

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE FOR TROPICAL FOREST-BASED TOURS



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication was developed by Conservation International in partnership with Rainforest Alliance and the United Nations Environment Programme. For additional copies of this publication, please visit www.ecotour.org.

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FOREWORD

Tropical forests are some of the most biologically diverse areas on Earth, harboring many of the world's plant and animal species and providing important ecological services such as climate regulation. They are also home to hundreds of millions of people who live in or near tropical forest areas, and the pressure to develop these areas, particularly in developing countries, is intense.

The beauty and "wildness" of tropical forests are highly attractive to the growing nature-based tourism sector, and capitalizing on this attraction is one way to contribute to the conservation of these valuable ecosystems. Appropriately managed tourism can be an important way to provide sustainable economic development and employment in these areas while still conserving their natural value. Yet, poorly planned or implemented tours to tropical forests can also have a significant negative impact. The operational and managerial decisions of tour operators and other tourism professionals in tropical forest areas will have an important effect on whether tourism can be a sustainable form of economic development in these ecosystems.

This Guide to Good Practice, the latest in a series to help the tourism sector integrate sustainability into its business, was developed through a collaborative process by the United Nations Environmental Programme, the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Development, Rainforest Alliance, Conservation International and their partners. It is meant to be a key resource for tour operators to assess their own business activities, and those of their suppliers and colleagues, in order to identify areas of good performance and areas where they can take measures to improve sustainability.

We invite you to read this guide and to work with us in promoting sustainable tourism development that benefits the tropical forest environment, its people and your business.



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INTRODUCTION



WHY WE CREATED THIS GUIDE

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world, and the demand for nature-based tourism, which currently accounts for about 20 percent of international travel, continues to rise worldwide. Within this sector, tropical forests are a significant visitor attraction and tourism asset, as travelers seek to view and experience the biodiversity, beauty and “wildness” of tropical forest ecosystems. Yet, poorly planned or implemented tours to tropical forests can also have a significant negative impact on the natural assets that attract tourists in the first place.

This publication is designed to help tropical forest-based tour operators improve their environmental and social performance. We begin with an introduction to tropical forest ecosystems and communities, and an overview of typical tourism and tour activities in these areas. The associated economic, social and environmental impacts of these activities are summarized and the importance and benefits of adopting good practices highlighted. Next, we offer information on good practices in both broadly applicable areas of tropical forest tour operations and for specific recreational activities that may be part of any particular tour. For each topic, we give an overview of the key issues to consider, the rationale for good practice, practical suggestions for improving performance in that area, and examples of what other tour operators around the world are doing. Links to sources of further information are provided at the back of this document. A self-assessment sustainability checklist has also been inserted into the guide, to help operators identify areas of business activity that need improvement and choose business partners and suppliers based on sustainability criteria.

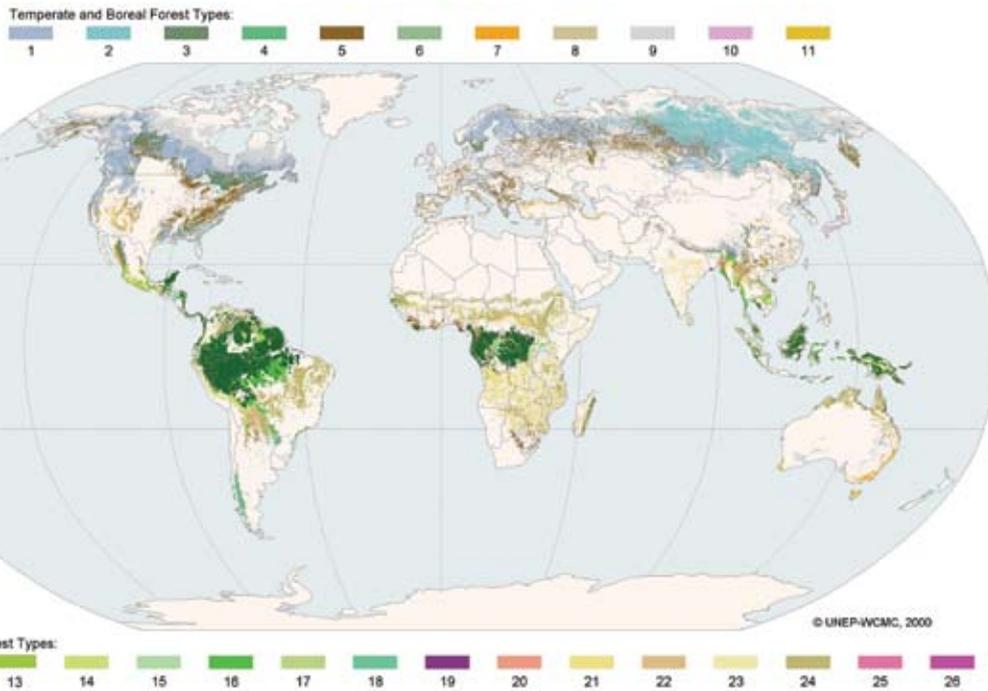
This publication is part of a series of Practical Guides to Good Practice that have been developed by Conservation International and the United Nations Environment Programme for various sectors of the tourism industry. One set of these guides is aimed at tourism professionals in the accommodation sector, the marine recreation sector and the cruise sector, to encourage them to implement good practices and to work jointly with national and local agencies to develop and implement sustainable tourism strategies. Another set of guides, of which this publication is one, has been developed specifically for the tour sector, including desert-based tours, mountain-based tours, marine/coastal tours and land-based tours. (For more on the other good practice guides, please see the Sources of Further Information section at the end of this guide.)



TROPICAL FORESTS

Tropical forests include forested areas found between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn (see Figure 1). While temperatures in this area tend to be high all year round, rainfall varies significantly in different areas, and tropical forests can be broadly classified into moist and dry forest types.

Figure 1: Global Distribution of Tropical Forests



Moist tropical forests cover more than 11 million km². While over half this area is made up of the lowland broadleaf forests located primarily in the Amazon Basin, Southeast Asia and the Congo Basin, the category also includes mountain forests, mangrove forests and the coniferous forests of Central America.

Dry tropical forests occur in tropical areas affected by seasonal drought, and generally are made up primarily of deciduous trees that lose their leaves for several months a year. Only 4 million km² of this tropical forest type remain. In wetter areas, a larger proportion of evergreen trees may be present in dry tropical forests. In drier and/or fire-prone conditions, a higher proportion of lower, thorny or spiny species may also be present, trees may be more sparsely distributed and canopy cover more open. Tropical and sub-tropical dry tropical forests are found in southern Mexico, southeastern Africa, the Lesser Sundas, central India, Indochina, Madagascar, New Caledonia, eastern Bolivia and central Brazil, the Caribbean, valleys of the northern Andes, and along the coasts of Ecuador and Peru.

Tropical forest areas have a very high value for biodiversity conservation. In particular, rainforests – forests that commonly have rainfall of more than 80 inches per year – are home to many of the world's plant and animal species and produce much of the world's oxygen. They also potentially contain many undiscovered medicinal and commercial products, and their high levels of biodiversity and productivity make them extremely attractive to many commercial industries including agriculture, forestry and tourism.

There are about 500 million people who live in or on the edges of the world's tropical forests, and developing countries, in particular, are under significant pressure to utilize these areas to generate national and local economic benefits. Appropriately managed tourism can offer significant opportunities to develop economically viable businesses and provide local employment in tropical forest areas, while still conserving the natural values of these areas for future generations.



TROPICAL FOREST TOURISM

The value of tourism in countries with major tropical forest resources is significant: in 2004, Brazil had 4.7 million visitors who generated US\$1.8 billion in revenues, while Indonesia's 5.3 million visitors generated nearly US\$4.8 billion. The demand for nature-based tourism – which, according to the World Tourism Organization, accounts for about 20 percent of total international travel – continues to grow, and tropical forests are a key natural attraction. Operators in destinations with large tropical forest areas are in a good position to meet this demand by developing a range of sustainable tourism products and services that allow visitors to experience these unique areas. Such tours may include one or more of the following: bird watching and wildlife viewing, hiking, camping and nature walks, horseback riding, cycling and mountain biking, and, in some areas, freshwater fishing, canoeing, kayaking, rafting and river tours.

Yet despite their value as a major tourist attraction, tropical forest environments are also particularly sensitive to environmental damage and degradation, through impacts such as soil compaction, fire damage, vegetation trampling, water contamination, soil erosion, and the introduction of exotic flora, fauna and disease – all of which can be a direct consequence of poorly managed tourism activities. Inadequate control of waste and trash disposal, unmanaged interaction with flora and fauna, and uncontrolled modification of landscapes from soft adventure activities can cause major disturbances to wildlife and habitat. Affecting the quality or health of one component of the tropical forest ecosystem (such as water quality or breeding patterns) can easily affect other components and, in turn, the integrity and health of the overall ecosystem. Over time, these cumulative impacts may mean eroded and unattractive landscapes, poor habitat, sparse vegetation, polluted rivers and springs and fewer animals and birds for visitors to see, greatly diminishing the attractiveness of a tropical forest destination to tourists. Tourism can also disrupt local communities and cultural sites, activities and events.

THE BENEFITS OF GOOD PRACTICE

By adopting good environmental and social practices in their tropical forest tours, tour operators can help protect the integrity of the tourism resource (unique wildlife, habitats, landscapes and communities) and facilitate high-quality visitor experiences, thus contributing to the continued viability of nature-based tourism to these regions. Sustainable and responsible tourism development can also help maintain support for tourism among local communities, by providing employment, income and higher levels of self-sufficiency, and conserving natural and cultural resources and heritage for future generations.

The use of good practices also makes good business sense, as tourists are increasingly showing a preference for products and suppliers that demonstrate good social and environmental performance. By improving its performance in these areas, a tour operator can enhance its reputation and recognition in the marketplace as a responsible operator. Good practices will also contribute to positive relationships with suppliers, staff and local communities, who are more likely to support operators who are conserving local environments and contributing to the well-being of local communities.



