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Meet the Architect of Ecotourism! HECTOR CEBALLOS-LASCURAIN

Interview on page 2



Director's Cut:

✂ [On page 2](#), read about the man who first uttered the great E. word and who has inspired all of us.

✂ [On page 5](#): the World Leisure Congress in Hangzhou, China, the conference with the most diverse and exciting program I have ever participated in. It provided some good, leisurely ideas to the emerging superpower which is developing both its economy and its tourism at breathtaking speed through an innovative socialist-market economy mix, but which also needs to maintain its environmental & social balance so as to sustain progress.

✂ [On pages 6-7](#): Review and excerpt from the new book by our Member Professor Todd Comen entitled "Integrated Rural Tourism: Weaving Low Impact Tourism into the Economic Fabric of Rural Communities".

✂ Warm congratulations to four of our Members who excelled at the prestigious 2006 First Choice Responsible Travel Awards, announced in early November at the World Travel Market in London, UK :

- Joint Overall Winner & Best Tour Operator: Intrepid Travel (Australia) <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/>
- Highly Commended (Best Small Hotel Accommodation): Sukau Rainforest Lodge (Malaysia): <http://www.sukau.com/>
- Highly Commended (Best for Poverty Reduction): The Blue Yonder (India) <http://www.theblueyonder.com/>
- Highly Commended (Best Destination): The Green Box (Ireland) <http://www.greenbox.ie/>

And to [Black Sheep Inn](#) (Ecuador) who are joint winners in the prestigious 5th Annual Skål International Ecotourism Awards presented during the Opening Ceremony of the 67th Skål World Congress held in Pattaya, Thailand in October.

✂ Very happy to hear from Ms JoLoyce Kaia of ([Hana Maui Botanical Gardens](#) & [Volcano Heart B&B](#)) that both her Lodges suffered no damage from the recent major earthquake in Hawaii.

✂ At the kind invitation of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), ECOCLUB, the International Ecotourism Club has become a 'Partner' for the [Global Ecotourism Conference](#), which is going to be held in Oslo, Norway, in May 2006. Our aim is to strengthen the unity of the global ecotourism movement and to assist in making this important event representative of all tendencies. We therefore encourage our Members to attend this global conference and celebration – a unique opportunity to meet in person! Find out more at <http://www.ecotourismglobalconference.org>

Antonis B. Petropoulos

[More Director's cut](#)



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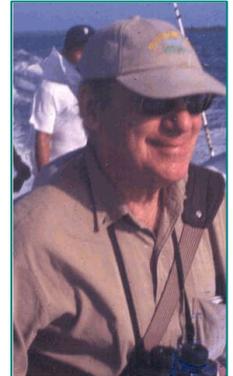
THE ECOCLUB INTERVIEW

ARQ. HÉCTOR CEBALLOS-LASCURÁIN

The Architect of Ecotourism



Ahead of his time, in 1983 Mexican Architect Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin coined the term "**ecotourism**" and its preliminary definition, while his modified version of the term was officially adopted by IUCN (The World Conservation Union) in 1996. Today, as a famous environmentalist, architect, and of course an Ecotourism expert, he is the Director General of the Programme of International Consultancy on Ecotourism (PICE), a Special Advisor on Ecotourism to IUCN (The World Conservation Union), as well as Advisor to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).



Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin is an expert in the planning and development of sustainable tourism, ecotourism, park management, and environmentally-friendly architectural design, with worldwide experience in this field. He has carried out consultancy and research work in 72 countries, including physical planning and low-impact architectural projects for ecotourism, sustainable tourism facilities, and housing developments, collaborating with governments, NGOs and private firms in those countries, as well as international institutions such as UNDP, UNEP, FAO, World Bank, OAS, World Tourism Organization, IUCN, WWF, US-AID, IDB, TIES, PATA, NAFTA, Conservation International, National Geographic Society, German Technical Cooperation Agency, etc. He has spoken in conferences and symposia in over 35 countries, and developed the National Ecotourism Strategies of Mexico, Malaysia, Uruguay, Ecuador, Dominica, and Yemen.

Previously he was Director General of Standards and Technology of the Mexican Ministry of Urban Development and Ecology (SEDUE) and Protected Areas Program Coordinator of IUCN (World Conservation Union), the latter with headquarters in Switzerland. For IUCN he coordinated the IV World Parks Congress, held in Caracas, Venezuela, in February 1992, an event attended by 1,800 persons from 130 countries. In 1981, he was the founding president of the Mexican Association for the Conservation of Nature (PRONATURA), currently the largest and most influential Mexican NGO in the field of conservation. In 1984 he founded the first Mexican ecotourism agency: ECOTOURS.

