

**Sustainable Tourism in Natural Areas
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**The Development of Sustainable Tourism in
Natural Areas in North America:
Background, Issues and Opportunities**

DISCUSSION PAPER

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This document is made available as a Discussion Paper to support a consultative workshop. The opinions expressed and the arguments employed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation or the CEC Member countries.

The Development of Sustainable Tourism in Natural Areas in North America: Background, Issues and Opportunities

Contents

Foreword
Executive Summary

List of Acronyms
List of Boxes
List of Figures
List of Tables

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1 DEFINITIONS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Defining Sustainable Tourism and Ecotourism – the evolution of theory
- 1.2 The Public Sector and Working Definitions of Ecotourism
- 1.3 Ecotourist Profiles
- 1.4 Demand for Ecotourism
 - 1.4.1 Trends in the Global Tourism Industry
 - 1.4.2 Evaluating Tourism Trends in the Ecotourism Industry
 - 1.4.3 Measuring Market Demand
- 1.5 Natural and Cultural Resources of North America
 - 1.5.1 Natural Resources
 - 1.5.2 Cultural Resources
 - 1.5.3 Ecotourism Assets: A Framework for Planning and Analysis
- 1.6 Impacts of Tourism Development in Natural Areas: Economic, Sociocultural and Ecological
- 1.7 Some Key Issues

CHAPTER 2 ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK: ACTORS, APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN NORTH AMERICA

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Actors Related to Sustainable Tourism
 - 2.2.1 International Organizations
 - 2.2.2 Federal Government Organizations
 - 2.2.3 Nongovernmental Organizations
 - 2.2.4 Academic Institutions
 - 2.2.5 The Private Sector

- 2.3 Approaches and Activities Related to Sustainable Tourism in North America
 - 2.3.1 Conservation Approach and Activities
 - 2.3.2 Marketing and Product Development Approach and Activities
- 2.4 Some Key Issues

CHAPTER 3
POLICY/REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: TOOLS FOR
IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

- 3.1 Legal Tools and Incentives: Canada, Mexico and the United States
 - 3.1.1 Land Planning and Zoning
 - 3.1.2 Water, Time and Distance Zoning
 - 3.1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment
 - 3.1.4 Other Environmental Standards and Programs
 - 3.1.5 International Commitments shared by Canada, Mexico and the United States
- 3.2 Voluntary Tools: Incentives and Guidelines
 - 3.2.1 Incentives
 - 3.2.2 Guidelines
 - 3.2.3 Management Tools
- 3.3 Some Key Issues

- APPENDIX 1 International Organizations
- APPENDIX 2 Governmental Organizations
- APPENDIX 3 Nongovernmental Organizations

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Foreword

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is the only regional environmental organization that has its roots in expanded economic integration brought about by a trade liberalization agreement. It is thus in a natural and privileged position to advance the understanding of the relationship between the environment, the economy and trade. In order to promote cooperation between the Parties to establish an integrative approach to the protection of the environment and economic development, the CEC is implementing an extensive program under the heading of Environment, Economy and Trade.

Work in this area furthers a number of the key objectives of the North American Agreement for Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). Among these is the objective to foster the protection and improvement of the environment in North America for the well-being of present and future generations, and to promote sustainable development based on cooperation and mutually supportive environmental and economic policies. The NAAEC also seeks to increase cooperation between the Parties to better conserve, protect and enhance the environment, including wild flora and fauna. A large part of the CEC's Environment, Economy and Trade program focuses on promoting healthy environment, economy and trade relationships. Such projects demonstrate the ability of the CEC to address the environment, economy and trade relationship in a way that is constructive for trade liberalization, economic growth and environmental protection (CEC 1998, 30).

Under Article 10(2) of the NAAEC, the CEC's Council may consider and develop recommendations regarding a number of key issues that are of relevance to the North American environment and economy, many of which will be incorporated into an examination of sustainable tourism in natural areas. This project on sustainable tourism in natural areas is an opportunity for Canada, Mexico and the United States to develop avenues for cooperation, and perhaps even a common framework, for the promotion of sustainable development through nature-based tourism. Underlying the economic benefits of development is a joint commitment to the protection of the ecosystems that attract tourists to natural areas.