VISITOR EDUCATION AND MESSAGING

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

An increasing number of tourists are interested not only in experiencing unique natural and cultural environments but also in learning more about them. Tropical forest-based tours are an ideal opportunity to share information about different tropical forest environments, wildlife and landscapes, how they function and how they came to be. In addition, visitors are also likely to be interested in the lifestyles, cultures and social and political histories of tropical forest-based and local communities. Environmental education and interpretation is about communicating ideas and messages that increase visitor awareness, knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the social, natural and cultural characteristics of a destination. Interpretation may be incidental to, or form a major focus of, a tropical forest-based tour and may include a variety of media, displays and interactive activities, and the use of local or naturalist guides.

A better understanding of the social, natural and cultural qualities of a destination gives visitors a better appreciation of these values, enhancing their motivation to behave in appropriate and sustainable ways when interacting with local environments and communities. It also encourages them to contribute to conservation and to support local communities and economies. This protects the integrity of the local community and environment, conserves the natural and cultural heritage and maintains the unique assets that are attracting visitors to the region.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Including environmental education and interpretation elements in a tour program:

- | adds value to the visitor experience, which can translate into better word-of-mouth recommendations;
- | promotes thoughtful visitor behavior that will contribute to a more sustainable experience;
- | differentiates your product from other tours, which can help you stand out in the market;
- | enhances your reputation as a knowledgeable, responsible and professional operator;
- | establishes an environmental and social commitment that makes you more attractive to environmentally conscious and discerning customers; and
- | attracts higher-yield customers who are happy to pay extra to gain knowledge and learn about the natural and cultural history of the destination they are visiting.



WHAT CAN I DO?

Identify key messages. Making a list of key messages makes it easier to efficiently gather the information you need and plan how best to communicate it to your customers. Otherwise you can spend a lot of time and effort gathering information that you don't need or won't end up using. Key messages for visitors might include:

- The environmental, cultural, social and historical values and points of interest you want visitors to know about and appreciate. These may include, for example, identifying unique sites or species of conservation significance, or raising awareness of current conservation programs and projects in the region that visitors can become involved in or support. The human and cultural history and use of the area is also relevant.
- How you want them to behave in the tropical forest environment and within local communities. For example, avoid damaging and polluting natural environments or disturbing or injuring wildlife, and channel spending into local communities (e.g. by shopping at local markets and purchasing locally made souvenirs).
- The health and safety risks you want them to know about and what they need to do to avoid/respond to them. For example, threats from wildlife, weather and appropriate use of equipment and safety gear.

Do some research.

- Find accurate information (facts and figures) on each of the key areas you identify and verify this information through reference books, scientific journals, documentaries, professionals, knowledgeable local people, or recognized conservation bodies or interest groups.
- Provide visitors with accurate information to ensure that you meet customer expectations, provide a safe and high-quality experience and maintain your reputation as a high-quality service provider.
- Formulating and delivering these messages in an interactive and positive manner can be more effective than just telling the visitor how to behave and how not to behave.



Understand your audience.

- Have an idea of your audience's perceptions, interests, knowledge, skill levels and motivations to help you decide what information to present and how best to do it. Formal or informal discussions before and during the tour will help you better understand the needs of your audience, to help you choose the information and mechanisms for communicating your messages that are most relevant and in line with those needs and interests.
- Consider how to cater for non-English speakers, children, people with disabilities and educational groups.
- Obtain formal or informal customer feedback and comments after the tour to evaluate the relevance and suitability of interpretation programs.

Keep tour numbers to a manageable and personable size. Smaller tour groups are always easier to manage and allow the development of a more personal and tailored approach. They also make it easier to maintain guests' attention and to encourage group discussion and interaction. As a general rule, it is good to stay below 50 customers per operator for transport-based tours, and below 10 for non-vehicle based tours.

Develop a range of interpretation materials.

- Consider a range of options when deciding how to present the information and key messages, including signage, videos, static or interactive displays, fact sheets and brochures, story telling, theater performances, role plays, photographs, activity books, talks by specialists, games, quizzes and craftwork. Developing a range of materials will give you some flexibility in tailoring your interpretation for different audiences and will provide variety for the audience.
- Consult with conservation and tourism organizations, as there may be existing media and materials that you can readily apply to the development of an interpretation program in any given tour.
- Use existing interpretation facilities and materials; ensure tours start at the visitor center (if one exists) and tourists receive good information, use interpretative trails and local guides.

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

Horizontes Nature Tours, a tour operator in Costa Rica, provides visitors with a high level of environmental education and interpretation on all of its tours. The company has established a partnership with the Rainforest Alliance to sponsor workshops for local hotel owners and tour outfitters about good practices for recycling, waste reduction and promoting benefits from tourism revenue within local communities. Horizontes encourages its clients to use the operators and accommodation providers that have participated in these workshops. The company hires only highly trained guides, who are required to take a comprehensive course on conservation, and sponsors guide-training workshops for local people who would like to become guides. On its website and in pre-tour information packages, Horizontes provides visitors with information on responsible travel and how to contribute to local conservation and community development efforts.

Located in the North-Central Lowlands of Costa Rica, *Selva Verde Lodge and Rainforest Reserve* offers a range of workshops and guided hikes focused on providing quality interpretation relating to biodiversity, tropical forests, ecosystem ecology, tropical wildlife and medicinal plants. The lodge also provides a base for independent scientific researchers, and visitors are encouraged to participate in research and data-gathering activities that contribute to conservation in the region. Guided walks are also provided to groups from schools, museums, zoos and other non-profit organizations for educational purposes.



INFRASTRUCTURE

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

The location and design of tourism infrastructure used by tropical forest tour operators needs to be carefully planned, managed and positioned to ensure it is both useful for tour operators and contributes to the conservation of the tropical forest areas. Built infrastructure associated with tropical forest tours includes paths, boardwalks, fences, bird hides, viewing platforms, bridges, suspended walkways, lookouts, signage, toilet facilities, information centers and vehicle parking lots. These structures may facilitate access to and through tropical forest areas or be used for distribution of environmental education and interpretation materials. They may be positioned within or adjacent to tropical forest areas, and may be on private, protected or public land. The owners and managers of tropical forest areas and adjacent lands will ultimately determine where such structures and facilities are erected, and who is able to use them. Cooperation between tour operators and relevant tropical forest managers, local authorities, landowners and conservation groups may assist in creating well-designed infrastructure that both supports tour activities and conserves the tropical forest environment.

Built infrastructure within tropical forest areas can have both positive and negative environmental impacts on sensitive tropical forest environments. Raised walkways and bridges can help prevent erosion from vehicle and pedestrian traffic and hides can reduce the disturbance to wildlife from wildlife viewing activities. However, inappropriate design or construction materials can also have adverse effects. Inappropriate paths, bridges and viewing platforms within tropical forest areas can disturb or frighten fauna, interfere with nesting sites, restrict animal movement, or remove protective canopies or densely vegetated areas. Built structures can also block or redirect natural watercourses and drainage paths, create over-shaded areas, and break canopy covers, all which can alter vegetation composition and distribution and encourage the growth of weeds.

Built infrastructure adjacent to tropical forest areas can also have both positive and negative environmental impacts on sensitive tropical forest environments. Locating camping sites, vehicle parks, toilet facilities and tour depots outside tropical forest areas can minimize the impacts from the use of vehicles and unloading/cleaning of equipment. However, the edges of tropical forests are particularly sensitive to erosion, habitat clearing and the encroachment of development and exotic species. Built environments adjacent to tropical forest ecosystems concentrate human activity and introduce noise, light, wind, exotic animals and plants, and temperature changes



that can force animals away from the forest edges. Ideally, areas adjacent to tropical forests should be used to provide a buffer zone from development.

For any type of structure, untreated construction materials can carry exotic insects, spores, seeds and microbes that can threaten the natural balance of the ecosystem. Construction materials may also leach chemicals from paints and treatments into local water bodies. Poorly constructed or maintained pathways, bridges and lookouts can also pose a threat to visitor safety.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- | Well-planned and constructed infrastructure can reduce the impacts of visitors on the tropical forest environment, protecting sensitive natural landscapes and wildlife by minimizing disturbance and erosion. This, in turn, maintains the quality of the visitor attraction and the visitor experience, supporting the continued viability of tour operations in the area.
- | Retaining canopy cover, vegetation density and construction of hides will help maintain the presence and numbers of unique and native wildlife and the ability for visitors to see them, adding to the value of the experience for visitors.
- | Well-maintained infrastructure can play a role in protecting visitor safety, thus enhancing the professionalism of the tour and maintaining the reputation of the operator and destination.
- | Cooperating with other organizations or agencies in designing and installing infrastructure can provide mutual benefits and reduce the cost of site hardening for each party.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Work together with tropical forest managers, conservation groups, other tour operators, landowners and environmental design professionals to:

- | Identify sites with the greatest need for infrastructure to reduce adverse effects (e.g. areas of high foot or vehicle traffic, sensitive species relationships that cannot be fragmented by track/road creation).
- | Identify suitable infrastructure and appropriate designs and locations that will not disturb flora or fauna through unusual levels of noise, light, physical disturbance or exposure to exotic plants, animals or diseases. Avoid overuse of local wood in the construction of infrastructure.
- | Share labor and other costs in construction and maintenance work.

| Encourage the establishment of tourism zones and the development of buffer zones to sustain sensitive and valued areas of tropical forest where human settlements or private areas lie adjacent to vulnerable patches of tropical forest. This will improve the likelihood of the tropical forest being sustained. The width of minimum tropical forest buffers varies depending on the level of sensitivity of the individual tropical forests. These range from 100 meters for highly sensitive tropical forest patches to 40 meters for less sensitive patches. This buffer zone also allows for more gradual changes of light, temperature, wind, weed and animal incursion. Comply strictly with the regulations established for the different use zones and buffer areas.

| Minimize the infrastructure footprint by coordinating the timing of tours with other operators, park authorities and land-owners, to allow for the sharing of existing infrastructure. Establish adequate group sizes for the use of the facilities.

| Comply with safety and security requirements for the use of infrastructure and sites visited.