He is particularly interested in the interrelationship between ecology, tourism, regional development, local communities, conservation, and environmentally-responsible architecture, subjects on which he is the author or co-author of over 120 titles. His 315-page book on "Tourism, Ecotourism, and Protected Areas" was published in 1996 by IUCN. At present, there are over 20,000 references to his work in the Internet. In 2004 he was awarded the first Colibri Ecotourism Lifetime Achievement Award by Planeta.com and Canyon Travel. He is also keenly interested in ornithology, bird watching and bird conservation, and has identified to date 3,671 bird species in their natural habitat around the world! (ranked number 158 in the world list of the American Birding Association – ABA). More details about Arq. Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin's current projects can be found at <http://www.ceballos-lascurain.com>

The Interview follows:

 *You are both a very active and near-mythical figure within the Ecotourism movement, as the person who first coined the term 'Ecotourism' in the early 1980s. Was it an accident? Did the fact that you were an architect play a role?*

No, it wasn't an accident. Ever since I was a child, I was keenly interested in the natural and cultural environment around me. In the family trips with my parents and my sister around Mexico, I fell in love with nature (especially birds) and history and culture (especially the archaeology of the pre-Hispanic cultures of my country: the Mayas, Aztecs, and Toltecs), and as a young man I realized that trips to relatively undisturbed natural areas could provide strong socio-economic benefits to the host communities. Soon after that, I coined the term of ecotourism and its preliminary definition. I believe that architects, by nature, should be more concerned about the environment than most other professionals, so maybe my profession did influence my pioneering role in ecotourism.

 *How did you define Ecotourism in the 1980s, how would you define it today, and how satisfied are you with the evolution of Ecotourism, this past quarter-century?*

My definition in 1983 was: "Ecotourism is that tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specific object of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects (both past and present) found in these areas. Ecotourism implies a scientific, aesthetic or philosophical approach, although the 'ecotourist' is not required to be a professional scientist, artist or philosopher. The main point is that the person who practices ecotourism has the opportunity of immersing him or herself in nature in a way that most people cannot enjoy in their routine, urban existences. This person will eventually acquire an awareness and knowledge of the natural environment, together with its cultural aspects, that will convert him into somebody keenly involved in conservation issues".

I revised this preliminary definition in 1993 to: "Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy, study and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present), that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations". This definition was officially adopted by IUCN - The World Conservation Union – in 1996. According to this definition, ecotourism denotes nature tourism with a normative element. Also, ecotourism should be seen as a component of sustainable tourism (which should now embrace all types of tourism, including city and beach tourism). In general, I may say that I am quite surprised and satisfied with the evolution of Ecotourism since I coined the term back in 1983. However, I am also concerned that the term has been variously abused and misused in many places. In my own country, Mexico, and in many others, I am sad to see that "ecotourism" is seen mainly as adventure tourism and carrying out extreme sports in a more or less natural environment, with little concern for conservation or sustainable development issues.

 *Ecological architecture is becoming more common, however what are the major practical problems that need to be resolved if it is to become mainstream in the tourism sector?*

My definition of Ecodesign is "any form of design that, being integrated to the surrounding ecosystem, minimizes its negative environmental impacts". Ecodesign and "ecological architecture" imply a more harmonious relationship between the building and its environment. New energy sources have to be employed (solar, wind, biomass, etc.) in a wise way. Excessive waste of resources must be avoided but, unfortunately, many people are still not willing to renounce to air conditioning for example, although in most cases a good ecodesign can enhance natural cross-ventilation, complemented by a ceiling fan. Government agencies in each country should demand a more environmentally-friendly approach to design and construction in general.

 *What are the dominant trends in eco-architecture today? Are there different schools and different materials, and which one do you espouse?*

An "eco-architect" should be more humble when designing a building and not just trying to impose his "ego" on the environment. Saving energy, minimizing waste and avoiding toxic materials are the dominating trends today. I am particularly interested in liberating architectural forms from conventional cubes and rectangles. Most of my designs are "organic" in shape, with free-flowing lines which harmonize more easily with nature and generally provide more amiable spaces for human beings. There are two different schools as regards building materials: one advocates using exclusively (or mainly) locally available "natural" materials, such as wood, stone, bamboo, thatch, unburnt clay ('adobe'), etc.; the other supports industrialized building materials, which will favour not continuing to deplete the use of rare, local materials, and which are easier to transport and assemble on-site. I believe a combination of both approaches is the most appropriate. Each specific case must be carefully studied. Recipes are not possible.

