

World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)

# Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

## Guidelines for Planning and Management

Paul F. J. Eagles, Stephen F. McCool  
and Christopher D. Haynes

Adrian Phillips, Series Editor



Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 8



These Guidelines are one of the Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines series. The Series Editor is Prof. Adrian Phillips.

Other publications in the series are as follows:

*National System Planning for Protected Areas*. No. 1. Adrian G. Davey, 1998, x + 71pp.

*Economic Values of Protected Areas: Guidelines for Protected Area Managers*. No. 2. Task Force on Economic Benefits of Protected Areas of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of IUCN, in collaboration with the Economics Service Unit of IUCN, 1998, xii + 52pp.

*Guidelines for Marine Protected Areas*. No. 3. Graeme Kelleher, 1999, xxiv + 107pp.

*Indigenous and Traditional Peoples and Protected Areas: Principles, Guidelines and Case Studies*. No. 4. Javier Beltrán, (Ed.), IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK and WWF International, Gland, Switzerland, 2000, xi + 133pp.

*Pueblos Indígenas y Tradicionales y Áreas Protegidas: Principios, Directrices y Casos de Estudio*. No. 4. Javier Beltrán, (Ed.), UICN, Gland, Suiza y Cambridge, UK y WWF Internacional, Gland, Suiza, 2001, xii + 139pp.

*Financing Protected Areas: Guidelines for Protected Area Managers*. No. 5. Financing Protected Areas Task Force of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of IUCN, in collaboration with the Economics Unit of IUCN, 2000, viii + 58pp.

*Evaluating Effectiveness: A Framework for Assessing the Management of Protected Areas*. No. 6. Marc Hockings, Sue Stolton and Nigel Dudley, 2000, x + 121pp.

*Transboundary Protected Areas for Peace and Co-operation*. No. 7. Trevor Sandwith, Clare Shine, Lawrence Hamilton, and David Sheppard, 2001, xi + 111pp.

# **Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas**

## **Guidelines for Planning and Management**

# **Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas**

## **Guidelines for Planning and Management**

Paul F. J. Eagles, Stephen F. McCool and Christopher D. Haynes  
Prepared for the  
United Nations Environment Programme, World Tourism Organization  
and IUCN – The World Conservation Union

Adrian Phillips, Series Editor

**World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)**

**Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 8**

**IUCN – The World Conservation Union  
2002**

The designation of geographical entities in this book, and the presentation of the material, do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IUCN, Cardiff University or any of the other funding organizations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Furthermore, the views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of IUCN, Cardiff University, Environment Australia, United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization or any of the other funding organizations.

This publication has been made possible in large part by funding from Cardiff University, Environment Australia, United Nations Environment Programme, World Tourism Organization and IUCN.

Published by: IUCN, Gland, Switzerland, and Cambridge, UK, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Tourism Organization

**IUCN**  
The World Conservation Union

**CARDIFF**  
**UNIVERSITY**



Copyright: © 2002 International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

Reproduction of this publication for educational or other non-commercial purposes is authorized without prior written permission from the copyright holder provided the source is fully acknowledged.

Reproduction of this publication for resale or other commercial purposes is prohibited without prior written permission of the copyright holders.

Citation: Eagles, Paul F.J., McCool, Stephen F. and Haynes, Christopher D.A. (2002). *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management*. IUCN Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. xv + 183pp.

ISBN: 2-8317-0648-3

Cover design: IUCN Publications Services Unit

Cover photos: Front: Cheetah in Masai Mara Game Reserve, Kenya, ©Robert Bernard  
Back: Ferry at Heron Island, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Australia, ©Paul F. J. Eagles; Birding in Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, Costa Rica, ©Jim Boissoneault and Banff Springs Hotel, Banff National Park, Canada, ©Paul F. J. Eagles

Layout by: IUCN Publications Services Unit

Produced by: IUCN Publications Services Unit

Printed by: Thanet Press Limited, UK

Available from: IUCN Publications Services Unit  
219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL,  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 1223 277894  
Fax: +44 1223 277175  
E-mail: [info@books.iucn.org](mailto:info@books.iucn.org)  
www: <http://www.iucn.org/bookstore>  
A catalogue of IUCN publications is also available