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

The *Inkaterra Canopy* walkway, in Tambopata, Peru, allows visitors to get an up-close look at the rainforest canopy. The 344-meter-long walkway, which spans two towers, eight platforms and seven bridges, was designed to be camouflaged as much as possible within the treetops. To support the bridges, the builders used bolts rather than brackets or clamps, to avoid affecting the natural growth of the trees. They also ensured that any tree affected had strong defense mechanisms against attacks of fungi or bacteria, so that the bolts would not compromise their health.

Maho Bay Camps, on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, consists of 114 tent-cottages built on 16-foot-square platforms within the Virgin Islands National Park. The camp was built using hand construction methods, to minimize disturbance on the natural environment. All platforms are connected by elevated walkways, to avoid soil erosion that might damage the beach and fragile coastline.



ENGAGING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Many visitors are interested in interacting with local people, experiencing elements of local lifestyles, crafts, food and local beverages, and visiting cultural and historical sites. Tour operators may consequently incorporate these elements as a minor or major component of their tour product. There are many areas where tour operators interact with local communities: direct interactions may occur through purchasing decisions and supplier choices; viewing, photographing or talking to individuals or families engaged in work, social, cultural or private activities; visiting local businesses, markets and exhibitions; utilizing shared infrastructure such as transportation, communications, entertainment and food services; and utilizing local recreation areas.

All tourism activities have impacts on local communities, whether interactions between visitors and local people are planned or incidental to tour activities. There are two main issues involved with regard to community interaction. The first is the level of cross-cultural awareness, understanding and respect between visitors and locals, which will influence the quality of the visitor experience, the level of community tolerance and support for tourism, and the ability of the local community to maintain its unique culture and lifestyle in the face of exposure to the alternative cultures of tourists. A lack of cross-cultural awareness, understanding and respect can lead to situations where visitors behave or communicate in ways that are seen as disrespectful or rude to local communities. This could include using inappropriate language, handling cultural artifacts, taking photographs of people or photographing or visiting private or sacred sites. Inappropriate behavior can create negative perceptions of visitors in local communities and lead to conflict, crime or an inhospitable atmosphere, which can, in turn, detract from visitor experiences and act as a deterrent for future visitors. At the same time, local communities lose the opportunity to secure the potential economic benefits from establishing tourism businesses.

The second issue is the extent to which the economic benefits of tourism are channeled into the local economies, which will directly affect the degree to which local communities benefit from tourism activities, and their ability to maintain viable local businesses, broaden their economic base, protect their natural and cultural assets and improve levels of self sufficiency. Tourism revenue and benefits can easily “leak” out of local economies if processes are not put in place to contain these benefits in the local destination. Importing goods, services and labor from outside the local destination and utilizing or recommending non-locally owned accommodation, trans-



portation and food outlets can also lead to a loss of local economic benefits. The less revenue that stays within the local economy, the less income is available to channel toward local training, developing tourism infrastructure, conserving natural, cultural and historical sites, and marketing local destinations and businesses.

Interactions between visitors and local people can also cause local communities to adopt visitor traits, customs and preferences, and/or to commercialize or modify aspects of their culture in an attempt to make their destination and services more appealing to visitors. However, it is the uniqueness, authenticity and difference of the culture that is most valuable, and this is often the primary attraction for increasing numbers of discerning customers. This cultural uniqueness and authenticity also contributes to a destination's competitiveness by making it different from other destinations.

Tourist presence also creates additional pressure on shared transportation, infrastructure and commercial services. In sufficient numbers, tourists can make it difficult for local people going about their daily activities to access these services. Visitors can overcrowd local community areas or prevent access to areas preferred by local residents, and they may also participate in incompatible activities in these areas. These outcomes can lead to resentment by host populations and hostile or unfriendly reactions to visitors. In turn, this can cause bad word-of-mouth references and decrease the attractiveness of a destination.





WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Improving visitor awareness of cultural do's and don'ts as well as host community awareness of the tourism value of their unique lifestyles, culture and history can help:

- conserve the local way of life and cultural heritage for future generations;
- maintain good visitor experiences resulting from a friendly and hospitable community that supports continuing visitation and revenue;
- maintain the economic viability of local tourism businesses;
- improve community self-sufficiency and income; and
- improve your overall relationship with local communities.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Consult with local communities to avoid sensitive sites.
 - Negotiate with cultural groups on appropriate access, behavior and interpretation regarding heritage, culture and people.
 - Avoid highly sensitive or private sites on the tour and seek local community endorsement in the selection of sites visited.
 - Keep visitors to defined areas and routes and use shared infrastructure and services in off-peak times to help minimize disturbances to local residents.
- Communicate cultural do's and don'ts to customers to increase cultural awareness and minimize inappropriate behavior, activities and communication with hosts and cultural sites during their stay.
 - Pass on relevant information about appropriate language, physical contact, customs, clothing, photography, sites, areas or subjects that should be avoided, and items that should not be sat on or touched.
 - Provide information on health and safety risks and health and emergency services.
 - Encourage visitors to use local resources (fuel, energy, food, water, etc.) sparingly.
- Encourage visitors to support local businesses.
 - Recommend local businesses offering other tourism-related services of interest to visitors, such as accommodation, entertainment, transportation, regional food and beverages, souvenirs and craft markets.
 - Increase visitor awareness of other local attractions and sites of cultural and historical interest.

- Incorporate stops or stays with other local businesses as part of the tour experience to create integrated tour packages and support local businesses.
- Use local suppliers and labor.
 - Employ local guides where possible and purchase local provisions and services.
 - Use local facilities and offer locally made souvenirs for purchase, if available.
 - Participate in work experience, mentoring and skills development programs that assist local people in developing tourism and guiding-related skills.
 - Provide fair wages and safe working conditions to employees.
 - Provide support to employees in the areas of health services and transportation
- Become involved in community development by supporting community-based initiatives or working with non-profit groups on community development projects.
 - Consider offering discounts for local groups, residents or community development researchers or workers.
 - Provide opportunities for tourists to make voluntary donations to support community development projects. Communicate the objectives of the community support projects so that tourists know how their contributions will be used. It is also very useful to inform tourists about the results of such projects after their trips. Community development projects can be coordinated through local community-based organizations and NGOs as well.
 - Offer help to communities during emergency situations by sharing tourist facilities and services (e.g. transportation, communication, accommodation in emergency situations).

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

Help Tourism, an Indian tour operator, established the *Sunderbans Jungle Camp* in the Sunderbans National Park, West Bengal, India, in 2002. The camp, a community tourism initiative supported by WWF-India, the West Bengal Department of Forests, the non-profit Association for Conservation and Tourism (ACT), and the Bali Eco Development Committee, was built with local materials in traditional architectural styles. Visitors can take guided excursions and boat trips to the national park and nearby villages. Though a demonstration model of the camp was operated jointly by Help Tourism and the Bali Nature and Wildlife Conservation Society, today it is run almost entirely by local people. Local social projects, including an evening school, free medical camps, book and clothing banks and scholarships, are supported with tourism revenue.

A photograph showing a row of traditional thatched-roof huts built on a riverbank. The huts are made of natural materials and have steeply pitched roofs. They are reflected in the calm water of the river. The background is a dense, lush green forest with tall trees. The scene is peaceful and scenic.

The **Kapawi Ecolodge and Reserve**, which is located in the southern Ecuadorian Amazon basin, near the Peruvian border, was established in 1993 as a joint initiative of the Canodros Foundation and FINAE, the Federation of Achuar Indigenous People in Ecuador. Today, about 70 percent of the lodge's staff are Achuar people, and products and services for the lodge are purchased in the local communities. In 2011, the lodge will be transferred fully, at no cost, to the Achuar community. The presence of the lodge has also served to bring the area to the attention of NGOs that have invested time and money in community development projects, including health care, communication, transportation and education, as a complement to the ecotourism revenues in the region.

WWF is promoting community-based tourism in the Congo Basin, working with BaAka pygmies in the Central African Republic's Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Special Reserve and the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park. BaAka guides take visitors on net hunting or medicinal plant collecting excursions, while other local people work as park guards. Ninety percent of the tourism revenue in the area is disbursed to local communities, 50 percent as salaries for guards, guides and other employees, and the other 40 percent to a community association that promotes rural development activities. An additional, important benefit of the initiative is the understanding among local people that wildlife can be more valuable alive as a tourism asset than killed for bushmeat.

Conservation Corporation Africa is a network of private reserves and lodges in various countries in southern Africa. The members encourage tourists to donate to community projects, such as clinics and schools, and visits to these communities and projects are a part of the tourist program at the lodges and reserves. These visits provide an interesting cultural experience for tourists and help them understand how their donations and support will impact local communities.

Projeto Bagagem is a non-profit organization working with low-income communities in the development of community-based tourism projects in Brazil. Projeto Bagagem collaborates with local NGOs to develop visitor itineraries that provide social, environmental, financial and cultural benefits to host communities. These itineraries also enable travelers to learn about the environmental, health and sustainable development issues in the host communities. Projeto Bagagem's vision is to become a nationwide model in the development of community tourism pilot initiatives, and ultimately reach the policy level.



INTERACTING WITH WILDLIFE

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

The opportunity to view, interact with and learn about native birds, mammals, reptiles, insects and other wildlife, particularly in their native habitats, is a very valuable part of the visitor experience for tourists and adds significant value to tropical forest-based tour products. Direct interactions with wildlife might involve viewing and following their activities, handling or feeding them, while indirect interactions can involve the disturbance or removal of habitat, the disruption or movement of prey or food sources, and the introduction of trash that can cause injuries or death. Encounters with wildlife may be unplanned and occur unexpectedly during a tour or may be purposefully sought after and offered as a core part of a tour program. In either case, appropriate knowledge, visitor management and good practice are essential to designing a quality tour experience that also protects the health and diversity of local wildlife.

