

Sustainable Tourism Development

Linda J. Cox, PhD

Community Economic Development Specialist

www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/CoxL

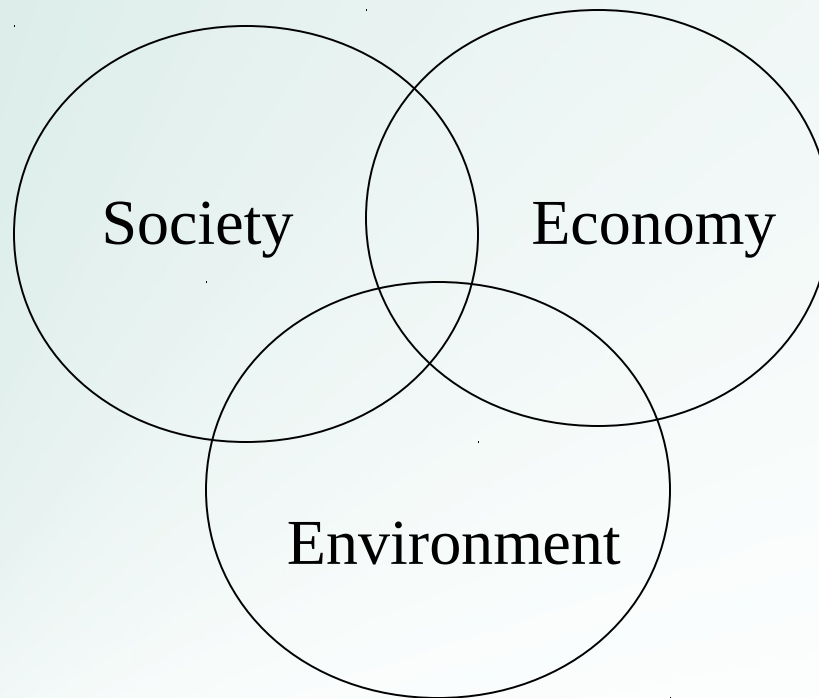


Sustainability

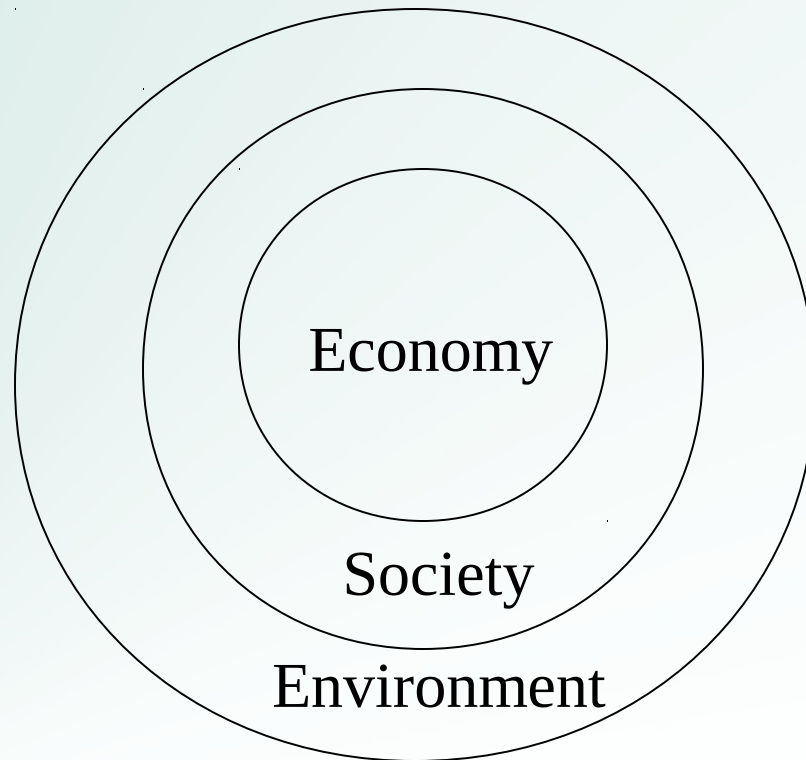
1. Meet our needs today without compromising the ability of people in the future to meet their needs.
2. People in the future are not made worse off than people are today, ie. product capacity is preserved.



Sustainable Communities



Sustainable Communities



Very Weak Sustainability Position

- Anthropocentric and utilitarian
- Growth oriented and resource exploitative
- Natural resources utilized at economically optimal rates with free markets satisfying individuals
- Infinite substitution between natural and human-made capital
- Continued well-being from economic growth and technical innovation



Weak Sustainability Position

- Anthropocentric and utilitarian
- Resource conservationist
- Managed growth
- Concern for intra- and intergenerational equity
- Rejection of infinite substitution between natural and human-made capital with some aspects of natural world being critical capital
- Human-made plus natural capital constant or rising
- Decouple of environmental impacts and economic growth



Strong Sustainability Position

- (Eco)systems perspective
- Resource preservationist
- Recognizes value of maintaining ecosystems over human resource utilization
- Interests of the collective given more weight than those of the individual consumer
- Adherence to intra- and intergenerational equity
- Constant natural assets rule
- Zero economic and human population growth



Very Strong Sustainability Position

- Bioethical and ecocentric
- Resource preservationist to the point where natural resources use is minimized
- Nature's rights include non-human living organisms
- Anti-economic growth and reduced human population



World Tourism Organization (WTO) Definition

Sustainable tourism is tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.



WTO agreed that

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations.

Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions.



Carrying Capacity

- Central to sustainability and ecotourism
- Many types exist
 - Cultural
 - Social
 - Ecological
- Limits of Acceptable Change - compromise between resource protection and recreational use stated as a ratio rather than fixed number



Ecotourism

Term coined in the late 1970s when mass tourism reached its peak.