The project will be conducted over three phases beginning in 1998. This discussion document represents a key component of the first phase—scoping. It is the product of a number of months of research and analysis undertaken by a number of individuals in North America. It is designed to assess, in a preliminary way, the current status of ecotourism and sustainable tourism in North America and to identify key issues related to sustainable tourism in natural areas including, *inter alia*, such issues as:

- A consideration of definitions of sustainable tourism and ecotourism;
- A discussion of best practices;
- A consideration of lessons learned from past initiatives;
- A discussion of the role of local communities in use and management of protected areas; and,
- An examination of some of the economic benefits derived from sustainable tourism.

This workshop is an important second step in the scoping exercise. It is an opportunity for relevant stakeholders in North America to work with the CEC to identify key priorities for work

on these issues in North America in order to help the CEC develop its agenda in this area for the next three years. It is hoped that this discussion paper will stimulate discussion on some of the critical issues associated with sustainable tourism in North America and can contribute to future work over the next three years to develop and implement practical mechanisms to support sustainable tourism in natural areas.

The CEC is indebted to the individuals in the three countries who have contributed to this discussion paper including Dominique Brief from the Alliance for Environmental Management, Hector Ceballos-Lascuráin, Director General of the Program of International Consultancy on Ecotourism in Mexico, Anne Drost, an adjunct professor of Law at McGill University, John Hull, a research fellow at the Québec-Labrador Foundation, Mark Spalding, Professor at the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies at the University of California, San Diego and Carolyn Wild, President of WILD International. Professor Spalding would also like to acknowledge the research assistance of Ariana Merlino and Marta Burg. In addition, there are a range of individuals from organizations and government who have made themselves available to members of the research team and have provided valuable information.

This document is designed to highlight some key issues and serve as a background document and a starting point for discussion at a consultative workshop. It is not, nor is it intended to be, a comprehensive compilation of all activity in North America related to ecotourism. We expect the dialogue at the workshop to complement and enhance this work. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the governments of Canada, Mexico or the United States.

Sarah Richardson
Program Manager, NAFTA/Environment
March 1999

Executive Summary

This discussion document is divided into three chapters corresponding roughly to the stages of development in the tourism industry: diagnosis, planning, implementation and management. Chapter one explores the diagnosis of the industry by providing definitions and context. Chapter two considers issues of planning, implementation and management. Chapter three explores the policy and regulatory framework relevant to issues of sustainable tourism.

The following issues have been identified in this background document as some of the key issues relevant to a discussion of sustainable tourism in natural areas.

DEFINITIONS AND CONTEXT

- Sustainable tourism is defined, in theory, as tourism development that minimizes its negative impacts and maximizes its positive impacts on the sociocultural and ecological environment through planning and management.
- Ecotourism is a niche market within sustainable tourism. It is sustainable tourism to natural areas and there are numerous definitions of ecotourism that are attempting to translate theory into practice.
- Tours can be ecologically-based but not ecologically sound.
- A clearer understanding of sustainable nature tourism is emerging in the mid-1990's due to more formalized accreditation programs.
- Canada, Mexico and the United States have different working definitions of the term ecotourism both within and among the countries.
- Surveys of ecotourist profiles in Latin America, Canada, and the United States found that on average, an ecotourist tends to be older with a graduate degree, have a high level of disposable income, and enjoys travelling with family or friends.
- Conservation of the cultural and natural resources is a key factor to continue attracting nature-oriented visitors.
- Popularity of guidebooks suggests that tourists are actively selecting companies that have a genuine interest in protecting the natural and cultural environment.
- Accurate data on ecotourism is difficult to find due to varying definitions of the term, non site-specific census methods and a lack of relevant studies.
- Trends indicate conventional tourism has risen over the past decade and continues to do so. They also suggest a diversification and increase of tourism into alternative and specialized activities such as ecotourism, birdwatching, hiking, canoeing, visiting natural settings and interesting cultures.
- Key North American natural and cultural tourism assets include ecological regions and landscapes, fauna and flora, protected spaces and species, cultural populations, sites and artifacts.
- Ecotourism creates economic, sociocultural and ecological impacts. These impacts may enhance the economic, sociocultural or ecological environment, hence creating positive impact, or they can detract from these issues creating negative impacts.
- While tourism is considered by some as a stable source of income, research has shown that market fluctuations and financial leakage can drastically reduce the positive aspects of tourism development creating very insecure employment.

