



# Global Ecotourism Trends and Suggestions

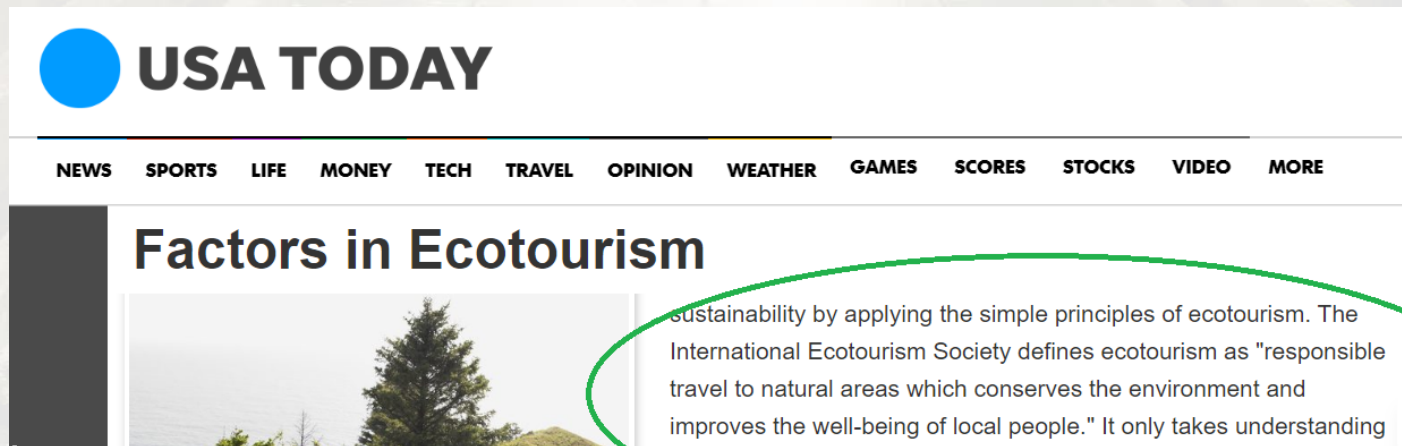
**The International Ecotourism Society**

**Jon Bruno, Executive Director**

# Ecotourism - Definitions

## The International Ecotourism Society

“Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”



The image shows a screenshot of a USA Today article. The USA Today logo is at the top left. Below it is a navigation bar with links for NEWS, SPORTS, LIFE, MONEY, TECH, TRAVEL, OPINION, WEATHER, GAMES, SCORES, STOCKS, VIDEO, and MORE. The article title is "Factors in Ecotourism". Below the title is a photograph of a tree. To the right of the photo, the text reads: "sustainability by applying the simple principles of ecotourism. The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." It only takes understanding



# Ecotourism - Definitions

## The International Ecotourism Society

Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. This means that those who implement, participate in, and market ecotourism activities should adopt the following ecotourism principles:

1. Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry.
2. Deliver memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climates.
3. Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities.
4. Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the Indigenous People in the community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment.



# Ecotourism - Definitions

**The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**

“Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features—both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations”



# Ecotourism - Definitions

## United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.

1. It contains educational and interpretation features.
2. It is generally, but not exclusively organized by specialized tour operators for small groups. Service provider partners at the destinations tend to be small, locally owned businesses.
3. It minimizes negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment.
4. It supports the maintenance of natural areas which are used as ecotourism attractions by:
  - a. Generating economic benefits for host communities, organizations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes;
  - b. Providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities;
  - c. Increasing awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets, both among locals and tourists.



# Ecotourism - Definitions

## Common aspects of Ecotourism:

- Conservation, the maintenance and preservation of the local ecosystem
- Respect for culture, and interpretive understanding of the culture and ecosystem through the lens of the community
- Socio-economic benefit for the local community, especially marginalized and small businesses within the community
- Education for the traveler, and, in some cases, for the community
- A mutually positive experience for all parties
- Active minimization of any negative impact



UPDATE



By ELAINE GLUSAC

Published: August 28, 2019 at 08:00PM

# Cooler, Farther and Less Crowded: The Rise of ‘Undertourism’

Across the globe, travel providers and government agencies are responding to ‘overtourism’ with suggestions for less-crowded places and quieter seasons.