# Table of Contents

---

Foreword by the United Nations Environment Programme	vii
Foreword by the World Tourism Organization	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
About the authors	xiii
Preface	xv
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Purpose of the Guidelines	1
1.2 Tourism terms and definitions	2
<b>2. Protected areas, biodiversity and conservation</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 A short history of protected areas	5
2.2 The IUCN Protected Area Management Category System	10
<b>3. Tourism in protected areas</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Trends affecting the planning of tourism and protected areas	13
3.2 Growth and diversification of market niches	21
3.3 Potential benefits of tourism in protected areas	23
3.4 Potential risks of tourism in protected areas	30
3.5 Tourism in protected areas which are not publicly owned or managed	34
<b>4. Planning for protected area tourism</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1 Protected area plans, policy and planning	41
4.2 Tourism in the Park Management Plan	43
4.3 Developing goals and objectives	44
4.4 Characteristics of successful protected area planning processes	46
4.5 Involving stakeholders	47
4.6 Managing conflict	56
4.7 Plan development and implementation	59
<b>5. Sensitive development of infrastructure and services</b>	<b>61</b>
5.1 Culturally sensitive design and operation	62
5.2 Environmentally sensitive design and operation	65
5.3 Transportation and infrastructure	71
5.4 Evaluating development proposals	72
<b>6. Managing the challenges of tourism in protected areas</b>	<b>75</b>
6.1 Management of risk and safety	75
6.2 Principles of visitor management in protected areas	78
6.3 Protected area management frameworks	80
<b>7. Tools for visitor management</b>	<b>87</b>
7.1 A toolbox of strategies and tactics	87

7.2	Zoning in protected areas	98
7.3	Transportation management	101
7.4	Pricing for visitor management	102
7.5	Regulation of visitor use	104
7.6	Information and interpretation	108
<b>8.</b>	<b>The economics of tourism in protected areas</b>	<b>113</b>
8.1	The economic value of tourism	113
8.2	Measuring the economic impacts of tourism	114
8.3	Communicating economic impacts	116
<b>9.</b>	<b>Financial aspects of tourism in protected areas</b>	<b>119</b>
9.1	Introduction	119
9.2	Fund-raising opportunities for protected area managers	120
9.3	Public and private sector financial relationships	124
9.4	Funding of protected areas through parastatals	127
9.5	International sources of assistance	128
9.6	Tourists' contribution via fees	130
9.7	Corporate contributions to protected areas	137
9.8	Managing concessions and contracts within protected areas	138
9.9	Summary	144
<b>10.</b>	<b>Human resources planning for tourism in protected areas</b>	<b>145</b>
10.1	Introduction	145
10.2	The human asset	145
10.3	Job analysis	146
10.4	Recruitment and selection	147
10.5	Human resource development	148
10.6	Performance evaluation	149
<b>11.</b>	<b>Monitoring tourism in protected areas</b>	<b>151</b>
11.1	Why monitor?	151
11.2	The characteristics of a monitoring system	155
11.3	Developing a monitoring programme	156
11.4	Research	157
<b>12.</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Appendices</b>		
Appendix A.	Definitions of tourism	161
Appendix B.	Park tourism definitions	163
Appendix C.	Operational policies for tourism for the National Park Service of the United States of America	165
Appendix D.	A comparison of five visitor management frameworks	167
Appendix E.	European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas	173
<b>References</b>		<b>175</b>

# Foreword by the United Nations Environment Programme

---

Tourism is good business, as it produces 4.4% of the world's GDP, and employs around 200 million people globally. It can also help the sustainable management of protected areas, as a market-based alternative catering to the growing number of discriminating travellers trying to find, understand and enjoy a natural environment. Tourism can support the protection of natural resources, as local residents realise the value of their asset and want to preserve it.

At the same time, our global heritage of living species is threatened as never before, as the protected areas that harbour so much of our biodiversity are exposed to the pressures of unsustainable development. The precautionary approach urges us to be especially concerned about tourism in protected areas, given the risk of damage and destruction to this unique natural resource.

Visitor impact management is ever more important as the number of tourists increases, and their distribution is often concentrated in major tourism destinations in ecologically vulnerable areas. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been actively supporting protected area managers, working with WTO, UNESCO and IUCN, for over 12 years, through technical assistance to key stakeholders, and capacity building in projects and publications. This publication is the latest in this series, and UNEP is proud to be a partner in this milestone reference work.

Ensuring that tourism follows a truly sustainable path, and that it contributes to the sustainable management of protected areas, whether public or private, will require enhanced cooperation and concrete partnerships among the tourism industry, governments at all levels, local communities, protected area managers and planners, and the tourists themselves. This book describes how this can be done, and UNEP is happy to present it to all interested parties, especially protected area managers, on the occasion of the International Year of Ecotourism 2002.

*Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel*  
*Assistant Executive Director*  
*Division of Technology, Industry and Economics*  
*United Nations Environment Programme*

*April 2002*



# Foreword by the World Tourism Organization

---

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) is pleased to present to the international community, and especially to public administrations and private sector businesses directly involved in tourism activities, this new publication containing guidelines for the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas.

Tourism has become a major sector of economic activity since the latter part of the twentieth century and all indications are that it will continue growing in the years to come. With this growth, a diversification of tourism products and destinations is taking place, with increased demand for nature-related tourism, including ecotourism, visitation to national and natural parks, rural-based tourism, and the like. The tourists themselves are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their demands; this is not only in terms of luxury at the various establishments they use, but especially in terms of having a meaningful travel experience, including such aspects as cultural authenticity, contacts with local communities, and learning about flora, fauna, special ecosystems and natural life in general, and its conservation.

The expected growth and the new trends observed put tourism in a strategic position to make a positive contribution to, or to negatively affect, the sustainability of natural protected areas and the development potential of surrounding areas and their communities. Tourism can in fact be a major tool for the conservation of such areas and for raising the environmental awareness of residents and visitors. These objectives can be achieved through the generation of financial resources from tourism that can be dedicated to conservation measures, and through appropriate information, interpretation and education programmes for visitors and residents. Additionally, tourism operations within protected areas need to be carefully planned, managed and monitored in order to ensure their long-term sustainability. Otherwise, negative impacts will be generated and tourism will instead contribute to the further deterioration of these areas.

WTO has been producing know-how and specific guidelines for the sustainable development and management of tourism in different types of destinations. It has also been disseminating good practices observed throughout the world, and supporting governments and the private sector with the necessary tools and technical advice to continuously raise the level of sustainability of the industry.

In presenting this publication to all types of users, WTO would like to emphasise the need for tourism managers, be they public or private, to work closely with those responsible for nature conservation and protected areas. Their joint cooperation should ensure that the twin objectives of conservation and development are suitably balanced and that tourism effectively contributes to safeguard the planet's precious resources. This book, coming out during the International Year of Ecotourism, can be a useful instrument for achieving this goal.

*World Tourism Organization  
Madrid, March 2002*

# Acknowledgements

---

Special thanks must go to Jeffrey A. McNeely, James W. Thorsell and Hector Ceballos-Lascurain who prepared the first version of these Guidelines. Peter Shackelford, former Chief of Environment and Planning of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) initiated a new version of this publication and Eugenio Yunis of WTO continued his work. Helene Genot, Senior Consultant with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), encouraged a co-operative effort in the development of this new, expanded publication supported by Giulia Carbone. David Sheppard, Head of the Programme on Protected Areas of IUCN – The World Conservation Union, was a strong supporter of multi-agency co-operation in the preparation of these Guidelines.

As a result, these new Guidelines are the product of the co-operative effort of many people in UNEP, WTO and the IUCN. The funding for the project came from UNEP, WTO and Environment Australia. The authors and other content contributors came from the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of IUCN.

Thanks to the Universities of Waterloo and Montana, which supported Dr Eagles and Dr McCool respectively in this work, and to the Department of Conservation and Land Management in Western Australia which similarly supported Mr Haynes.

A special debt is owed to Pam Wight, a tourism consultant, who undertook a full review of a draft of the Guidelines. She provided thorough and very helpful editorial changes and comments, and substantial additional material. Her suggested revisions and document reorganisation were very influential in the final version, and the result was much improved through her contribution.

In addition, Dick Stanley of the Department of Canadian Heritage, Ross Constable of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service in Australia, Lee Thomas of Environment Australia and Derek Wade of Parks Canada contributed significantly to the economic benefits section of the Guidelines. Per Nilsen of Parks Canada provided a key section of the Guidelines dealing with risk management, and commented extensively on the chapter dealing with infrastructure and services. Rob Black of Parks Victoria provided important comments on the concession management component of the Guidelines. Oliver Hillel of UNEP provided critically important editorial advice and publication guidance.

Thanks also go to Ross Constable, a Ranger with the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, for providing assistance with the Montague Island Case Study. Richard Davies of the Northwest Parks Board of South Africa helped with the Madikwe Wildlife Reserve Case Study. Information on Chumbe Island came from Eleanor Carter in Tanzania. Chuck Hutchison of Conservation International provided current information on the Kakum National Park project in Ghana.