- Participation by the local community is key to the long-term viability of tourism.
- Increased tourism is believed by some local residents to increase existing social problems including crime, use of drugs, prostitution and in particular child prostitution. Other social concerns include erosion of local culture, conflict between generations, loss of local language, and diminishing the quality of cultural artifacts.
- History has proven that if tourism is not properly planned and managed and exceeds the limits of the area, its carrying capacity, the industry is transformed from a non-consumptive renewable resource venture into a short term “boom and bust” enterprise.
- Ecotourism is often developed in relatively remote wilderness areas. These areas can be in or near residential communities. As a result, ecotourism development may have specific economic and sociocultural impacts on these communities.
- Successful ecotourism management minimizes its negative impacts and maximizes its positive ecological, sociocultural and economic impacts.
- Those promoting tourism and those promoting nature conservation can exist in three types of a relationship: conflict, coexistence or symbiosis. A symbiotic relationship, where both those promoting tourism and those promoting nature conservation benefit is the ultimate goal.

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK: ACTORS, APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN NORTH AMERICA

- Tourists visiting North America may design their trip according to ecological features and not according to political boundaries. This presents an opportunity for collaboration among Canada, Mexico and the United States to market North America as a destination.
- There are a number of local, international and national organizations, government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and private sector initiatives involved in sustainable tourism development in North America.
- Partnerships among sustainable tourism actors are emerging in North America to conserve the natural resources or features of the local community, to identify common areas of interest and possible collaboration, and for marketing and product development.
- There is often a lack of distinction between sustainable and unsustainable tourism. Accreditation might help consumers distinguish between the two.

POLICY/REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

- Managing the development of tourism entails the adoption of planning strategies and guidelines to control and mitigate the negative impacts of tourism without sacrificing its benefits.
- Legal tools such as local zoning and development norms respecting such features as siting, height, setbacks and density of construction can permit ecotourism development in accordance with the goals of natural and cultural resource conservation.
- Governments at the regional, state/provincial and national levels play an important role in ecotourism planning to ensure consistency among local standards and in the siting of major infrastructure and in establishing protected areas.

- Ecological zoning, water and distance zoning are relatively new and particularly useful tools in the context of ecotourism planning. A study and sharing of the experiences in the application of such tools across North America would serve as a guide for local communities.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is another important tool in the context of tourism development to measure and mitigate against negative impacts that a project may have on the environment. Government agencies studying tourism projects in the context of an EIA should be aware of ecotourism approaches as viable and favorable alternatives to traditional, mass tourism.
- The legal framework for the creation and management of national and state/provincial parks and protected areas in Canada, Mexico and the United States, along with legislation protecting marine resources are also part of the legal tool-kit for ecotourism development available in these countries.
- The goals of many of the international conventions signed by Canada, Mexico and the United States support ecotourism as they are aimed at protecting the natural and cultural resources upon which ecotourism depends. The Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Treaty, the World Heritage Convention, CITES, Man and the Biosphere Program, the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 are examples of international conventions which promote ecotourism as a strategy for conserving ecosystems and natural and cultural resources while permitting local economies to develop.
- State/provincial and national governments may create a positive economic and political climate for ecotourism development in North America through the adoption of incentive programs. For example, tax deductions and exemptions for the creation of conservation easements on private property and the donation of land to governments or NGOs as parks and protected areas, have proved to be valuable incentives for the voluntary conservation of ecotourism assets.
- Another incentive program involves the recognition of best practices with awards and honorary mentions. At various levels of government, a combination of monetary and non-monetary awards could be given in public recognition of successful efforts to preserve ecosystems, habitats, and the species within them.
- Some of the costs of developing and maintaining protected areas and ecotourism facilities can be recovered through mechanisms to capture revenue such as user fees. User fees may take the form of entrance fees to parks, museums and wildlife reserves or through such programs as hotel and visitor taxes.
- Voluntary codes of ethics are non-legally binding principles and guidelines that have received international recognition as important tools in environmental preservation. Tourism codes of ethics are generally part of an overall package that also includes certain mandatory regulations to properly control and manage tourism development. State and local governments, international and regional tourism groups, and environmental organizations are the primary initiators of codes of conduct targeting industry, tourists, and host communities. Codes are typically cast in terms of large principles and objectives, but may also be specifically directed to a site or an activity. Codes may also be addressed generally to tourists, to the tourism industry (e.g., hotel owners and tour operators), and to the host community.
- Intersectoral collaboration is an effective method for incorporating the various economic, ecological and sociocultural interests implicated in the sustainable tourism management process.

