supply
- Noise levels of campers, vehicles, radios
- Visual impact of visitors on other visitors
- Group size
- Collecting natural souvenirs
- Purchasing natural souvenirs
- International trade laws

Social guidelines are best generated by local communities. Failing that, the entity generating guidelines should seek extensive input from local leaders.

- Local customs and traditions
- Religious beliefs
- Permission for photographs and other social favors
- Dress
- Language
- Invasion of privacy
- Response to begging
- Keeping promises
- Use and abuse of technological gadgetry
- Bartering and bargaining
- Indigenous rights
- Local officials
- Off-limits areas
- Alcoholic beverages
- Smoking
- Tipping

Table 2-2. Model Guidelines for Tourists (Contd.)

Environmental Impact: For Wildlife Watchers and Photographers

Part of the experience for visitors is to observe wildlife. Learn appropriate stalking behavior and do not succumb to the urge to get too close. Photographers can be disruptive intruders in the wild. Use telephoto lenses—the longer the better—avoid flash photography with most mammals, and never bait animals with food.

Observe animals from the distance they consider safe; stay at a distance. All animals have "escape distances," that is, they'll let you approach within a certain distance before they try to escape. Observers should not violate this escape distance. Distances vary among species, individuals, and environmental circumstances and depend on the mode of transport. Here are some examples of distances submitted in the guidelines.

- Penguins, nesting birds, true seals: start with a baseline distance of 15 to 20 feet (5 meters).
- Walruses, otters, marsupials, plains herd animals: keep a minimum distance of 20 to 30 feet (8 meters).
- Manatees: 50 feet (16 meters) from an individual or a concentration.
- Fur seals: 50 to 60 feet (18 meters).
- Whales: not closer than about 300 feet (90 meters) and at a speed that matches theirs, approaching not directly from the front or rear, but parallel.
- Humpback whales: avoid an intentional approach within 100 yards (90 meters). If the craft is more than 100 feet long (30 meters), avoid within 1/4 miles (.40 kilometer). If cows or calves are present, stay beyond 300 yards (270 meters). By aircraft, stay beyond 1,000 feet (300 meters).
- Bears: as far as possible. Avoid encountering them, except at great distances. Observe with powerful binoculars or scopes.

How to approach and retreat. Approach wild animals slowly and quietly. Avoid sudden movements. Do not forget to retreat the same way you approached. You might have to crawl on the ground or walk with bent knees to get closer.

Learn the signs you are too close. Learn the wild animal behavior that indicates you are too close. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has sketched the behavior of disturbed animals. Signs of fear, alarm, distress, aggression, and attack are described for birds, marine and land mammals, and fishes. In general, disturbed animals interrupt regular activities, such as feeding, start looking at observers, and take aggressive postures.

Learn the consequences of coming too close. If you come too close, remember you can be responsible for the loss or death of young animals. If nesting birds are flushed, chicks and eggs may die from excessive heat or cold, predators will eat unguarded eggs and chicks, and nests may be abandoned. Disturbance can cause animals unnecessary expenditure of energy.

Table 2-2. Model Guidelines for Tourists (Contd.)

Familiarize yourself with the local regulations. Always respect buffers and boundaries if they are indicated on a managed site. Do not go beyond these limits. Do not enter posted designated sanctuaries; these signs play a major role. The nautical charts in Florida, for instance, indicates to boaters and divers how to protect the manatees by observing speed signs and zones. If there are any local regulations or policies in the areas you are visiting, follow them.

Basic tips. Stay at the periphery of animal assemblages. Do not surround a group. Never get between animal parents and their young. Do not isolate one individual from its group. Give animals the right-of-way. Do not scare birds off nesting colonies. Do not attempt to touch animals. Follow these basic rules: keep your camp clean, store your food in a tree, camp well away from trails, and do not feed animals.

The should-nots. It is generally harmful, and often dangerous to: hand-feed, harass, chase, disturb, capture, or attempt to sell wild animals or the by-products of any living organism. Certain species are protected by law. The manatees, marine mammals, corals, flora and fauna of Antarctica and many other species are under protection of the Endangered Species Act or the Marine Mammal Act in the United States. The Convention of International Trade (CITES) has well documented lists of species prohibited in trade. Local regulations in each country visited must also be respected. Learn the rules for legal sales and purchase of animals and plants. See the "Buyers Beware" leaflet for trophies, meat, living organisms.

Returning home. Join environmental organizations. Become involved in conservation efforts. Pick up brochures and send money to local conservation projects. Keep in touch with your fellow travelers and let them know the latest on projects that are worthy of support. Give back, as much as you can, to the local authorities or to your hosts, in return for what you received.

Economic Impact

When choosing travel operators, ask these questions: How do they disburse their profits? Do they hire local guides and use local services and supplies?