Wildlife can be easily disturbed by human activities and presence. The number of visitors, physical movements, noise levels and proximity to wildlife, nests, breeding grounds and food sources can all affect the health, breeding and feeding patterns of local wildlife. Wildlife injury, sickness or distress can result from entanglement in or ingestion of trash (such as aluminum cans and plastics), being fed foods not usually part of their diet (particularly those that are highly processed and sugared), exposure to diseases, being handled, or being scared by sudden movements, loud noises or bright lights.

Tourist behavior can also disrupt wildlife breeding and nesting patterns if visitors disturb or frighten animals with noise, rapid movements or large groups, or get too close to nests or young. Nests or burrows and nesting materials may also be trampled or removed if visitors are unaware of their appearance, use and location. Feeding patterns can be disrupted, as a constant tourist presence at feeding grounds may encourage wildlife to move elsewhere. Feeding animals can make them less capable of being self sufficient when visitors are not around, or make them more aggressive as they seek food from any human. Tourist activities can also make wildlife more susceptible to predation if animals become too accustomed to noise and human presence.

Different species will be affected in different ways by similar activities, and have varying abilities to tolerate and recover from the range of visitor activities and behavior. As a general rule, impacts will increase with larger numbers of visitors, more direct forms of contact, and with



repeated use of the same viewing and interaction areas. Adopting good practices is about understanding the characteristics of the local wildlife, the potential impacts, the types of interaction that least affect their well-being, and designing your tour activities accordingly.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- | Wildlife is a significant tourism attraction in tropical forest environments. Conserving the health, numbers, diversity and presence of wildlife in tropical forest areas helps maintain the unique value and appeal of an area to visitors, as well as tourism's ability to support local businesses and employment.
- | Reducing disturbance to and contact with local wildlife may mean that the number and predictability of sightings will increase, improving visitor experiences.
- | Visitors may be scratched, bitten or stung as a result of defensive wildlife behavior, if animals feel threatened by being handled or when protecting their young. Parasites or other diseases that may be carried by native wildlife can also make tourists ill if they handle animals inappropriately. Protecting the health and safety of tourists is key to ensuring a positive experience and increasing the likelihood that visitors will recommend the business and the destination to friends and family.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- | Minimize noise and disturbances when in close proximity to wildlife, and nesting, breeding or feeding areas.
 - Minimize noise from equipment, phones, radios and loud conversations, as well as sudden movements, flash photography, bright-colored clothing and open fires.
 - Avoid nighttime wildlife sightseeing tours unless required in a conservation project.
 - Where possible, keep group sizes to 10 or less people per guide.
- | Improve your knowledge and be aware of the location of important feeding, breeding and nesting sites, as well as seasonal activity, and avoid direct, prolonged or repeated contact with wildlife.

- Talk to local tropical forest area managers, conservation groups or local wildlife groups about what kinds of behaviors the local wildlife may be sensitive to and what guidelines are available regarding appropriate interactions. Small changes to the routes chosen, the viewing distance and sites selected, or route rotation, may decrease the negative impacts on wildlife.
- | Avoid wildlife handling and feeding of wildlife. If handling or feeding is required due to a conservation project, it should follow appropriate guidelines and be conducted by trained staff only.
- | Inform and manage visitors by providing pre-tour information on keeping appropriate distances from wildlife, minimizing noise and disturbances, handling and feeding restrictions, and any potential health and safety risks from wildlife. Include the reasoning behind particular actions or precautions. On the tour, be aware of evidence of nest trees, logs or pits to avoid trampling and removal and encourage visitors to stay on designated paths.
- | Consider participating in the development of "hides" or other structures to allow wildlife viewing at reasonably close distances but with minimal disturbance.
- | Develop interpretative techniques to help tourists understand wildlife by observing signs such as footprints, droppings, prey, or abandoned nests. These can help visitors understand wildlife habits and behavior and give them a sense of wildlife without direct contact or disturbance of animals. Such signs are also a good way to experience animals that are difficult to see (especially night predators). Consider the use of remote sensing techniques (e.g. cameras) for sensitive areas such as nesting grounds or remote locations to increase the possibility that tourists will be able to see wildlife.

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

Rainforest Expeditions operates three lodges in the Peruvian Amazon, Posada Amazonas, Refugio Amazonas and the Tambopata Research Center. All visitors to the lodges are provided with a Guests Code of Conduct that outlines acceptable and unacceptable behavior when visiting the area. Among the prohibitions are no harassment of wildlife and no wildlife collection or manipulation. The code specifically recommends that guides stay away from hurt wildlife, stay on trails and remain with a guide at all times when in the forest.



VEHICLES AND VESSELS

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Most tours involve the use of some kind of motorized transportation in the delivery of their services, whether motorbikes, cars, buses, four-wheel drives or boats. Motorized vehicles may be used to transport visitors, equipment and supplies from a pick-up point to various destinations and back (e.g. buses), as viewing platforms for the majority or part of the tour (e.g. river cruise boats), as part of an adventure activity (e.g. motorbikes and quads), or to navigate long-distance difficult terrains (e.g. four-wheel drives).

Motorized vehicles are noisier and more powerful than pedestrian traffic, and can therefore magnify the potential landscape damage and noise disturbance impacts from more passive walking, hiking and soft adventure activities. In addition, they consume important energy resources and can cause significant pollution from emissions, oil leakages and chemical runoff from cleaning and maintenance activities. This pollution can contaminate the air, water and soil on which human, animal and plant communities depend for their health and well-being.

Landscape and track erosion can occur from vehicles being navigated over soft ground, vegetation, river banks and beds, and non-sealed or reinforced tracks, or from unruly or rough driving

or riding. Improper use of vehicles can lead to vegetation clearing, soil compaction, erosion and topography changes, resulting in reduced wildlife habitat, modified or increasingly turbid water flows, unattractive and denuded landscapes and high-nutrient topsoil loss.

Vehicles and vessels can also transport organisms and plants picked up in one destination and carried on wheels, in vehicle recesses and on interior floors where they have been deposited from footwear and equipment. The introduction of foreign micro-organisms can cause flora or fauna disease, while exotic plant and animal species that prey on or compete with native species can disrupt species numbers and distribution.

Vehicle size, noise, speed and appearance can be disturbing or frightening for native wildlife and, aside from causing injury or death by collision, can also disrupt feeding, nesting and breeding patterns. In turn, wildlife may relocate or population numbers may drop, detracting from the natural value of the destination and the visitor experience. In addition, too many vehicles and/or poor infrastructure can significantly increase the risk of vehicle collision. Vehicle congestion, or exposure to too many other vehicles on a tour can also detract from the natural, unique and intimate experience that visitors are often seeking.



WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- | Fuel efficiency conserves increasingly rare and expensive energy resources.
- | Being more fuel efficient will save money on fuel costs and reduce the operating costs of the tour.
- | The prevention of air, water and soil pollution from toxic chemicals, and oil and fuel spills maintains the integrity of the natural environment as a valuable asset for attracting visitors.
- | Maintaining vegetated landscapes and natural contours conserves the aesthetic appeal of destinations for visitors, contributing to the long-term viability of tourism operations.
- | Clean air, water and soil resources are integral to the health of local communities and to the ongoing viability of local fishing and agriculture industries, as well as local support for tourism in an area.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- | Avoid sensitive sites such as important habitats, breeding grounds and small local communities.
- | Stay on designated or defined routes where possible.
 - Avoid skidding or rough riding/driving where possible, to help minimize erosion, habitat loss and wildlife disturbance.
- | Keep vehicles clean to avoid transfer of weeds, fungi and diseases.
 - Undertake cleaning away from tropical forest areas and preferably in designated wash bays.
- | Use fuel-efficient vehicles.
 - Consider fuel efficiency when purchasing vehicles.
 - Choose vehicles that minimize fuel consumption or use renewable energy.
 - For motorized watercraft, diesel, four-stroke or electric engines are the most energy-efficient.
 - For land vehicles, use two-wheel drives instead of four-wheel drives where possible.
 - Perform regular maintenance to ensure vehicles are running efficiently.
- | Consider fuel consumption when designing tour routes.
 - Choose routes and time schedules that minimize congestion and distance traveled.
 - Avoid using vehicles with a larger seating or engine capacity than is required for the tour, to help keep running costs down.

- | Sound proof vehicles where possible to minimize engine and exhaust noise.
- | Keep vehicle colors neutral to blend with the natural environment and avoid alarming wildlife.
- | Maintain low vehicle speeds in and around sensitive sites to minimize levels of disturbance and injury to wildlife and local communities.
- | Minimize the use of toxic chemicals for vehicle maintenance, cleaning and protection.
- | Clean, service and refuel vehicles away from freshwater and dispose of waste into appropriate treatment or recycling facilities. Use drop trays or ground liners to reduce the chance of fuel and oil spillage.
- | Keep engines well-maintained to help avoid oil and gasoline leaks from polluting air, soil and water.
- | Maximize the time spent outside the vehicle to include walking or educational activities.
- | Practice good driving techniques to reduce gas consumption, including reducing idling times, driving at a constant speed and braking slowly.
- | Use public transportation, where feasible, to access the tour areas.
- | Offer alternative forms of transportation (e.g. cycling, kayaking, horse riding) where feasible.

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

Visitors to the *Yachana Lodge* in the Ecuadorian Amazon begin their journey by traveling in a 57-foot long EcoCanoe designed and built by La Fundación para la Sobrevivencia del Pueblo Cofan, a micro-enterprise initiative of the Cofan indigenous community. Traditional canoes in the region are made from the large trunks of trees that are more than 200 years old. The fiberglass canoes were introduced as an ecological alternative to cutting down the rainforest trees and are expected to last several decades – up to five times longer than the dugout canoes. Yachana's canoes are powered by two four-stroke engines that are more efficient than conventional motors used by most vessels on the river, and contribute less noise and chemical pollution into the pristine surrounding environment. By supporting this micro-enterprise, Yachana is contributing to local community development, and visibly communicating their commitment to rainforest conservation and sustainability.