- Public participation is a widely supported approach that can help achieve ecotourism objectives by increasing benefits to local communities. This in turn can increase the communities' endorsement of conservation efforts. In order to be successful and to allow the poorest members of the community to participate, the public participation process must recognize the local sociopolitical structure and address the costs involved for the participants.
- North America has the opportunity to collaborate in the harmonization of definitions and policies regarding public participation in the decision-making process.
- An effective technique to resolving conflicts over resource use is environmental dispute resolution. The use of mediation and consensus-building in ecotourism planning and establishing regulations and voluntary conservation guidelines can greatly improve the implementation of such mechanisms.
- Indicators are tools that promote effective and successful project management. When properly developed, they provide information to decision-makers, promote understanding of relevant issues, allow timely intervention and enable informed decision-making.

List of Acronyms

Alcadedco	Alternative Training and Community Development (Mexico)
Amtave	Asociación Mexicana de Turismo de Aventura y Ecoturismo, A.C. (Mexican Association of Adventure Travel and Ecotourism)
ASK	Amigos de Sian Ka'an
ATTC	Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs (United States)
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
C	Canadian
CCFM	Canadian Council of Forest Ministers
CEAA	Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
CEC	Commission for Environmental Cooperation
CERF	Coastal Ecosystems Research Foundation
CI	Conservation International
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CINSDS	Canadian Interdepartmental Network on Sustainable Development
CITES	Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna
CNATA	Canadian National Aboriginal Tourism Association
Conabio	Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad (National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity)
Conaculta	Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (National Council for Culture and the Arts)
Conagua	Comisión Nacional del Agua (National Water Commission)
Conocer	Consejo Nacional de Normas y Certificación (National Council for Standards and Certification)
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development (United Nations)
CTC	Canadian Tourism Commission
CTHRC	Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council
CTX	Canadian Tourism Exchange
CUI	Canadian Urban Institute
CWS	Canadian Wildlife Service
DPT	Dirección General de Desarrollo de Producto Turístico (Directorate General for Tourism Product Development)
EBA	Endemic Bird Area
ECO	Ecosolar (Mexico)
EDR	Environmental Dispute Resolution
EDF	Environmental Defense Fund (United States)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (United States)
Fonatur	Fondo Nacional para el Fomento del Turismo (National Fund for Tourism Development)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GEF	Global Environmental Facility
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development projects
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDRC	International Development Research Center (Canada)
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
INAH	Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (National Institute of Anthropology and History)
INE	Instituto Nacional de Ecología (National Institute of Ecology)
INEGI	Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information Technology)
INI	Instituto Nacional Indigenista (National Institute of Indigenous People)
ISO	International Standards Organization
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature/The World Conservation Union
MAB	Man and Biosphere Program (UNESCO)
MBS	Migratory Bird Sanctuary
MOU	Memorandum Of Understanding
NAAEC	North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation
NAFEC	North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAICS	North American Classification System
NAS	National Audubon Society
NAWMP	North American Waterfowl Management Plan
NEPA	National Environment Policy Act
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce (United States)
NOM	Normas Oficiales Mexicanas (Official Mexican Standards)
NPS	National Park Services (United States)
NWA	National Wildlife Area (United States)
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
PRO	Pronatura (Mexico)
QLF	Quebec-Labrador Foundation
Renew	Recovery of Nationally Endangered Wildlife Species at Risk
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Science, Technical and Technological Advice
SC	Sierra Club
SCBD	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
SCT	Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes (Ministry of Communications and Transport)
Sectur	Secretaria de Turismo (Ministry of Tourism)
Sedesol	Secretaria de Desarrollo Social (Ministry of Social Development)
Semarnap	Secretaria de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca (Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries)

SEP	Secretaria de Educación Publica (Ministry of Public Education)
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
Sinap	Sistema Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas (National System of Natural Protected Areas)
SHCP	Secretaria de hacienda y Crédito Publico (Ministry of Finance and Public Credit)
STRING	Sustainable Tourism Research Interest Group
TES	The Ecotourism Society
TIA	Travel Industry Association of America (United States)
TIAC	Tourism Industry Association of Canada
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Commission on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA FS	United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USHUD	United States Housing and Urban Development
USNTO	United States National Tourism Office
USTDC	United States Travel Data Center
USTTA	United States Travel and Tourism Administration
WB	World Bank
WI	Wetlands International
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