A number of the case studies were taken from winners of the Protected Areas category of British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards. This category is organised jointly

with IUCN and we applaud the airline company for this encouragement for environmentally sound tourism.

IUCN gave permission for the use of case study material originally published in the *Guidelines for Tourism in Parks and Protected Areas of East Asia* (Eagles *et al.*, 2001).

Dawn Culverson and Elizabeth Halpenny, both graduate students in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, were the research and editorial assistants on the project to prepare these Guidelines. Ms Halpenny undertook a complete editorial review of a late version of the draft. Ms Culverson wrote the Human Resource section of the Guidelines. The Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo provided office and support services to the project. Catherine Eagles provided detailed comments on the copy proof version of the document.

The reproduction of the photographs used in this book was made possible by a contribution from Environment Australia. The photographers include Paul Eagles, Jim Boissoneault and Robert Bernard. Thanks are due to the photographers for the use of their images.

The authors thank their wives and children for years of patience and assistance.

# About the authors

---

Paul F. J. Eagles was originally trained as a biologist, then went on to receive M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in resource development and planning. He is a Registered Professional Planner in Canada. As a Professor at the University of Waterloo in Canada, he has published over 270 publications. He started working in Ontario Provincial Parks in 1970, first as a summer student employee, then later as a full time parks planner.



From left to right: Paul Eagles, Chris Haynes and Steve McCool.

He went on to work as a planner in many areas, with planning projects in parks, tourism, highway design, electrical power line placement, subdivision design, environmentally sensitive areas, mine and pit opening, wetland creation, urban design, watershed planning and government policy development. He has worked in over 20 countries, with substantial experience in North America, Africa and Central America. Since 1996 Dr Eagles has been the Chair of the Task Force on Tourism and Protected Areas of IUCN's WCPA.

Stephen F. McCool is Professor of Wildland Recreation Management at the School of Forestry, The University of Montana in Missoula, Montana, USA. Dr McCool was initially trained as a forester, and then went on to receive M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in outdoor recreation management. He has been professionally involved in management and planning of protected areas for over 30 years, and has authored over 200 publications. His work emphasizes sustainability, public participation and natural resource planning processes, particularly the Limits of Acceptable Change. He is a member of WCPA and serves on its Task Force on Tourism and Protected Areas.

Chris Haynes has had a career in natural area management for over 36 years. Having trained in forestry, he worked in different aspects of that field in South Australia and the Northern Territory of Australia before becoming the first superintendent of Kakadu National Park, one of the largest and most biologically diverse protected areas in the world. He was Director of National Parks in Western Australia between 1985 and 1994, and Director of Regional Services in the Department of Conservation and Land Management in the same state before spending four years working as a consultant. During this time he also lectured in environmental management at the University of Notre Dame, Australia. He has just returned to Kakadu National Park, as Park Manager. Mr Haynes has published papers on Aboriginal use of fire and on visitor use in natural areas, and was co-editor of *Monsoonal Australia*, a book about the biogeography of Australia's north. He is also a member of the World Commission on Protected Areas and its Tourism Task Force.

# Preface

---

The link between protected areas and tourism is as old as the history of protected areas. Protected areas need tourism, and tourism needs protected areas. Though the relationship is complex and sometimes adversarial, tourism is always a critical component to consider in the establishment and management of protected areas.

These guidelines aim to build an understanding of protected area tourism, and its management. They provide a theoretical structure, but are also intended to help managers in practical ways. The underlying aim is to ensure that tourism contributes to the purposes of protected areas and does not undermine them.

While protected area planners and managers can do much to build a more constructive relationship with the tourism sector, they operate within legal, political, economic and cultural contexts that greatly limit their freedom. Moreover tourism itself is driven by many forces that are beyond the influence of park managers. Therefore the success of these Guidelines depends in part on action taken by governments and others, for example in updating legislation relating to protected areas and tourism, or introducing economic incentives to encourage sustainable forms of tourism.

Nonetheless, managers can and do play a critical role. By working with a broad range of stakeholders, and notably the industry and local communities, they can do much to ensure that tourism works for their park and for the people living in it or nearby. These Guidelines contain numerous practical suggestions about how this can be done, based not only on sound theory but also on practice from around the world. In order to draw out practical advice, a number of sections are highlighted thus: **Guidelines**.