 *What makes an Ecolodge, an Ecolodge, from the architects' point of view?*

An Ecolodge should blend in with the natural environment. It should not be imposed on nature, and should not overwhelm it. I am always stressing that "the most important thing about an ecolodge is that the ecolodge is not the most important thing" (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1997), i.e., it is the quality of the surrounding environment that most counts: the nearby natural and cultural attractions - and the way ecotourism circuits are set up, operated and marketed, also the way in which local populations are actively involved in the process.

The main reason for a tourist coming to an ecolodge is that it provides the opportunity of being in close contact with nature (in some cases, supplemented by interesting cultural elements).

At a purist level an Ecolodge will offer a tourist an educational and participatory experience, be developed and managed in an environmentally sensitive manner and protect its operating environment. An ecolodge is different from mainstream lodges, like fishing and ski lodges and luxury retreats. It is the philosophy of ecological sensitivity that must underlie, and ultimately define, each operation. It is this philosophy that the client is seeking both from the lodge operator and from government in their support of resource conservation.

 *To the dismay of many, there are many luxury lodges that promote themselves as 'Ecolodges'. As an architect do you believe that luxury and ecology are compatible in terms of Lodge features?*

A new concept of "luxury" must be incorporated into the ecolodge field. Having the privilege of being surrounded by a primeval rain forest or having the opportunity of watching birds from your breakfast table, or being able to see a Maya temple or and Indian pagoda from your lodge room, or staying at a lodge which is one hundred per cent energy self-sufficient is considered by ecotourists more of a "luxury" than staying at a hotel with marble floors, state-of-the-art discotheques or air-conditioning.

 *Mexico has a long and quite successful history of organised planning for Tourism, the development of the Yucatan peninsula, where you have worked, as a vast resort being a prime example. What in your view and experience have been the*

major errors and lessons learned at a policy level from Yucatan, and have these been adequately incorporated in state policy?

Unfortunately, the so-called official project of the “Mundo Maya”, promoted by the Mexican and other Central American governments, has failed as an instrument for local sustainable development and for conservation of the natural environment. This is due to the fact that the “Mundo Maya”, since its inception in the early 90s, was seen only as a marketing gimmick and an exceptional opportunity for making good business for transnational companies (or rich hotel groups from Mexico City), and there was never a serious sociological or ecological framework underlying the scheme. Because of this, the project is slowly fading away, and the unique opportunities for a true ecotourism project have not yet been grasped.

 *Also in Mexico, protesting teachers in Oaxaca have recently blamed among other things 'Yankee Ecotourism'. Is there something that needs to be done perhaps, to reconnect Ecotourism with the public interest and public perception in Mexico?*

Yes, the tourism authorities and the ecotour operators themselves must try to involve the Mexican public in more true ecotourism activities (and not only promoting high-adrenalin activities such as jumping off cliffs with parachutes, cliff climbing and rappel, and hang gliding). If we are going to conserve our rich natural and cultural heritage for the coming generations we must embrace tourism as a tool for conservation, for ensuring sustainable development and for enhancing environmental awareness and ecological education. Also, Ecotourism must not be seen as only something for the rich foreigners.

 *In many countries, certain circles are touting the need and benefits from villa developments for affluent foreign owners, complete with golf courses and marinas, and argue that these can be made sustainable, environmentally-friendly and beneficial for the local economy. Do you agree?*

If this development is truly going to be sustainable, respecting the natural and cultural environment and improving the livelihood of local inhabitants, I agree. However, most “exclusive villas”, golf courses and marinas are still carried out in an environmentally-unfriendly way and they generally foster an “enclave” approach, which usually means putting a wall between the tourism or real estate facility and the surrounding environment and communities. The inhabitant of these “pleasure domes” will normally not have the opportunity of truly relating to the environment of a specific country or region and the surrounding poor people will in all likelihood remain poor, marginalized from this process.

 *You have worked as an architect and consultant in virtually all parts of the planet, learning and teaching. However some purists / nationalists even, would argue that it is not so 'eco' for developers to use foreign architects, but to rely on local 'wisdom', 'talent' and 'tradition' when creating tourism facilities. What would you say to them?*

Since Ecotourism is a new, complex and inter-disciplinary phenomenon (with a “globalization” component), in most developing countries it is usually not enough to rely on local wisdom, talent and tradition, at least in the present time. The insight of an international consultant or architect, with much grass-roots experience in many diverse countries around the world, should continue contributing tangible benefits to local ecotourism and ecolodge projects, as long as the consultant respects the local environment (both natural and cultural) and is willing to work within a team of local professionals and other stakeholders. Perhaps in the future, once ecotourism is clearly understood around the world, the need for foreign architects and consultants will not be further required.