List of Boxes

- Box 1.1 Federal Government Definitions of Ecotourism in North America
- Box 1.2 World Wildlife Fund 1988 Latin American Ecotourist Profile
- Box 1.3 HLA Canadian/US Survey Results
- Box 1.4 The Migratory Pacific Gray Whale
- Box 1.5 International Heritage Corridor Examples—Collaborating Across Borders
- Box 1.6 Ría Celestún Special Biosphere Reserve Yucatán, Mexico
- Box 1.7 Potential Costs and Benefits of Nature-based Tourism Development
- Box 1.8 Contribution of Tourism to the National Economies in North America
- Box 1.9 Selected National Tourism Employment Figures in North America
- Box 1.10 Potential Relationships between Tourism and the Environment
- Box 2.1 Product Development – Ecolodges
- Box 2.2 Wetlands International’s Shorebird Project: Linking Communities, Wetlands and Migratory Birds Across Three Countries
- Box 2.3 The Important Role of the Internet in Promoting Ecotours
- Box 3.1 GREEN GLOBE Certification
- Box 3.2 WTTC Environmental Guidelines
- Box 3.3 Charter for Sustainable Tourism Development – Tourism Concern
- Box 3.4 Sustainable Tourism Indicator Index

List of Figures

- Figure 1.1 Ecological Regions of North America
- Figure 3.1 Tourism Planning Pie Chart

List of Tables

Table 1.1	Canadian Ecotourists—Sociodemographic and Travel Attitude Profile
Table 1.2	Adventure Traveller Profile of Selected Activities, 1995
Table 1.3	International Tourist Arrivals and Receipts in the Americas
Table 1.4	North American Tourist Arrivals and Receipts
Table 1.5	Arrivals to National Parks in North America
Table 1.6	Level 1 Ecological Regions in North America
Table 1.7	North American Species: Mammals, Birds and Higher Plants, 1990s
Table 1.8	North American Species: Reptiles, Amphibians and Freshwater Fish, 1990s
Table 1.9	National and International Protected Areas, 1997
Table 1.10	Protected Areas in North America
Table 1.11	A Method for Planning and Analyzing Ecotourism Attractions
Table 1.12	World Heritage Sites in North America
Table 2.1	Sustainable Tourism Actors
Table 2.2	International Organizations involved in North American Sustainable Tourism: Their Roles and General Areas of Interest
Table 2.3	Government Agencies and Responsibilities Related to Tourism
Table 2.4	Nongovernmental Actor Roles and General Areas of Interest
Table 2.5	Academic Actor Roles and General Areas of Interest
Table 3.1	Revenue Generation Mechanisms
Table 3.2	Nationwide and site-specific sustainable tourism indicators

INTRODUCTION

Ecosystems are dynamic and are constantly changing over time. Nevertheless, human beings are nature's foremost agents of change. Interventions by human beings have greatly impacted the ecosystems of the continent. It is essential to ensure that ecosystems do not become stressed beyond a threshold at which irreversible undesirable changes occur. Approaching the Third Millennium, all human activity needs to become more sustainable; tourism is no exception. Sustainable tourism in natural areas—ecotourism—may even become a vital tool for conserving natural and cultural heritage, and for increasing the living standards of many inhabitants of North America, particularly those in the less developed rural areas.

Sustainable tourism in natural areas is a broad vision that fuses the elusive concept of sustainable development with the tourism industry. It attempts to balance a variety of economic, sociocultural and ecological concerns at international, national and local scales. The uncontrolled development of tourism in natural areas and community destinations has proven to be unsustainable in the long term. The degradation of areas of natural and cultural significance and the loss of biological and cultural diversity will ultimately result in the destruction of the natural and cultural assets upon which the industry depends for its revenues. A sustainable approach to tourism can help to ensure that this does not occur by providing an important incentive to protect wilderness areas and local culture.

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), whose members are Canada, Mexico and the United States, was created in 1994 under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). It is designed to address environmental issues of regional concern in a cooperative manner and to promote the effective enforcement of environmental law in the context of trade liberalization in North America.

This report, undertaken within the project Sustainable Tourism in Natural Areas, is intended to contribute to the promotion of healthy environment, economy and trade relationships and to provide an initial assessment of nature-based tourism, its scope, and its current state of development in North America.