A niche market that incorporates environmentally friendly and culturally protective techniques

Some feel it is rich people trying to see something rare or companies trying to use a trend to make money



Niche Market

- Narrowly defined group of potential customers
- Businesses may be able to make more money by targeting environmentalists because they have higher incomes.



Ecotourism

“Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people”

The International Ecotourism Society

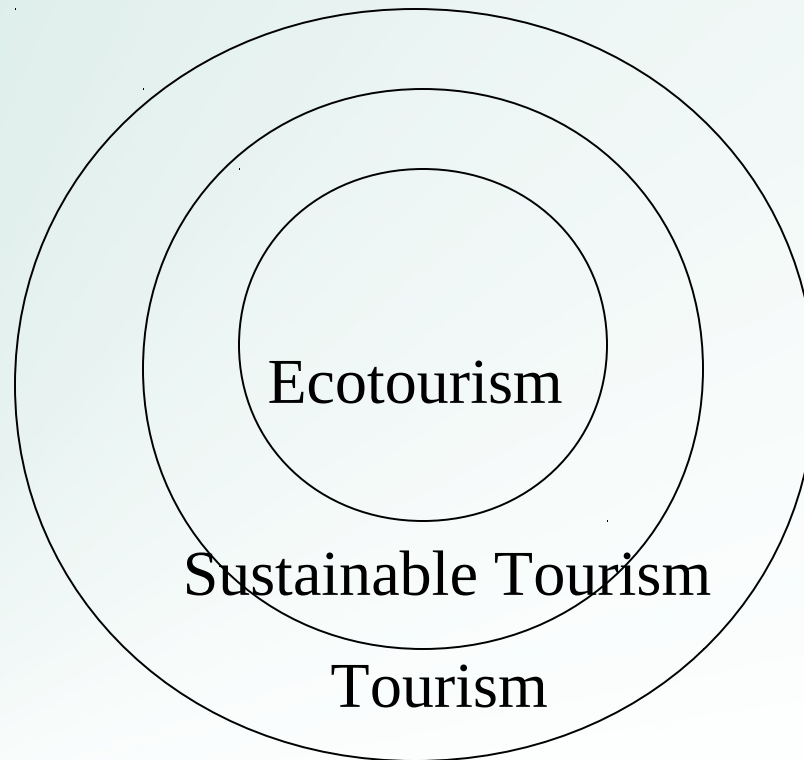


Ecotourism should

- Involve travel to fragile, pristine and usually protected areas while striving to be low impact and small scale
- Educate the traveler
- Provide funds for conservation
- Benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities
- Foster respect for different cultures and for human rights



Tourism Sector



Restricted Supply



Restricted Supply

- Reduces amount supplied
- Increases price
- Customers need higher incomes to pay for higher prices
- Rich people may cause issues in the community



Visitor Satisfaction

- Quality
- Health, hygiene and safety conditions
- Sustainability

Rating systems exist for the first two.



Elements of Conformity Assessment

- Standards
- Assessment
- Certification
- Accreditation
- Recognition
- Acceptance



- More than 100 ecological programs worldwide certify or grant awards to tourism operations
- Each program has its own standards
- Many sustainable tourism and ecotourism initiatives focus exclusively on certification, ignoring the other components
- Goal is a cost effective, credible sustainable tourism conformity assessment system



Standards

- Prescriptive-how things will be done
- Performance-what will be achieved
- Management system- how things will be done and overall what will be achieved



Assessment

- First-party assessment - supplier (self) assessment
- Second-party assessment - purchaser assessment
- Third-party assessment - done by an organization not related to the supplier or the purchaser



Certification

- First-party - supplier declaration is common
- Second-party - commonly used by large purchasers
- Third-party - a technically competent certifier is needed
- Supplier's audit confirmation - third party assesses the supplier's internal audit system



- Certification programs mandated by government regulation more rigorous and expensive than voluntary private sectors programs.
- Voluntary programs vary greatly
- Types include
 - Conventional
 - Sustainable
 - Ecotourism



Accreditation

- Process to certify the certifiers
- Important element of third party systems
- No international accreditation program for tourism
- Peer review process includes
 - Self-evaluation
 - On-site assessment by auditors
 - Judgment by accreditation body



Acceptance

- Accreditation and recognition address credibility, acceptance requires that producers and customers be educated about the benefits of certification
- A complementary marketing efforts is needed to alert all stakeholders about issues



Certification Benefits

- Increased Producer Satisfaction
- More Sustainable Tourism Businesses
- More Competitive Local Tourism Markets
- Increased Profitability of Tourism Sector
- Improved Public Image of Tourism Sector
- Increased Community Dialogue



Certification Benefits

- Better Credit Opportunities
- Reduced Liability and Insurance Costs
- More Capable and Dedicated Workers
- Proactive and Participatory Tourism Businesses
- More Efficient Technology Transfer



Keys to the Process of Standard Development

- Openness - all persons who will be affected must be allowed to participate
- Balance - no single interest category should account for more than one third of group deciding on the standards
- Consensus - all views and objections should be considered and an effort be made to resolve differences



Interest Categories

- Producer or suppliers
- Users
- Affected public
- General interest



Successful Systems

- Continue to be responsive to major stakeholders who prefer a grading mechanism to a pass/fail decision
- Are self-supporting and financially stable-direct cost of assessment (certifier) and the cost of implementing (supplier)
- In the long-run costs should be paid by the tourism industry and its customers



Caveats

- An overall tourism policy and plan are needed first with sustainable tourism as the goal
- Certification is a means to implement the plan
- Commitment to a political process that includes all members of the local community is needed
- Limiting supplies will result in price increases and then customers tend to have higher than average incomes