 *You have probably already achieved all your architectural ambitions, still, if a government or development was to give you a blank cheque to build anything you like, anywhere you like, what & where would it be?*

At this stage of my professional development, I am mainly turning my attention to my country, Mexico, where there is still much to be done in the field of true Ecotourism and environmental architecture development. Fortunately, I have recently been engaged by two important urban developers who are planning two megaprojects in different parts of Mexico in suburban areas of two big cities (both involving more than 50,000 houses each – they are really being conceived as new cities). In both projects, the developers have decided that over 20 per cent of the total land will be left as a natural reserve, in which only ecotourism and other environmentally-friendly activities will be allowed to be carried out. My involvement in these two megaprojects is both as an architectural designer and as an ecotourism consultant, and I will be developing the master plan of the natural areas, including ecolodges, nature trails, interpretative centres, experimental ecological farms, display areas for alternative technologies, wellness retreats and a number of exclusive upmarket “ecological residences” (placed on the buffer zone of the protected natural areas). God willing, these two projects (in which I hope to be involved over the next 5 or more years) could well be my dream projects and my “blank cheques”.

 **ECOCLUB: Thank you very much.**

SPECIAL REPORT 9th World Leisure Congress, Hangzhou China

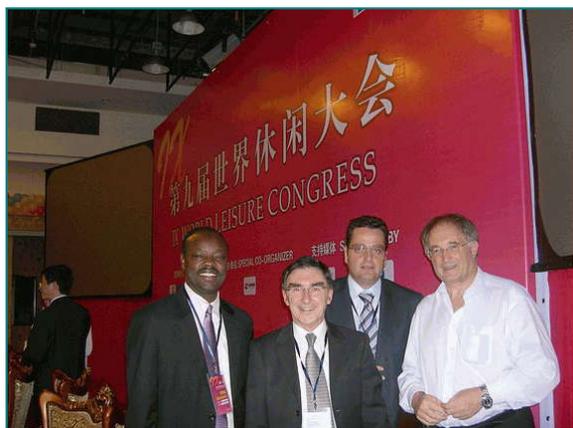


9th World Leisure Congress Opening Ceremony

At the invitation of [World Leisure](http://www.worldleisure.org), and its Board Chair, **Dr Derek Casey**, I had the great privilege to visit China for the first time. There, with my own eyes, I witnessed some of the results of 15 years of imaginative combination of the best of both market and socialist traditions on the part of the administration, its hard-working people and talented businessmen. China is indeed on track of becoming the largest tourist source & destination market, and thanks to its size, it is in a unique position of eliminating poverty through tourism on a international level! During the recently instituted “three golden weeks” (weeks starting lunar new year, May 1 and October 1) hundreds of millions of Chinese tourists use their new found wealth and spare time, to explore their country. Beyond developing adequate

infrastructure fast (not an easy task), what China also needs so that it makes steady progress along its ‘harmonious path’ policy, is that this rapid tourism growth is at the same time environmentally & socially sustainable. China should not be lured into forgetting inclusive, affordable, community-based genuine Ecotourism, in the rush to develop exclusive, high-priced Tourism with overseas private funds, something which I pointed out in my speech, and through questions ‘from the floor’. In addition, the Beijing Olympics, is an excellent opportunity for learning and showing the world, how a major international green tourism event can be organised.

Formed in 1952, World Leisure (Web: www.worldleisure.org) is a non-profit, non-governmental, international association of individuals and organisations promoting leisure as integral to social, cultural and economic development, and committed to sustainable and well-distributed economic growth through leisure. It provides forums, organises events, delivers educational programs, promotes and undertakes research and builds partnerships at the highest level. Every two years, it holds the World Leisure Congress, this one attracting over 2,000 delegates from all over the world, among them senior international and local policy makers.



The Editor with UNWTO Assistant Secretary General, Mr. Geoffrey Lipman, Prof. Trevor Sofield and Prof. Lawal M. Marafa organizers.