Ecotourists are interested in scenic natural beauty, flora and fauna, and in the different human cultures that add richness to the areas they visit. The spectrum of natural and cultural assets in North America constitutes the core of the enormous ecotourism attractions that it offers. Its ecosystems are diverse and possess unique natural features. Due to their enormous aesthetic values, they also constitute notable ecotourism attractions, both for the nationals of each of the three countries and internationally.

From a cultural perspective, pre-Columbian civilizations existed throughout North America resulting in a rich archeological and indigenous traditional heritage. This constitutes a major asset for ecotourism development. Moreover, the European colonial past of the three countries has left North Americans a rich French, Spanish and English heritage.

There is some evidence that many forms of traditional development, including traditional tourism development, may cause varying degrees of harm to the environment. In a recent report

prepared by USEPA, Sedesol and others, it was noted that tourism can result in four basic types of environmental damage:

- Restructuring and elimination of the natural environment and land and water resources due to tourism-related development, such as dredging and filling of wetlands, particularly mangrove forests.
- Generation of waste and pollution from tourism activities, such as large increases in untreated and treated sewage, or increased solid waste (garbage disposal problems), which, in turn, can pollute surface and groundwater.
- Direct environmental harm caused by tourists' activities, often within fragile ecosystems. Examples include damage caused by walking on coral reefs or using off-road vehicles in deserts.
- Seasonal increases in population density caused by tourism that intensify problems of the first three types mentioned above and increase the burden on existing local infrastructure, systems, and practices (such as water supply, food production, and cultural practices). When these systems fail or deliver reduced services, serious threats to public health safety, and the environment can occur (USEPA et al. 1995, 2).

This report further asserts that such environmental damage can be extremely serious because of its impact on human health and the environment, as well as the eventual harm to the local economy from the decrease in environment-dependent tourism as the environment is degraded.

“No business sector has greater reason to promote ecologically and culturally sustainable development than tourism. The tourism industry is fundamentally dependent on the diversity and quality of the world's natural and cultural resources. Nonetheless, the tourism industry has not focused on addressing issues of environmental conduct in a proactive fashion. Indeed, it is quite ironic that the industry's role has been so mute, given its dependence on environmental assets that are so often being exploited in unsustainable ways by all sectors of the economy” (Hawkes and Williams 1993).

There are a number of examples in North America suggesting that “traditional” tourism can harm the environment. For example, Parks Canada recognizes that past and present use of areas now occupied by parks have left their mark on the environment, and in some cases, compromised the integrity of the ecosystem (Canadian Heritage, Parks Canada 1997, 48). In Point Pelee National Park for example, a renowned stopover point for migrating birds and monarch butterflies, Parks Canada notes that: “Tourism facilities and park infrastructure, including building, roads, parking lots, trails, change houses, tile fields and utility corridors, cumulatively result in loss of natural habitat, changes in community structure, increased edge effects, changes in wildlife movement patterns, and habitat fragmentation” (Parks Canada 1997, 11).

In Mexico, the development of the Cancun resort complex while originally designed to avoid the pollution problems that had plagued Acapulco, failed to do so, and the long term harm from natural habitat alteration through construction and other modification was never contemplated. Ocean areas were dredged to enlarge beaches, a highway was built across the wetlands (eliminating the free-flow of water), and a lagoon was filled. And in the United States, visits to

the San Bernadino National Forest have increased by 50 percent in the last decade. As a result of this steadily increasing demand for forest recreation, permitted and illegal off-road vehicle use in this park is destroying vegetation and causing serious erosion. In addition to such destruction of plants and soil stability, there have been many animals killed by off-road vehicles. Finally, significant noise pollution from motor bikes and other vehicles disturbs wildlife and the solitude of other park users. Some of this expanded motor bike usage has come as the result of a public-private partnership to promote such use as a means to raise funds for the park due to cuts in parks appropriations (Clifford 1998).

Nevertheless, there are a number of positive links between economic development and environmental protection and ecotourism is among the issues that represent an economic activity that can support both conservation and local development. This report will focus on the important role of ecotourism as a tool for promoting sustainable development.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates that global tourism and travel will generate US\$3,500 billion in 1998 (<www.wttc.org>). This is expected to account for an average 11.6 percent contribution to gross domestic product (GDP), which should grow to 12.5 percent by 2010. The WTTC estimates that tourism in North America will generate US\$1,077 billion in 1998, generating 20.73 million jobs and encouraging US\$189.09 billion worth of capital investment.