<https://ecotourism.org/news/ecotourism-is-the-solution-to-overtourism/>



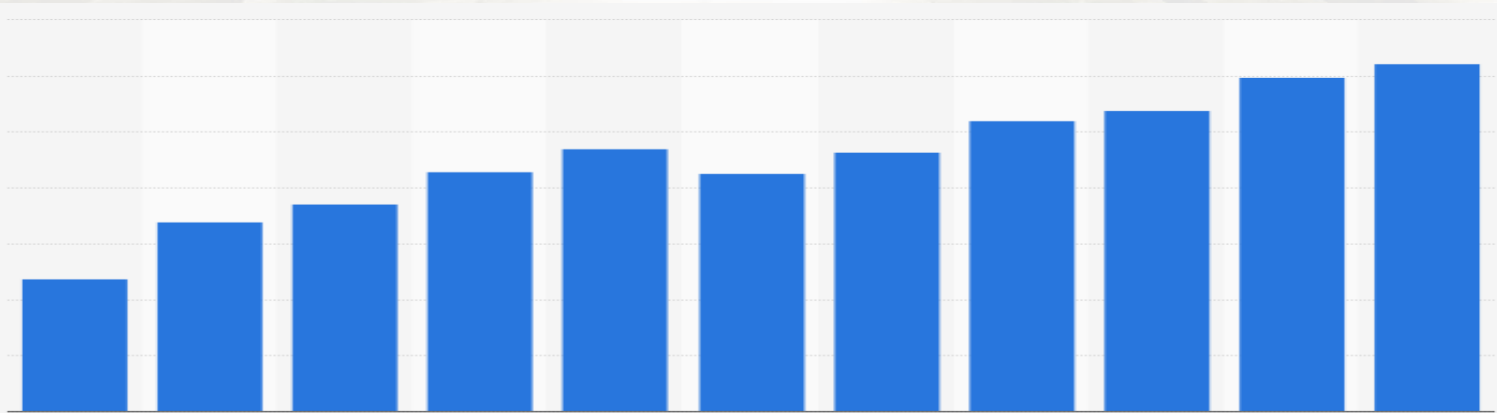
# Tourism the Global Industry

Travel is a \$8.8 Trillion Industry, 10.4% of the global GDP

Travel and tourism sector directly employed more than 112 million people in 2016 (3.6 percent of the world's total employment)

International travelers have more than doubled from 527 million in 1995 to 1.36 billion in 2018

Strong economic growth in 24 out of the last 25 years



2004: \$3.6 Trillion

Global Ecotourism : Trends and Suggestions  
The International Ecotourism Society

2017: \$8.8 Trillion



# Tourism the Global Industry

The Oxford Economics global industry model projects Travel & Tourism direct industry GDP to grow 3.9% per annum over the next decade, outpacing the World GDP by 33%

In many countries, tourism is the only “bootstrap” profession; one where a person born in poverty may create a chance at a better life for themselves and their family.

2.1 billion International travelers are expected to cross borders in 2025

**Tourism is a principle “export” (foreign exchange earner) for 83% of developing countries, and the leading export for 1/3 of poorest countries**



# Booking.com reveals key findings from its 2019 sustainable travel report

- Consistent with overall intentions to make more sustainable travel choices, sustainable stays are growing in popularity, with almost three quarters (73%) of global travelers intending to stay at least once in an eco-friendly or green accommodation when looking at the year ahead. This is the fourth consecutive year that Booking.com research has seen this figure trend up, from 62% in 2016 to 65% in 2017, and 68% in 2018. Additionally, 70% of global travelers say they would be more likely to book an accommodation knowing it was eco-friendly, whether they were looking for a sustainable stay or not.
- Over half (55%) of global travelers report being more determined to make sustainable travel choices than they were a year ago, but barriers include a lack of knowledge and available or appealing options when trying to put this into practice



# Fundamental Ecotourism Principles

TIES - Things We Think Are Important

Value Culture and Heritage

Protect Nature

Value Wildlife

Value Communities

Benefit Communities

Decrease threats to our climate

Increase positive results of tourism revenue

Increase tourism revenue



# Ecotourism – The Global Industry

Global annual ecotourism revenue is estimated to be anywhere from \$800 Billion USD (TIES) to 1Trillion USD (UNWTO)

Ecotourism employs over 11 million people directly and adds ancillary income for millions more

Ecotourism is now growing anywhere from 10% (TIES) to 12% (UNWTO) on an annualized basis, and is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry

Ecotravelers are younger than the average traveler, and, according to TIES surveys, are more committed to ecotourism and sustainable practices.

Ecotravelers cost less in infrastructure per unit revenue than any other type of traveler



# Ecotourism - The Global Industry

Over 90 nations now have an ecotourism or sustainable tourism initiative nationally or at a regional level. This has happened in the last 30 years; there is no other form of tourism or industry that has become so fundamental to the global economy so quickly.