Among the so many notable presentations, for which we would need to dedicate many pages to describe, was an inspiring opening address by [UNWTO](http://www.unwto.org) Assistant Secretary General **Geoffrey Lipman**, who encouraged the delegates to join the global campaign to stand up against poverty, for the Millennium Development Goals, and the UNWTO’s Global Code of Ethics for Tourism; two highly educational presentations by **Professor Trevor Sofield**, coordinator of the Greater Mekong Project based on his first-hand experience initiating sustainable tourism projects in China and Cambodia, **Professor John Helliwell** presented the latest research evidence on the importance of ‘well-being’ and the social capital theory; **Avi Lewis**, Film Maker and TV Host, coordinated a high-power roundtable on leisure and social development, while Bhutan Culture Minister **Jigmi Y. Thinley** passionately and convincingly presented ‘Gross National Happiness’ as an alternative to GDP. Oral and poster presentations were also first-rate and incredibly geographically and thematically diverse and are available in a detailed abstract volume from the

The Congress was made even more pleasant by its location in historic Hangzhou (population 6m), one of the 6 ancient capitals of China, from where the grand canal (1,600 km) starts its way to Beijing. Today it is the capital of Zhejiang province and famous for its cultural heritage and scenic beauty focusing on its famous man-made ‘West Lake’ (60 sq. km), which have helped make it into one of the most popular domestic tourism destinations, just 180 km from Shanghai, in sub-tropical, southeastern China. The city is traditionally home to China’s famous silk & tea industries, and appropriately host to both the National Silk Museum and the National Tea Museum. Hangzhou enjoys direct travel connections to all major Chinese cities and to many international ones. More information can be found at the city’s portal at: <http://english.hangzhou.gov.cn/english/index.html>

At a time when working pressure increases on employees worldwide, it is important to remember that Leisure is included in Article 24, of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.



responsible waste management at a tourism site in Hangzhou - recycle on the left!

NEW PUBLICATION REVIEW

Integrated Rural Tourism: Weaving Low Impact Tourism into the Economic Fabric of Rural Communities.

Todd Comen. Middlesex VT, USA: The Institute for Integrated Rural Tourism, 2006. Pp. 169.

The author is the Director of the Institute for Integrated Rural Tourism and an Associate Professor of Business and Hospitality Management at Johnson State College in Vermont and a Member of ECOCLUB. Beyond his academic expertise, he first obtained practical knowledge of rural tourism in 1982, as a developer and operator of a small country inn on a farm in northern California, and as a consultant in numerous rural tourism projects around the world ever since. Professor Comen has developed a new strategy for rural economic development and poverty alleviation, called Integrated Rural Tourism (IRT).

As defined by the author, IRT, is perfectly compatible with the way this newspaper defines Ecotourism, within the context of rural communities. The author's intention was to create a manual for practitioners working to effect socioeconomic improvement in rural communities through tourism development and this intention has been achieved, particularly for community trainers and development workers, while the book will also appeal to eco & socially-minded SMEs.

This manual provides a practical, digestible, memorable and transferable account of activities and useful tips that have been tested & proven in rural areas around the world. Other books may be richer on statistics, academic theory and minutiae but in the end they really offer an assortment of usually incomparable case studies, rather than a practical guide, like Professor Comen's book.

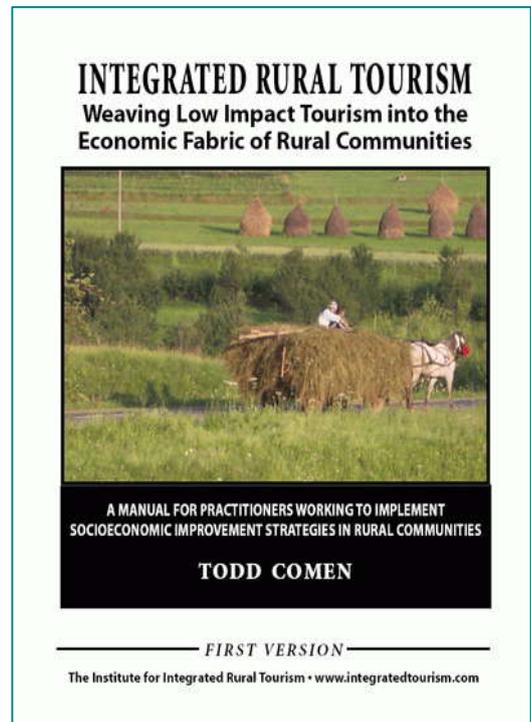
As the author acknowledges, IRT is "not an easy approach to economic development, nor is it a panacea for economic prosperity" (indeed there *are* no panaceas) and is "much more difficult than concentrating on heritage sites or natural areas", as it needs a number of prerequisites – not least, a community eager to develop tourism in a communal, eco-friendly way, and a well-meaning, selfless outsider with a strong stomach!

Indeed, among the most interesting sections of the book, is the one dealing with the initial introduction of the concept of IRT by an IRT proponent/practitioner to a community, as a good beginning is a half of the battle. I particularly enjoyed the refreshing section dealing with Menu development, Food Safety and Sanitation, and in such a detailed manner, and the somewhat brief section on Emergency Management.