CONTRIBUTING TO CONSERVATION

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Tour operators can make positive contributions to tropical forest conservation directly and indirectly through various aspects of their business operations. The choice of suppliers for business equipment and products, the level of good practices demonstrated by operators and visitors during tours, and the type of information passed on to customers can all have an effect on conservation outcomes. The influence of operators on visitor awareness, attitudes and behavior before, during and after a tour can also have an impact on both local and broader conservation goals.

In addition, because tour operators are in direct contact with local communities, the tropical forest environment and visitors on a regular basis, they are in an excellent position to make a direct contribution to tropical forest conservation at the local, regional or national level. Such contributions are particularly important in countries or regions where capacity and resources for environmental conservation may be limited.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- | Contributions to conservation help protect the assets that attract visitors and add to the value of the visitor experience, thus maintaining the viability of tour operations and sustaining tourism income and development in the region.
- | Clean tropical forest environments, with unique flora and fauna and pristine landscapes make a region more competitive with other destinations, and hence more likely to attract a greater market share of visitors.
- | Conservation of the natural environment is important for the health and well-being of local communities and for ensuring that the resources are there for future generations to use and enjoy.
- | Participation in and support of conservation efforts enhances your reputation as an environmentally responsible operator, making you more attractive to environmentally conscious and discerning customers.
- | Participating in conservation activities can enhance the visitor experience and add an additional dimension and point of differentiation to your tour.
- | As an operator in a natural area, helping to protect the tropical forest environment is an investment in the future of your own business.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Adopt good practices (such as those indicated in this guide) in areas such as waste management, water and energy use, and the ways that landscapes, habitat and wildlife are utilized in tour activities.

- Obtain feedback from conservation professionals on how to improve your tour's contribution to tropical forest conservation.

Communicate good practices to customers to minimize the environmental impacts of their activities and improve awareness of what constitutes appropriate behavior in tropical forests and other local environments during their stay.

- Pass on relevant conservation information regarding important or threatened species, habitats and local environmental issues.
- Encourage visitors to avoid souvenirs derived from rare or threatened species.

Encourage visitor participation in local conservation activities. This may include the promotion of conservation groups and local conservation projects or it may include making participation in such projects part of tour activities. Activities focused on direct maintenance and improvement of the areas used can be incorporated into the tour, including:

- rehabilitation and re-vegetation of tour areas/sites;
- monitoring of erosion and degradation of sites/routes used (for example by taking time-series photos/video footage of problem areas from a fixed point such as a tree or rock);
- monitoring of native and non-native animal sightings or evidence of their presence (e.g. droppings, footprints or digging);
- monitoring and maintenance of the condition of tracks/campsites (for example, noting the percentage of vegetation cover, the extent of erosion and weed cover, evidence of campfires in non-designated areas and illegal use of timber for firewood); and
- trash collection and removal.

Directly support conservation projects or schemes. In addition to the activities suggested for visitors, operators can also contribute to the conservation of tropical forest areas by:

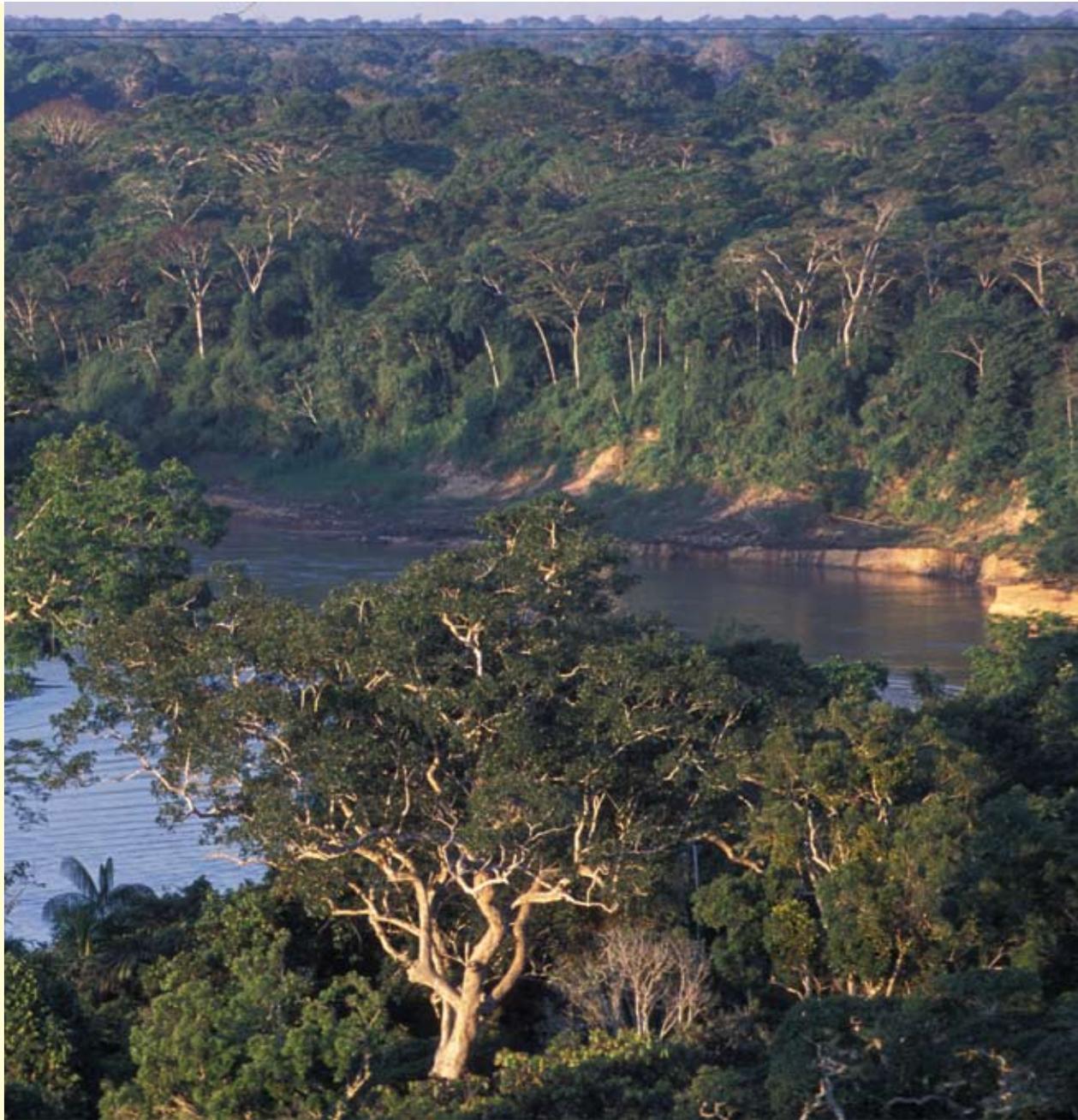
- working with tropical forest area policy makers and managers and participating in environmental monitoring programs (e.g. species monitoring, conditions of roads, tracks and infrastructure);
 - working with tropical forest area policy makers and managers and participating in visitor monitoring programs (visitor surveys and monitoring visitor numbers at particular sites as well as the number of commercial operators can provide useful information for planning, infrastructure development and impact management);
 - providing physical or financial support for rehabilitation activities;
 - encouraging tourists to donate to conservation activities;
 - encouraging the use of park entrance fees as a means to generate funds for conservation;
 - assisting in the development or maintenance of site-hardening infrastructure (such as pathways and boardwalks);
 - participating in non-native animal and weed management activities; and
 - supporting research and/or providing concession rates for groups or institutions that are studying and promoting tropical forest conservation.
- Contribute to broader conservation goals by participating in recycling schemes or greenhouse gas abatement programs.
- Influence visitor attitudes through the incorporation of an interpretation component into your tour program. This contributes to visitor awareness and appreciation for the environmental values of both the tropical forest and the region. Changes in awareness and attitudes can also encourage support for conservation projects when visitors return home, and inspire them to incorporate more sustainable activities in their everyday lifestyles.
- Choose responsible suppliers who demonstrate good practice when making decisions about purchasing equipment and goods and services that support business operations. (See the attached sustainability checklist). Similarly, choose responsible suppliers when recommending or linking your tour to other tourism products (e.g. accommodation, food and beverage, or transportation providers).

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

Luna Lodge is located on the Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica near Corcovado National Park, which is home to nearly 400 species of birds, 140 species of mammals, 116 species of amphibians and reptiles, more than 500 species of trees, and more than 6,000 species of insects. The park's 13 major ecosystems provide refuges for jaguars, pumas, crocodiles, tapirs, poison dart frogs and harpy eagles. In addition, the region's beaches, including those near the town of Carate, where Luna Lodge is located, are major nesting sites for several varieties of sea turtles. To give back to the environment that draws visitors to Luna, the lodge participates in several conservation projects, including monitoring and protection of the endangered harpy eagle. The lodge has also been a part of the creation of the Osa Conservation Trust Fund, a joint initiative of local communities, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, the Costa Rica-United States of America (CRUSA) Foundation, and the Costa Rican Ministry of Environment and Energy to support infrastructure, management and enforcement in the national park.

The **Napo Wildlife Center**, which is located near Anangucocha Lake within the ancestral lands of the Anangu Quichua community, was built in conjunction with EcoEcuador, a non-profit organization dedicated to conservation efforts in Ecuador. Members of the Anangu Quichua community are active participants in the conservation and management of over 52,000 acres within the Yasuni National Park as well as partners in the lodge. The members participate in conservation efforts to prevent logging, market hunting and oil extraction, all of which are actively destroying local forests. The Napo Wildlife Center demonstrates a commitment to sustainable sewage and waste management by keeping trash to a minimum and composting. The center uses solar panels and diesel generators to provide power.