While tourism has been growing at an annual rate of around four percent, nature travel has been estimated to be increasing at an annual rate of between ten and 30 percent (Reingold 1993). One study has estimated that between 40 and 60 percent of international visitors travel to enjoy and appreciate nature (Filion et al. 1992). Thus, the responsible development and proper management of sustainable tourism in natural areas would benefit the economies of all three nations as well as providing important financial resources for some of North America's poorest regions. Successfully managed initiatives to promote ecotourism require attention to the laws of nature and the local social and cultural environment that support them.

Canada, Mexico and the United States share many natural features including the ecosystems straddling their borders, geological formations such as the mountain chain stretching from the Canadian Rockies to the Mexican Sierra Madre, and migratory whales, birds, and monarch butterflies. They also share common challenges such as negative impacts on the most popular tourist destinations, and development in remote, rural or aboriginal communities. Cooperation through the CEC will provide the opportunity for Canada, Mexico and the United States to develop a common framework for nature-based tourism in North America. Because it is a relatively new field, policies, operating principals and pilot projects to promote sustainable tourism can be developed jointly in a cooperative fashion within the region. In the long term, the three nations may even cooperate to promote North America as an integrated region for nature-based tourism in the future.

Research for this report was undertaken with the understanding that it is an initial assessment of the issues and that further research and expert examination would be conducted during future phases. This report is intended to contribute to that examination by raising issues for discussion to assist the CEC in its effort to scope this issue and develop avenues for trilateral cooperative

work that will benefit the North American environment. Given the timeline and budget associated with this project, the report contributors reviewed recent popular press reports and readily available documents from the three NAFTA parties' governmental agencies responsible for federally controlled natural areas and tourism. This was supplemented by a review of reports on the international aspects of ecotourism from The World Conservation Union (IUCN), Conservation International, other institutions and a thorough academic search of the relevant literature. There was no field research and interviews played only a small role in the information gathering process.

This report will not include a complete discussion of all aspects of sustainable tourism in North America. Rather, it seeks to introduce the current state of tourism in natural areas in North America through a brief overview of various aspects of the industry including definitions, assets, actors and approaches, and federal and global policies.

Framework for Sustainable Tourism Planning and Analysis

Four stages in the development and management of sustainable tourism may be identified: (1) diagnosis; (2) planning; (3) implementation; and (4) monitoring. The diagnostic stage includes an analysis of supply (the ecotourism assets) and the demand for ecotourism.

In chapter 1 the first stage of sustainable tourism development and management, the diagnosis is addressed. The various definitions of nature-based tourism, sustainable tourism and ecotourism are examined and the profile of the typical ecotourist in North America and the growing demand for ecotourism is examined. As will be illustrated, the ecotourism assets of North America and the rich cultural and natural sites suggest a great potential for ecotourism development in this area which would be benefited by enhanced cooperation among the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States. Finally, chapter 1 identifies the various economic, sociocultural and ecological issues related to sustainable tourism.

The next three stages, planning, implementation, and monitoring focus on the conservation and improvement of ecotourism assets through the establishment and maintenance of appropriate levels of development. The planning, implementation and monitoring stages of sustainable tourism development may be considered within an organizational framework and a policy/regulatory framework. The organizational framework refers to the stakeholders, the actors who are involved in the various stages of development and have an interest in or are affected by tourism projects and policies. A crucial first step in planning is to identify the stakeholders who must be actively involved or represented in the decision-making process. In general, those who are most affected by the development of a site or region for ecotourism are the local inhabitants.

Therefore, following a "bottom-up" approach, the local stakeholders must play a central role. At the same time, national government policies articulated through laws and financial and technical assistance (a "top down" approach) will largely determine the success of ecotourism projects. NGOs acting on the international arena and at the national and local levels have important roles as intermediaries between citizens and government and to help shape public policy. They help to bridge the gap between bottom-up and top-down decision-making. Tasks, responsibility and practices are assigned among public and private stakeholders at the international, national,

regional and local levels within the organizational framework for sustainable tourism development.