Ecotourism gets a lot of coverage, usually positive, and there is an interesting and detailed section on the types of Ecotourists, which is quite enlightening. We are not so sure about the author's view that "the ecotourist is willing to pay for high standards and is therefore a lucrative client" but we agree with the books' overall emphasis on fair prices, and particularly appreciate the chapter (module) on "Valuing the Visitor Experience" which deals with pricing methods in a very balanced and useful way. There are two modules dedicated to explaining the importance of good customer service & communication - i.e. minimum accepted standards, complaint handling and following-up - facts sometimes knowingly – sometimes unknowingly ignored by community-owned providers, as superfluous 'niceties'.

Overall a very good manual, which can become even better in subsequent editions, with the inclusion of a final chapter with actual feedback from the many practitioners who will be using the manual!

▶ To order this publication in Book or CD Form please go to <http://www.integratedtourism.com/?Order>
Special Rate for ECOCLUB Members: 20% discount on the Book or CD. Simply include your Member ID when ordering.
ECOCLUB Members order at: <http://www.integratedtourism.com/?Ecoclub>



"[Green Places To Stay](#)", by Richard Hammond (ed.), a new print publication by Alastair Sawday Publishing, is featuring no less than ten Members of ECOCLUB among its best 165 places to stay around the world. These are: "Laguna del Lagarto (Costa Rica), Uxlabil (Guatemala), 3 Rivers (Dominica), Tree Tops Jungle Lodge (Sri Lanka), Sukau Rainforest Lodge (Malaysia), Pacuare Lodge (Costa Rica), The Lodge at Big Falls (Belize), Black Sheep Inn (Ecuador), Ionian Eco Villages (Greece), and the Inn at Cero Coyote (Costa Rica). [Available from Amazon](#)

Do you wish us to review your new publication? Please see <http://ecoclub.com/news/information.html#Review> for details.

Excerpt from: *Integrated Rural Tourism: Weaving Low Impact Tourism into the Economic Fabric of Rural Communities.* Todd Comen. Middlesex VT, USA: The Institute for Integrated Rural Tourism, 2006. Pp. 169.

Excerpt reproduced by kind permission of the author.

Integrated rural tourism (IRT) is a socioeconomic development strategy that has the potential to encourage communities to protect their environment. It is a strategy that highlights the rural community while still including the natural and heritage sites as a major component of the tourism product mix. IRT forms a complex web that features agriculture and rural life patterns as



Vice-mayor of a small community in Transylvania presents the story of her community as described by the workshop team. This story will become the backbone of the visitor experience. Promotional materials will be developed based on results of this integrated rural tourism workshop.

the foundation of the tourist experience. No longer is the local community skirted by visitors as they are whisked from monument to protected natural area, unaware of the human inhabitants that have lived in the shadows of the spectacles so often sought after by tourists. By employing an integrated approach to tourism development, the local community will no longer merely be a picture on the brochure, but it will become the highlight of the visitor experience. Traditional rural life patterns are disappearing the world over for a variety of reasons, not the least of which are pressures on habitat, shifts in economic activity, and devaluation of traditional life patterns.

The main goal of IRT is to encourage and support rural peoples in their quest for developing a sustainable economic system that leads to economic prosperity and social stability. IRT provides tourists with an opportunity for direct contact with rural community members, promoting deeper understanding of each other's lifestyles. Therefore, from the

customer's perspective, the main purpose of IRT is to engage in a vivid, active, and educational experience. For this exchange to benefit both the host and the visitor, the tourist must directly experience the host community through extended interactions, not just be a passive observer. In a successful program, the tourist becomes immersed in the host community's daily life processes, particularly its food production processes. Integral to the experience is learning how the host community interacts with its natural environment. As such, IRT is a chance for visitors from urban areas to learn how to live a sustainable lifestyle within the constraints of a rural economic system.

Marketing drives the tourism enterprise into the world and keeps it linked stakeholders, customers, and others will help to sustain it both directly and indirectly. This module presents a quick yet comprehensive look at the elements of marketing. It focuses on designing effective marketing materials tactics for community-based IRT products. A series of activities for developing the main marketing tools necessary to sustain an organization apply theories of marketing are outlined.

Through these activities, readers will learn the following:

- how to identify target market segments
- how to create an effective brochure
- how to develop an integrated marketing strategy
- how to embed marketing tactics into stage of the visitor cycle
- how to develop a significant brand for the tourism experience

Effective marketing is critical to the long-term success of any tourism enterprise. Many people think that marketing focuses only on attracting customers through promotions and advertising. However, it is especially important in IRT that marketing skills and strategies be employed throughout all stages of the visitor cycle.