Brazil Ecotravel is a tour operator in Brazil based on Rio de Janeiro that has a mission to promote environmentally responsible travel and help the efforts to the conservation in Brazil, ensuring that natural resources and local communities benefit now and in the future. All tours have been designed under strict sustainability assessments that evaluate its impacts at destinations and local communities. A great effort to develop and market sustainable tourism products at conservational areas is made at international level, and most of the tours contribute to conservation projects of endangered species.



TROPICAL FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Deforestation and land-use changes, including the expansion of cattle pasture and mechanized agriculture in tropical forest regions, slash-and-burn farming, soil degradation, drainage of wetlands, road building and urban sprawl, account for as much as a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions. It is estimated that each year deforestation and land-use changes release roughly 1.6 billion tons of carbon into the atmosphere, accounting for between 18 and 25 percent of global emissions, with deforestation being responsible for most of these emissions. Protecting existing tropical forests and greatly reducing deforestation rates can help reduce the impacts of climate change. In areas that have already been cleared and logged, reforestation and restoration activities will help increase carbon uptake from the atmosphere and thereby contribute to mitigating climate change.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- | Tropical forests help regulate climate conditions, by recycling water into the atmosphere. The Amazon basin in particular plays a global-scale climatic role in cooling the planet—it is estimated that the trees of the Amazon release 20 billion tons of water into the atmosphere each day. However, as forests are cleared, rates of evapotranspiration are reduced, with significant negative impacts on rainfall and precipitation.
- | Globally, some 35.1 million acres of tropical forests are destroyed each year, releasing millions of tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere.
- | As forests are cut, the habitats of plant and animal species are destroyed, putting them at risk of extinction, and also reducing the attractiveness of areas for tourists.
- | Deforestation also disrupts the provision of ecosystem services, such as storm protection, non-timber forest products, ecotourism potential, and water purification. Pollination services alone have been estimated to contribute US\$12 billion per year to agriculture.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- | Calculate and offset the carbon impacts of your tours and clients. Use a carbon calculator, like the one found at www.conservation.org, to offset your carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.
- | Develop and implement sustainable purchasing guidelines for key products and services through the supply chain. Engage with your partners and suppliers to encourage them to join combined efforts to minimize their environmental footprint and contribute to conservation.

- | Improve operational efficiencies and implement good practices. Take practical steps to reduce the carbon emissions of your activities, including reducing energy consumption and the use of fossil fuels.
- | Build the business case for improved practices, and identify potential incentives to encourage better practice among key suppliers.
- | Support tropical forest monitoring and research programs.
- | Support national, regional and local policies and strategies to limit carbon emissions.
- | Donate money to forest conservation projects, which provide the triple benefits of climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation and generation of sustainable livelihoods.
- | Educate visitors about the effects of climate change on tropical forests and related recreational activities.
- | Support the creation of new protected areas and the improvement of conservation strategies and policies to combat the effects of climate change.
- | Support reforestation and restoration projects in degraded areas.

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

Tropical Nature Travel offers itineraries for individuals and groups to the tropical forests of South and Central America. The company, which has a specific focus on fighting global warming, has partnered with NativeEnergy Travel Offsets to give their clients the option to offset the carbon impacts of their travels.

In 2007 *Natural Habitat Adventures* became the world's first carbon-neutral travel company by calculating the greenhouse gas emissions for each trip they run plus their office operations, and then paying Sustainable Travel International to invest in sustainable energy projects in developing countries. These projects include replacing diesel-powered generators with solar generators in Costa Rica; installing methane capturing mechanisms in sewage treatment plants in South Africa; and replacing coal burning ovens with solar ovens in Ethiopia. The company has also reduced emissions through decreased vehicular travel, utilizing long-lasting light bulbs and providing reusable water bottles.

GOOD PRACTICES FOR SPECIFIC TOUR ACTIVITIES



HIKING, NATURE WALKS AND CAMPING

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Most tours through tropical forest areas will involve taking visitors for a walk, hike or trek as a means of experiencing the flora, fauna and landscape of the tropical forest environment. The equipment and provisions needed on these walks will vary depending on:

- | the duration of the walk (minutes, hours, days) and whether overnight camping that would require tents and cooking equipment is involved;
- | the weather and the predictability of the weather (e.g. how hot, wet or stormy it is, or is expected to be);
- | the environmental conditions (e.g. the existence of flooded or extremely boggy areas); and
- | what facilities (toilets, food, water) are available along the route.

As a general rule, impacts will increase with larger numbers of visitors and with repeated use of the same areas and routes. Tropical forests often have fragile soils and, in steep terrain, they are very susceptible to erosion and compaction, for example from campsite clearing or constant pedestrian traffic. Erosion affects the ability of native vegetation to regenerate and can result in sedimentation in local waterways, decreasing water quality.

Tourist activities can also affect the health and composition of local vegetation, which provides an important food source for native wildlife and protection and habitat for breeding. Vegetation can also be affected as visitors remove plants, break off flowers or fruits, take souvenirs, collect firewood, and clear areas for campsites or new tracks. The introduction of exotic species and diseases from seeds and spores carried in on equipment, footwear and clothing can disrupt the natural food chain and threaten the survival of local species of plants and animals. Wildfires from smoking and campfires can also threaten the health of wildlife, habitat and local community settlements.

Pollution from trash generated by food consumption, packaging and equipment, human waste, and chemicals used in cleaning products can contaminate waterways. Clean and free-flowing rivers, creeks and waterholes are critical in supporting wildlife and vegetation. Trash decreases the attractiveness of an area, and wildlife can be injured if they eat or become entrapped by it.



WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- | Conserving the quality of the natural tropical forest environment will help maintain the future viability of tourism businesses in the area.
- | Polluted and damaged tropical forest environments will be less attractive to tourists, leading to a reduction in visitors, and, in turn, income, employment and local community benefits.
- | Habitat degradation or conversion, pollution, and the introduction of exotic species can reduce wildlife populations in an area, thus decreasing visitor sightings and affecting one of the principal tourism values of tropical forests for visitors.
- | Demonstrating good practice will make your business more attractive to visitors, and increase respect among local communities who may value tropical forest resources as part of their traditional culture and heritage.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- | Improve your knowledge.
 - Talk to tropical forest area managers, conservation groups, researchers or other professionals to find out more about the tropical forest in which you conduct your tours.
 - Identify sensitive sites and species and their resilience to human activities to help you plan your tour. Small changes in the routes you use, how often you use them, the duration of activities, the key natural sites you visit or the camping sites you use could help to avoid irreversible damage and allow natural areas to regenerate after use.
- | Inform and manage customers. Make customers aware of how they can help protect tropical forest areas (e.g. stay on trails, use equipment appropriately, avoid smoking, carry all waste out) to help prevent accidents and avoid damage to the environment.
- | Limit the number of customers per guide to 10 or below to provide a better experience for visitors, decrease impacts and make the groups more manageable.
- | Use established tracks and sites wherever possible when choosing routes and campsites.
 - Avoid clearing new areas or tracks, to minimize erosion, habitat clearing and trampling on vegetation.
 - If there are a few key routes and sites, rotate the ones used to help allow areas to recover and not put too much pressure on any one area. This can be particularly important where there are no sealed or graveled tracks or boardwalks.
- | Retain canopy cover in camping areas and day-use areas, as well as along walking tracks

and forestry roads. This reduces dispersal of weeds and non-native species, edge effects, soil erosion and nutrient loss. Healthy canopy cover also provides shade and shelter for camping and rest areas.

- | Avoid highly sensitive sites when choosing routes and campsites.
 - Stay away from breeding grounds (which may be seasonal), areas with extremely wet or soft ground, and areas where vulnerable or sensitive species exist.
 - Avoid camping less than 30m from water bodies, to help prevent erosion, pollution and damage to habitats.
- | Remove all waste.
 - Adopt a policy of carrying out all trash and waste where possible.
 - Avoid over-packaged goods and disposable items.
 - Purchase in bulk and use recyclable containers where possible.
- | Use batteries and fuel stoves, which are more energy-efficient.
- | Avoid open fires and smoking to reduce accidental fires and scarring of the landscape.
- | Keep waste and chemicals away from natural water bodies.
 - If permanent toilets are not available, portable chemical toilets are a preferable option. Where this is not possible, bury human waste at least 15cm deep and 100m from water sources or campsites.
 - Avoid the use of soaps, detergents and toothpaste near or in freshwater.
- | Clean all equipment and boots before entering tropical forest areas to avoid chemicals entering waterways and exotic seeds and diseases entering the local ecosystem.

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

FreeWay, a Brazilian tour operator, was founded in 1983 to introduce the people of São Paulo to the natural beauty of their country. Beginning with one-day hikes through the Atlantic Forest, the company now offers multi-day tours to natural destinations throughout Brazil. As part of its commitment to responsible travel, FreeWay limits the size of its tour groups to minimize impacts, requires groups to stay on trails when hiking and take rests only in sound areas such as rocks, sand or dry vegetation, and calls for all garbage produced on the tour to be carried back out of the forest. In addition, visitors are asked not to touch rock formations, or to gather plants, archaeological objects, shells or other natural products.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Archaeological tours involve excursions to cultural or archaeological sites. On some tours, visitors may simply view artifacts, ruins and research sites, while on others, they may get involved in hands-on excavation and field activities.

Archaeological sites are part of the cultural heritage of an area and may have historic, social, scientific and/or religious importance. Through scientific investigation, these areas may provide important insight into a region's history, social development, culture, art and architecture. These sites may also provide tourism and education opportunities through the presentation and interpretation of the area. However, archaeological tourism is relatively new, and not all areas visited by tourists have appropriate infrastructure in place to help conserve the sites. In addition, standards regarding site access, interaction and methods of presentation vary significantly in terms of which local communities are consulted about what is appropriate and the extent to which physical impacts are managed.

Archaeological sites can be particularly sensitive and susceptible to erosion and destabilization, and valuable remains and artifacts can be easily destroyed through poorly planned and managed excavation activities. Once exposed, these areas are also susceptible to disruption and damage from exposure to wind, water, sand flows, micro-organisms, flora and fauna. For these reasons, modern archaeologists use a range of less invasive investigation methods wherever possible to try to conserve remains.