Travelers, who made over 10 billion visits to natural areas last year, have greatly increased both their awareness of ecotourism and their willingness to increase payment to ensure a sustainable travel experience.

Ecotourism is now the preferred travel experience for many major conservation NGOs

71% of people under 30 say sustainable travel is a priority



# Why Grow Ecotourism?

- We know that ecotourism provides the strongest community revenue and the strongest return on investment (*TIES*)
- We know that ecotourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry (*UNWTO 2017*)



# Why Grow Ecotourism?

We know that many nations on the earth depend for a substantial part of their external revenue on tourism.

We know that ecotourism respects communities.

*(TIES)*

We know that done correctly ecotourism can provide perpetual revenue without damaging resources or exploiting people.

*(ESTC 2017)*



# Ecotourism as a positive influence

## Sustainable Tourism provides revenue for Conservation, Sustainable Investment, and Protected Areas (IUCN 2016)

- Conservation becomes an integral part of sustainable economies
- Investment success creates positive investment partnerships
- Ecotourism demonstrates to visitors that a destination cares for its resources
- Ecotourism decreases “short term” thinking by demonstrating the viability of another path
- **Ecotourism encourages destination populations to respect and value their culture, does not force them to imitate traveler cultures**
- Ecotourism encourages real relationships and real connections with nature, which creates an increase in return travel
- **Ecotourism is and has been the fastest growing segment of tourism**





# Ecotourism as a positive influence

## Ecotourism

From IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 adopted Motion 065, co-authored by TIES , AWF, et. al.:

RECOGNISING that tourism has been highlighted in United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 8, 12, and 14 as a tool for sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production practices, and for the conservation and sustainable use of nature and natural heritage;

FURTHER OBSERVING that nature-based tourism is a major tourism sector, making up more than 25% of the global travel market;

NOTING that the term 'ecotourism' is frequently applied to this type of tourism but that governments, NGOs and the tourism industry have overlapping yet differing definitions, interpretations, and few precise standards for ecotourism, nature-based tourism or geotourism (based on geodiversity and geological heritage);

**AWARE that the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution for the Promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environmental protection and believes that *"ecotourism creates significant opportunities for the conservation, protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and of natural areas"*;**

ALSO RECOGNISING that IUCN agrees **"ecotourism can be a driver of sustainable development...if it is carefully conceived, well-managed and strictly controlled"** and has undertaken significant work (e.g. guidelines and workshops) to help improve development and operation of tourism;

"ecotourism is a positive ally for conservation." <https://portals.iucn.org/congress/motion/065>



A flock of birds, likely cranes or herons, is captured in flight against a vibrant sunset sky. The birds are silhouetted against the orange and red hues of the setting sun. Below the birds, the dark, bare branches of trees are visible, creating a stark contrast with the bright sky. The overall scene conveys a sense of natural beauty and movement.

# Ecotourism: Growth and Adaptability

A Discussion For Potential in Armenia

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Մեր հին ծանոթ ծառն էր կանաչ

# Ecotourism Investment

## Barriers to investment

- Ecotourism attractions are often difficult to describe in conventional ways.
  - Low cash flow and difficulty repatriating funds
  - Funders have traditionally preferred large scale transactions that are far above what is needed for 95% of development
- The desire for risk management can lead to requests for “concessions” which can be damaging to community relationships and good governance
  - Low access to capital and high interest rates in developing nations



# Ecotourism Investment

## Well Managed Investment

- Respects culture
- Respects tradition
- Respects sovereignty
- Respects conservation
- Resources can grow behind ROI
- No interest in politics
- Majority of generated revenue stays in the community
- Does not cripple the land or financial systems

## Destructive Investment

- Requires an immediate regular return
- Requires guarantees
- Can result in Imperfect understanding of ecotourism
- May require changes in governance or tradition
- May require community “concessions”
- Conservation and community benefit can be suborned by desire for profit
- Majority of generated revenue leaves the community or nation
- Failure is often blamed on ecotourism with no justification



# Optimum Partners: Ecotourism



# Optimum Partners: Ecotourism

Partnering with funders, governments, developers, experts, and most importantly, communities

**Chain of success:**



# Ecotourism Development Suggestions

- Be willing to build teams
- Look for opportunities to create small organic successes as well as large scale success
- Partner where possible and understand the roles in the team
- Successful implementation can take time



# The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)

- [www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org)
- Oldest and Largest Ecotourism Society
- Founded in 1990
- 15,000+ members in over 190+ countries and territories