When traveling, spend money on local enterprises. Choose traditional handicrafts and items made from renewable resources. Do not deprive people of rare and hard-to-get supplies. Do not encourage illegal trade by buying products made from endangered species. Shop around, but avoid bargaining with craftspeople to such a degree that their profits are only marginal.

Table 2-2. Model Guidelines for Tourists

The seventy guidelines reviewed offer the following tips for travelers.

Social Impact

Prepare well in advance of your trip. Take time beforehand to learn about the people and the place you are going to visit. Ask your travel agent or tour operator for detailed information about the destination country. Such information should be provided as soon as the trip is purchased. Go to the library for more information.

Allow plenty of time in each place. Spend sufficient time in an area to get to know and understand it. Avoid superficial visits. Make sure your schedule allows opportunities for meeting and interacting with local people. Try to stay at one site, rather than flying like a butterfly from one place to another.

Don't create barriers. Do not stay confined to your group. Mix with others. Use local transportation and services. Be receptive, ask questions, try to communicate in the native language. Look, listen, and learn from others.

Accept the differences, adopt the local customs. Culture, customs, religious sensitivity, lifestyles, and skills are different from your home country. Accept them, respect them, appreciate them. Try not to offend your hosts. Be culturally sensitive, especially when taking photographs, bargaining, and choosing your attire. Ask permission before photographing. Make sure your good deal is not robbery of the merchant.

Consider the effect of your visit. Do not make an extravagant display of wealth (for example, technological gadgetry). Beware especially of what you say and how you gesture. Do not leave your good manners at home. Do not encourage children to beg.

Be an ambassador back home. Share your experience with others. Maintain contact with the people you meet. Don't make promises that you cannot keep: send photos, for instance. Contribute to local projects and spread the word to fellow travelers.

Environmental Impact: For General Travelers

Make the right choice before you travel. Choose the right tour operators. Make sure they run their business with environmental sensitivity. When you plan to travel, find out about laws and regulations in the areas you plan to visit. Follow them. If you are an independent traveler, write or call for guidelines and contact the manager of the land you are visiting. Take the appropriate equipment with you.

Leave only footprints, pack it back, carry it in, carry it out. Do not leave anything behind: litter, trash, garbage, waste, disposal, leftover food, or even cigarette butts. Leave the site as clean as it was before human impact. Inquire about rules for proper disposal of human waste. Use designated areas, where possible, or bury waste well away from freshwater sources. Paper and organic matter can be burned if there is no danger of fire.

Table 2-2. Model Guidelines for Tourists (Contd.)

Be efficient with natural resources. Use energy, water, and other resources efficiently and in keeping with local practices. Participate in local recycling programs when they exist. Try biodegradable soap or detergent and use it well away from natural water sources. Gathering wood on the ground may be prohibited in dry or woodless areas. Portable stoves are recommended (stoves prevent fires). In general, be self-sufficient in fuel use. Do not deplete local resources.

Travel by your own muscle power. Go on foot, cycle, canoe, or use local public transportation, where possible.

Environmental Impact: For Hikers and Campers

Stay on the trail. Never take shortcuts. When traveling cross-country select your path and avoid stepping on vegetation. Overuse can lead to soil erosion or vegetation damage. This is particularly true for arctic tundra or arid desert, but it applies to most locales. Staying on the trail applies to vehicles, too. Cars, buses, jeeps, bikes, motorboats, canoes, and kayaks should stay within designated areas for transport, respecting speed limits and using charts that mark fragile zones, such as alpine vegetation, tundra, or coral reef areas. Drivers unfamiliar with specialized terrain should employ guides.

Low impact camping, staying overnight. Camp in a designated area. If no areas are specially designated for camping, camp away (100 meters) from water sources. Use existing campfire rings. On the beach, remove or scatter the ashes. Avoid crowding large groups into small camping areas. Keep groups small, ideally less than six people and no more than twelve. Speak softly, be aware of your impact on other users. Think of the noise disturbance. Leave pets at home or keep them leashed.

Environmental Impact: For Collectors

Take only pictures as souvenirs. Do not collect plants and animals or shells, corals, fossils, artifacts, stones, and eggs without permits.

Introducing plants and animals. Introduction of foreign plants and animals, whether intentional or accidental, can disrupt the ecologic balance of a region. Some countries are very concerned about introduced non-native plants. For example, New Zealand, Antarctica, and the Galápagos Islands are reducing imported organisms by thoroughly checking for nonindigenous species before passengers enter the territory. Check clothing, shoes, and camping equipment to avoid the accidental introduction of non-native flora and fauna.

Food gathering. Applicable size, catch limits and collection seasons must be observed. Be aware that national regulations may apply. In order to ensure preservation of stocks and resources, the commercial operators of the Queen Charlotte Islands (in the Gwaii Haanas Code of Conduct) have specified in their guidelines the local regulations for fishing and collecting shells and berries (rules include limit of catch, refraining from catch-and-release, maintenance of records, and possession of license).