Like cave environments, many archaeological sites are particularly sensitive to small changes in temperature and humidity that can be caused by continuous exposure to human exhalation, perspiration and body heat. The acids in our skin can also cause irreversible damage to paintings, structures, artifacts and materials.

Finally, any findings at archaeological excavations or digs are an important part of the cultural heritage of an area and can easily be lost or taken as souvenirs if tourist access and activity is not closely managed.



WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- | Archaeological sites are valuable and unique tourism attractions. If well-managed and conserved, these sites can provide historical, scientific and cultural points of interest that can be incorporated into tours. However, unsustainable, poorly planned and badly managed tourist activities will quickly destroy the value of these sites.
- | When sites are damaged or eroded, opportunities for tourists to see ongoing presentation and interpretation, or to participate in specialized archaeological activities will also be lost, diminishing the value of the area as a tourist asset and affecting associated tourism revenue and local employment generated.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- | Consult and work with local stakeholders, including communities, landowners, government agencies, research organizations and cultural heritage professionals, when planning to incorporate archaeological sites into your tour. A cooperative approach to developing the tourism potential of these areas while minimizing damage will benefit all stakeholders. Identify:
 - Appropriate areas for visitors to access and appropriate tour group sizes; and
 - Appropriate visitor activities and the kind of involvement in research, scientific investigation or excavation that will not damage the site and may be incorporated into tour activities.
- | Abide by established restrictions where they exist and communicate them to visitors.
- | Establish codes of conduct for your tour and communicate these to visitors, including:
 - things that should not be touched or photographed;
 - areas where walking or climbing should not occur;
 - areas where digging should not occur;
 - wearing appropriate footwear with soft soles to avoid damage to stones and mosaics;
 - being wary of brushing against walls or other items with backpacks;
 - not drawing or writing on structures;
 - not purchasing illegal artworks and souvenirs of unknown origin;
 - not taking pieces of structures or artifacts as souvenirs (e.g. from mosaics); and
 - respecting the area by avoiding noise pollution from shouting, radios and phones.

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

Programme for Belize (Pfb) provides tours to La Milpa, the third-largest archaeological site in Belize, which also serves as the research base for the many archaeological sites found in the Rio Bravo Reserve. Pfb's naturalists, scientists and service personnel provide visitors with an informative, yet low impact, experience throughout the reserve. Pfb promotes environmental awareness, education and interpretation throughout the Rio Bravo tours. All profits from Pfb's tourism operations are redirected toward conservation in Rio Bravo.



LAND-BASED ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

The land-based adventure activities that may form part of a tropical forest-based tour include cycling, mountain biking, horseback riding and, less often, rock climbing and caving. Visitors may choose to participate in these activities just to do something different or as part of an ongoing hobby. The range of experience and ability of participants who engage in these activities may vary significantly in any given group, from the complete novice to more experienced individuals.

The environmental impacts of adventure activities can be more severe than those from hiking and walking, because of the repeated and heavy use of equipment on the landscape. Wheels, hooves, ropes and hooks can all cause significant damage to the landscapes, creek beds, vegetation, rock and cave formations on which they are used, particularly if the equipment is of a poor standard or used incorrectly or inappropriately.

Cycling, mountain biking and horseback riding can lead to erosion, soil compaction and vegetation destruction, as well as the introduction and transfer of weeds and other foreign micro-organisms. Horses, for example, can retain weed seeds in their gut for up to 14 days and these can then germinate in manure. The alteration of landscapes from repeated, sustained and intense use of the same areas can affect drainage and water flows, and lead to a gradual loss of habitat through trampling, grazing and the widening of tracks. Chemicals used for cleaning and maintenance can also pollute local waterways, as can animal waste.

Caving occurs in a highly sensitive environment. The natural processes by which cave rock formations develop, the rock formations themselves, and the animals and plants that have adapted and live in these environments are particularly sensitive to changes in temperature, humidity and light, as well as to the acidity of human skin. Many of these formations are easily broken or disfigured by handling, walking or climbing. Repeated use of ropes, hooks and bolts can also damage both the appearance and stability of the formations. Waste, trash and the introduction of foreign organisms can also easily pollute and unbalance these delicate ecosystems.

Rock-climbing equipment marks rock faces with chalk and holes and often wears away and chips the rock face. With repeated use, mosses and other organisms in these micro ecosystems are often cleared or worn away over time. Unmanaged climbing can degrade the appearance and attractiveness of these areas as well as their appeal as high-quality adventure destinations.



Adventure activities also carry a higher risk of visitor injury, due to sometimes harsh environmental conditions, levels of physical exertion and dependence on equipment. It is therefore important that safety information and procedures are effectively implemented and appropriate safety equipment used to maintain the safety of visitors and the reputation of the tour operator.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- | Conserving the quality of the unique landscapes, caves and rock-face environments that attract visitors interested in adventure activities to tropical forests, as well as those just interested in experiencing a diversity of natural environments, can help maintain the viability of the area as a tourism destination.
- | Protecting visitor health and safety enhances the professionalism of your tour product and maintains the reputation of both your company and destination.
- | Ensuring sustainable use of these areas over the long term will help support current and future operators in developing and diversifying tour products and packages, thus increasing the attractiveness of the overall destination.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- | Improve your knowledge by talking to local tropical forest area managers or conservation groups to help identify sensitive sites and increase your understanding of the resilience and ability of sites to regenerate under the pressure of particular adventure activities. Consider sites or routes for adventure activities that avoid these sensitive areas. Understand the relationship between particular activities and the tropical forest sites in which they take place.
- | Stay on designated tracks/roads where possible when traveling on horseback or by bike and keep to the middle of these tracks to avoid erosion, trampling of vegetation and ever-widening tracks.
 - In general, keep to the highest and driest ground, which is the most stable, and cross creeks and rivers at designated crossings at 90 degrees to the bank to help minimize erosion and landscape damage.
 - Use only existing tracks to access cliffs for rock climbing or caves and be aware of avoiding any geological and cultural areas of significance.
 - Keep to designated routes when in caves in particular, as contact with cave formations can quickly deteriorate these structures. Paths should not block natural water flows, and structures should be built to protect sensitive cave formations.

- Select and rotate tour routes and sites where adventure activities take place to minimize the intensity and impacts of use.
- | Keep animals clean. Keep horse coats, tails, hooves and manes free from seeds and plant materials, and collect and remove any animal waste. Deliver feed through a nose bag. Commercial grain and processed feeds such as pellets are the best option and animals need to be on this diet before the trip.
- | Keep animals controlled.
- Water animals by trough or bucket to avoid erosion on creek and river banks.
 - Pen horses at least 30 meters (98ft) from the nearest water body and in an area at least 15sqm (161sqft) per animal.
 - Use a portable fence or designated tie up facility where available. Avoid wire fences as they cause damage to trees and animals. Portable low voltage electric fences are preferred and, in such cases, electric fence warning signs should be prominently displayed.
 - Use soft ties when tethering to natural anchors, though tethering should be avoided with horses that paw the ground as this can clear the ground area around tethering points very quickly.
- | Avoid intensive or constant use of particular areas.
- Where there are no designated tracks or roads, try to avoid intensive use of the one area or route by spreading out over the area and/or using different routes on different days.
 - When rock climbing, repeated or intensive use of the same areas can remove mosses and other life on rock face areas, so rotating the use of areas and keeping group numbers small (five-15 people) can help minimize impacts.
- | Keep equipment clean and remove all waste.
- Clean boots and equipment of dirt, lint, chemicals, seeds and plant materials when entering tropical forest areas, particularly sensitive sites such as cave environments.
 - Ensure trash and chemicals are not brought into sensitive environments and any food or other waste is collected and removed.
 - Use only dry composting or package sewage system toilets near sensitive areas such as caves.
 - Camp at least 100m from cave entrances and water flows.
 - Ensure access to high-quality equipment and encourage good practice use of this equipment
- | Avoid handling and removal of animals, vegetation or rock structures which, over time, can

- damage sensitive tropical forest ecosystems (particularly those in cave environments and rocky areas). This can detract from the overall attractiveness of landscape formations and in turn decrease the value of the tropical forest area to visitors.
- | Use equipment efficiently and appropriately to avoid damage to natural landscapes and features when rock climbing or caving.
- Minimize the use of chalk when rock climbing, as this can detract from the natural appearance and attractiveness of rock faces.
 - Avoid excessive use of fixed equipment and bolts (particularly galvanized) on all climbing areas as these can chip and wear away at rock formations.
 - When caving, use soft materials to cushion ropes and natural anchors, avoid bolts and over-use of cave marking materials and lights.
 - Strong lighting in caves encourages algae and other foreign species into the sensitive ecosystems and can be injurious to cave dwelling animals. Use battery-operated lights where possible.
 - Ensure appropriate standards of equipment are used to protect the health and safety of visitors and minimize environmental impact.
- | Inform, manage and protect visitors.
- Keep the number of customers per guide to 10 or less to limit the intensity of impacts and make it easier to monitor and manage their activities.
 - Provide pre-tour information on appropriate behaviors and keep visitors on defined, stabilized areas and routes to minimize impacts.
 - Discuss health and safety risks, emergency procedures and appropriate use of safety equipment specific to each type of activity and environment before beginning any activities.

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

Responsible Travel offers mountain biking tours throughout Costa Rica and other Latin American countries and works to minimize the impact of their tourism activities by restricting the size of groups, sticking to established dirt roads (jeep roads), and avoiding off-limits areas such as national parks or otherwise protected or wildlife-sensitive areas. Responsible Travel tours strive to patronize local business and service-providers wherever possible, particularly organic farmers and food producers. All bicycle tour members are asked to comply with a strict no-trash policy and are encouraged to collect any trash they may spot along their route.