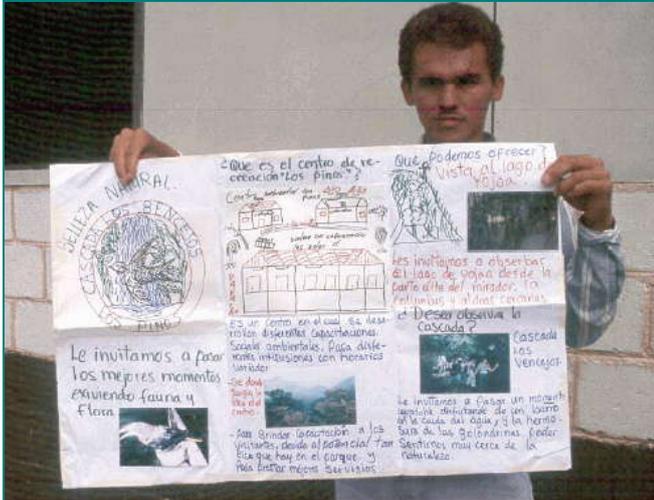
Constructing the image is a major step in creating a brand identity. "The ultimate purpose of image creation is to influence buyer behaviour and manipulate demand." The brand you are creating will ultimately communicate the core attributes of the tourism product through a variety of mediums. A brand exists in peoples minds. It is the sum total of all the associations that we have of the attributes of a product or service. Brands are built over time. A positive brand identity is more than just the attributes of a product as customers gain a feeling of well-being from the product or service. Brands are built on delivering promises, not making promises. Popular brands include Nike shoes, Patagonia outdoor clothing, American Airlines, Intercontinental Hotels, Crest toothpaste, and Apple Computer.

The first step in building a brand identity for your tourism product is to create the image. The second step is to deliver a quality product that satisfies the customer, and the final step is to attract the customer to purchase another experience from your product menu.

Creating the image takes several steps. The first step is in creating a visual image of the tourist experience. The second step is logo design. The third is putting together a menu of collateral materials along with a web site that sends a consistent message

to potential customers. The final step is in disseminating the information and responding to market requests to ultimately sell the travel experience.

1. Begin by discussing the story you wish to tell the visitor through their IRT experience. Identify the primary and secondary attractions as well as the main elements of the tourism sector, such as transportation, lodging and food, activities, policy, and the visitor. Weave together these elements by focusing on the aspects of your IRT product that make this experience unique. You may want to begin by listing these unique attributes. Take a few minutes to brainstorm with your group members and outline your story.



Community members help to create the story that becomes both the tourism product and the promotional message.

2. Spend thirty or forty minutes thumbing through the magazines to find pictures that illustrate the features described in your outline.

3. Draw pictures; create symbols. Don't worry if the drawings aren't perfectly executed; it's enough that others can identify the drawings and understand the symbols.

4. The poster may develop its own order. It may begin to look like a map, a brochure, or a storybook. Think about what you would like your visitor to know about the product. Also think about what you would want to know about the product if you were the visitor. Put yourself in the visitor's shoes. This is what marketers do all the time. The only difference here is that you are designing the tour and the marketing materials to represent actual life patterns, not a programmed and prescribed tourism attraction or activity.

5. When everyone has had at least one hour to complete their collages, display the posters for all to see. Everyone should take some time to view the posters quietly, gathering impressions and thoughts about what each represents. The final product you have created will serve two purposes. It will be used as the basis for creating your logo. It will also become the model from which a graphic artist and professional marketers will create your marketing materials. They will interpret the story you are telling and reveal it with a professionalism that is necessary to compete for visitors in the global travel market.

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ECOCLUB Ecolodge NEWS

Monroe, WI, USA: John Ivanko & Lisa Kivirist (Inn Serendipity) report:



Starting in 2007, more of Inn Serendipity's local commuting will be done in an all-electric CitiCar, one of only 2,600 produced in the U.S. from 1974 to 1976, in response to rising energy costs, but more importantly, to further reduce the Inn's ecological impacts and operate more sustainably.

The award-winning Inn Serendipity Bed & Breakfast, rated among the top 10 eco-destinations in North America, will be recharging the car with 100-percent renewable energy, including a soon-to-be-completed 48 Volt solar power station on site. The project was completed in close collaboration with neighbours on a nearby farmstead.