FRESHWATER-BASED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Freshwater-based recreational activities, including river tours, canoeing, kayaking, tubing, rafting and freshwater fishing, may also form part of tropical forest tours. One or more of these activities may be incorporated into any one tour as a point of interest, or an entire tour can be created around one of these niche activity areas. Some visitors travel with the primary objective of participating in one or more of these recreational activities in different environments around the world, while others participate just to do something different. The skills required for each freshwater activity are different and the range of experience and ability of participants may also vary significantly in any given group of interested participants.

The conservation and health of a tropical forest environment is largely dependent on the maintenance of healthy freshwater systems. Local communities are also dependent on the maintenance of this resource. The use of motorized and non-motorized watercraft in freshwater bodies can pollute the water through oil and fuel spills, discharge of wastewater and sewage, or improper use of chemicals for cleaning or equipment maintenance. Polluted waterways may then become unsuitable for human use or for sustaining fish and animal populations. Erosion and vegetation clearing along riverbank landscapes can also easily result from the repeated transport, dragging and launching of watercraft and equipment. Nearby trees can become ringbarked or damaged from constant use as anchors. River beds, rock formations and water-based vegetation and habitats can also become damaged from anchors, paddles and collisions.

Freshwater-based tourist activities can also result in injuries or disturbance to wildlife if animals become entangled in or injured by litter, disused fishing equipment and tackle. Wildlife are at risk from collisions with craft, and increases in turbidity from constant paddling or propellers can also be a hazard to wildlife. Noise from motorized watercraft can disrupt feeding, breeding and nesting patterns, diminishing the populations of native species. Populations of native flora and fauna may decrease from the introduction of alien micro-organisms that cause diseases, or exotic plant or animal species that prey upon or compete with native species. Unmanaged fishing and over-fishing can lead to declining native fish stocks and poor fishing experiences for both local people and visitors.

Visitor injuries can also occur as a result of inappropriate use of watercraft and equipment,



a lack of experience in navigating water bodies, poor swimming skills or health problems, or encounters with poisonous or dangerous water-dwelling species.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- | Conserving the natural environment retains the elements of uniqueness and naturalness that make it attractive to visitors, thus contributing to a quality experience for visitors and facilitating ongoing success for nature-based tour businesses.
- | Pristine freshwater bodies are important for protecting the health and stocks of fish and other water-dwelling animals as well as providing a clean water source for local wildlife and communities.
- | Clean environments and healthy vegetated landscapes, plentiful fish stocks and the presence of unique and native wildlife add to the value of the experience for visitors. Providing a good visitor experience will encourage repeat visitation and good reports to friends and family regarding the destination and tour.
- | Protecting visitor health and safety enhances the professionalism of a tour and maintains the reputation of the operator and the destination.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- | Improve your knowledge by talking to tropical forest area managers and local conservation groups to help identify sensitive sites such as breeding or nesting grounds in rivers and creeks and along banks. Avoid these areas when porting, launching, anchoring or mooring watercraft and when choosing sites to come ashore.
- | Be considerate around wildlife.
 - Be aware of the presence, general locations and common travel routes of large animals likely to be using or navigating the river. Keeping watercraft speeds to a minimum and staying clear of these routes will help to avoid injury from watercraft collisions and disturbance to natural behaviors, breeding and nesting.
- | Encourage sustainable and humane fishing practices.
 - Be aware of and follow any regulations on maximum fish catch and minimum size regulations, as well as seasonal closures or zoning restrictions.
 - Use appropriate tackle and native bait and limit catch sizes to immediate need.
 - Avoid catching threatened and endangered species.

- Use catch and release systems using artificial baits with barbless hooks. **Minimum** handling and the use of wet hands will maximize the chance of survival for returned fish.
- | Choose anchoring and mooring locations carefully.
 - Anchor in muddy environments and avoid anchor dragging.
 - Use soft wraps when tying to trees and use or install mooring rings or pylons wherever possible.
 - Avoid damage to vegetation and banks when unloading, launching and coming ashore.
- | Keep watercraft engines clean; avoid any discharge of trash and pollution.
 - Keep non-motorized watercraft and equipment clean of dirt, seeds, moss and algae to help prevent water pollution.
 - Clean and maintain crafts away from water bodies and with a minimum use of chemicals.
 - Use four-stroke or electric engines.
 - Avoid disposing of wastewater, sewage, trash, food stuffs, fishing line and tackle into freshwater bodies.
- | Inform, manage and protect visitors.
 - Keep the number of non-motorized watercraft to eight or less and the number of customers per guide to 15 or less to limit the intensity of impacts and make it easier to monitor and manage their activities.
 - Provide pre-tour information on appropriate behaviors and keep visitors on defined, stabilized areas and routes to assist in minimizing impacts.
 - Discuss health and safety risks, emergency procedures and appropriate use of safety equipment specific to each type of activity and environment before beginning any activity.
 - Ensure that the required safety equipment is available and well-maintained.

GOOD PRACTICE IN ACTION

The **Hamanasi Adventure and Dive Resort**, located on 21 acres of rare coastal forest in Belize, offers its visitors an opportunity to venture inland on jungle river canoeing and kayaking tours, to view wildlife including green and orange iguanas, parrots, toucans, herons and egrets, as well as stingrays, manatee and crocodiles. The tours begin near the Creole village of Sittee River and end in a large mangrove forest near the sea. Hamanasi was selected as an environmental leader in the hotel industry in Belize to participate in a pilot Environmental Walk-Through program to promote good practices among their staff and guests, such as reducing water and energy consumption, minimizing trash generation, and improving waste and water treatment.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

CONSERVATION GUIDELINES AND CONVENTIONS

Biological Diversity and Tourism

CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism development

<http://www.cbd.int/programmes/socio-eco/tourism/guidelines.asp>

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

<http://www.cites.org>

Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management

http://www.unep.fr/pc/tourism/library/sust_prot_areas.htm

The World Conservation Union

<http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/pubs/guidelines.htm>

A Practical Guide to Good Practice: Managing Environmental and Social Issues in the Accommodations Sector

<http://www.celb.org/xp/CELB/publications-resources/>

A Practical Guide to Good Practice: Managing Environmental Impacts in the Marine Recreation Sector and Self-Assessment Checklist

<http://www.celb.org/xp/CELB/publications-resources/>

A Practical Guide to Managing the Environmental and Social Impacts of Mountain Tours

http://www.ecotour.org/xp/ecotour/resources/publications_factsheets.xml

A Practical Guide to Managing the Environmental and Social Impacts of the Desert Recreation Sector

http://www.unep.org/publications/search/title_search.asp?search=Tourism+and+Deserts

EXAMPLES OF OPERATORS DEMONSTRATING GOOD PRACTICES

Adventure Travel Trade Association

<http://www.adventuretravel.biz/default.asp>

Rainforest Alliance

http://www.rainforestalliance.org/programs/tourism/certification/tourism_practices_guide.pdf

Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development

http://www.toinitiative.org/good_practices/case_studies.htm

World Travel and Tourism Corporation Tourism for Tomorrow Awards

<http://www.tourismfortomorrow.com/>

USING HORSES

Australian guidelines for using horses

<http://www.australianalps.deh.gov.au/publications/codes/horsecode.html>

United States guidelines

<http://www.nps.gov/olymp/wic/stock.htm>

TROPICAL FOREST CONSERVATION

Amazon Conservation Team

<http://www.amazonteam.org/>

Association Promoting Education and Conservation in Amazonia

<http://www.apecaperu.org/>

Ceiba Foundation for Tropical Conservation (American Tropics)

<http://www.ceiba.org/>

Center for Environmental Leadership in Business

<http://www.celb.org>

Conservation International

<http://www.conservation.org>

Mongabay (features rainforest information and news)

<http://www.mongabay.com/home.htm>

Rainforest Action Network

<http://www.ran.org/>

Rainforest Alliance

<http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/>

Rainforest CRC (Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management)

<http://www.rainforest-crc.jcu.edu.au/>

Rainforest Foundation

<http://www.rainforestfoundation.org/>

Wet Tropics Management Authority

<http://www.wettropics.gov.au/>

World Rainforest Movement

<http://www.wrm.org.uy/>

ARCHAEOLOGY AND TOURISM

ICOMOS (International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism)

<http://www.icomos.org>

ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property)

<http://www.iccrom.org>

Francis P McManamon Linking Archaeology and Tourism

http://www.international.icomos.org/publications/93sy_tou16.pdf

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Guidelines to good practice in other business areas, such as choosing responsible suppliers, responsible marketing, staff training and labor practices can be found in the following publications:

Integrating Sustainability into Business—A Management Guide for Responsible Tour Operations

Tour Operators Initiative and United Nations Environment Program (2005)

Integrating Sustainability into Business—A Management Guide for Responsible Tour Operations

http://www.unep.org/publications/search/title_search.asp?search=Integrating+Sustainability+into+Business

MARKETING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRODUCTS (2005)

United Nations Environment Program and Regione Toscana (2005) Marketing Sustainable Tourism Products

<http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/library/marketing-sustainable-tourism.htm>



ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

UNEP, established in 1972, is the voice for the environment within the United Nations system. UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and sustainable development of the global environment. UNEP provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UNEP works with a wide range of partners, including United Nations entities, international organizations, national governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society.

<http://www.unep.org>



CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL

ABOUT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

CI believes that the Earth's natural heritage must be maintained if future generations are to thrive spiritually, culturally and economically. Our mission is to conserve the Earth's living natural heritage, our global biodiversity, and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature. Founded in 1987, CI is a global non-profit organization, working in more than 30 countries on four continents. Practical and people-centered, we draw upon a unique array of scientific, economic, awareness-building and policy tools to help inhabitants of the Earth's biologically richest ecosystems improve the quality of their lives without depleting natural resources.

www.conservation.org



ABOUT RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior. Rainforest Alliance works with people whose livelihoods depend on the land, helping them transform the way they grow food, harvest wood and host travelers. From large multinational corporations to small, community-based cooperatives, we involve businesses and consumers worldwide in our efforts to bring responsibly produced goods and services to a global marketplace where the demand for sustainability is growing steadily.

<http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/>