► <http://ecoclub.com/innserendipity>

ECO PHOTO



Despite the carnage of the 1990s, around 160 wild horses, still survive in the Livno-Hills of Bosnia-Herzegovina – Photo by Dr. S. Brdar

UPCOMING EVENTS

For more details and future events, check <http://www.ecoclub.com/events>

08 November 2006 – Paris, FRANCE

Conference/Workshop: Sustainable Development in Tourism & EU Eco-Label

Organiser: ADEME / Alpheeis

► <http://www.ecobuilding-performance.com/pack5.html>

09-10 November 2006 – Petaling Jaya, MALAYSIA

Academic Conference: Asia-Euro Tourism, Culture & Gastronomy Conference 2006

Organiser: Taylor's College, School of Hospitality & Tourism, MALAYSIA and Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, FRANCE

► <http://asiaeuro.taylors.edu.my>

10-11 November 2006 – Rhodes, GREECE

Conference: 2nd International Rhodes Tourism Forum. Competitiveness through Sustainability: Opportunities & Challenges for Mediterranean Tourism Destinations

Organiser: DETAP, under the auspices of UNEP

► <http://www.detap.gr/forum/en/index.htm>

22-24 November 2006 - Gothenburg, SWEDEN

Conference: 3rd Annual Conference of European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN)

Organiser: ECTN

► <http://www.congrex.com/ectn2006/>

24-26 November 2006

Fair: Adventures in Travel Expo – Sydney, AUSTRALIA

Organiser: Showtime Group

► <http://www.adventuresintravel.com.au>

29 November – 2 December 2006 – Porto Alegre, BRAZIL

Conference: Destinations, World Tourism Forum for Peace & Sustainable Development, 3rd Annual Summit

Organiser: Instituto de Hospitalidade

► <http://www.desti-nations.net>

30 November – 3 December 2006 – Mérida, Yucatan - MEXICO

Festival & Conference: 5th Yucatan Bird Festival, TOH

Organiser: Yucatan State Government

► <http://www.yucatanbirds.org.mx>



ECO – JOBS

A selection of ecotourism –related vacancies with November deadlines. Members: [Click here for the vacancies](#)

Nov 12	Gabon	Protected Area Research Manager
Nov 12	Gabon	Ecotourism Manager
Nov 13	New Zealand	Recreation Officer
Nov 13	UK	Reserve Warden
Nov 13	UK	Environment / Tourism Partnership Manager
Nov 15	UK	Sustainability/Tourism Chair
Nov 15	Alaska	Environmental Educator
Nov 15	Mexico	Vegetarian Cook-Chef/ kitchen manager
Nov 15	Nigeria	Tourism Business Advisor (MBA)
Nov 15	Thailand	Ecotourism/Conservation Project Co-Manager
Nov 15	USA	Conservation NGO Expedition Advisor
Nov 15	USA	Nature Reserve naturalist
Nov 15	Worldwide	Post-doc Conservation Fellowships
Nov 20	Costa Rica	Bird Monitoring/Conservation Internships
Nov 20	USA	Conservation Expedition NGO Marketing Manager
Nov 21	UK	Countryside/Nature Training Placements
Nov 22	USA	Environmental Interpretation Intern
Nov 23	Namibia	Tourism Specialist
Nov 23	Switzerland	Conservation Intl Body Intern
Nov 24	UK	Nature Reserve Project Manager
Nov 28	UK	Nature Reserve Interpretation Project Officer
Nov 30	Samoa	Environmental Officer
Nov 30	UK	Expedition/Conservation NGO Internship
Nov 30	USA	Ecotour Operator Office Positions
Nov 30	USA	Wetland Technician

ECO – PROJECTS

A selection of ecotourism-related consultancy and other opportunities available to our [Members](#)

Deadline	Country	Description
CONSULTANCY/ BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES		
Nov 9	China	SME Environmental Management
Nov 15	Thailand	National Park Communication Specialist
Nov 17	Botswana	Wildlife Conservation International Contractor
Nov 17	UK	Tourism Strategy Consultation
Nov 29	Vanuatu	Tourism networking and investment opportunities in the South Pacific
ECOTOURISM FUNDING AVAILABLE		
Nov 24	UK	Sustainable Wetlands Award
Nov 24	UK	Environmental Hotel Award
Nov 24	Various	Conservation Projects
Dec 1	Alaska	Recreational Trails Grant
Dec 1	USA	Wetlands Conservation Small Grants
Dec 11	Worldwide	Sustainable Tourism Awards
Dec 15	USA	Wildlands Conservation Grants
Dec 15	Worldwide	Ecotourism Conservation Projects Grants

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