In Chapter 2, organizational issues are examined by identifying the actors, approaches and activities related to sustainable tourism in the three countries of North America. This is not intended to compare the approaches of the three countries but to provide an overview of the current state of tourism in natural areas in North America as a whole. This assessment will begin by identifying key actors at the international, national and local political levels and their respective roles and contributions to tourism are briefly described. Several partnership approaches that have been taken to promote the sustainability of the industry are also briefly described. These partnerships exist in relation to joint marketing and promoting nature-based tourism product development and various conservation initiatives by institutions in North America.

The regulatory/policy framework provides the normative and policy context within which ecotourism development may occur and is assessed. The laws and regulations governing land use development and environmental impacts in Canada, Mexico and the United States may be used as tools to ensure that tourism development is appropriately sited and is sustainable. International environmental conventions set out policies and, in certain cases, assign rights and responsibilities to state signatories to promote and respect sustainable development practices. Incentives, such as fiscal policies, help to encourage land conservation and support traditional cultures. Educational programs and tourism codes of ethics serve to complement regulatory regimes and can instill environmentally responsible behavior.

Chapter 3 of this report addresses certain national and local regulatory mechanisms, relevant international environmental conventions, fiscal and award incentives, environmental dispute resolution methods, public participation needs, and best practices that may be used in the context of ecotourism in North America.

CHAPTER 1

DEFINITIONS AND CONTEXT

Sustainable tourism to natural areas, ecotourism, is a niche market within the larger industry of tourism and is the central focus of this report. This section will present a definition of this niche market-through an examination of the demand and supply components of the industry. As Gunn (1994, 39) points out,

the planning of tourism should strive for a balance between demand (markets) and supply (development). This requires an understanding of market characteristics and trends as well as the process of planning development to meet market needs.

On the demand side, a review of market studies and visitor profiles will assist in understanding who these tourists are and the activities they prefer. On the supply side, the planning process is examined through a review of North American natural and cultural assets identifying the resources that are the basis of the industry and highlighting the benefits of trilateral cooperation. The process of planning tourism development is further examined through a review of the socioeconomic and conservation issues that outline the potential benefits, costs, and management strategies of promoting tourism to natural areas and as a development option on the continent.

1.1 Defining Sustainable Tourism and Ecotourism – the evolution of theory

Sustainable tourism is defined by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), World Tourism Organization (WTO), and the Earth Council as tourism that,

meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life-support systems (WTTC/WTO and Earth Council 1999).

The WTTC definition builds on the World Conservation Strategy (IUCN 1980) and the World Commission on Environment and Development's report, *Our Common Future* (WCED 1987). These two publications have served as the foundation for a global sustainable development movement over the last decade and advocate the need for integration of conservation and development strategies in order to "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987, 43).

In this context, the term "sustainable tourism" refers to tourism based on natural or human-made resources, which contributes to sustainable development. It is a form of tourism that needs to be developed and managed in such a way that all activity that focuses on a heritage resource (natural or cultural) can continue indefinitely (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1986; Butler 1992a; Healy 1992a). The definition acknowledges the need for a comprehensive approach to development with an understanding of the relationships between natural and cultural resources, the tourism

sector, and other activities, processes, and value systems where tourism takes place (Butler 1993).

One form of tourism that is directly dependent on the use of natural resources in an undeveloped state is nature-based tourism (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1986; Butler 1992a; Healy 1992a). Nature-based tourism, which includes such activities as birdwatching, hunting, sportsfishing, off-road biking, and white-water rafting, is a rapidly growing sector of the tourism economy. The global value for nature-based tourism in 1988 was estimated to have been as high as US\$1 trillion (Filion et al. 1992). Whether all nature-based tourist activities are sustainable is questionable because some of these activities do not use natural resources wisely (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996).

In recent years, a specific category of nature-based tourism has developed which attempts to promote sustainability and the conservation of nature: ecotourism. Many of the early definitions of ecotourism tended to be descriptive and resulted in the proliferation of tours that were ecologically based but not ecologically sound (Wight 1994). As a result, more prescriptive definitions have evolved to incorporate the concept of travel that includes such factors as: positive benefits for conservation in a given locale; educational programs; minimal visitor impact; and socioeconomic benefits through small-scale, locally owned facilities (Ziffer 1989; Adler 1990; Cater 1994; Lindberg and McKercher 1997). The concept has evolved to one which recognizes tourism will create change and that a managed approach is essential to avoid the “boom and bust” cycle of tourism development. In short, any rational tourism plan includes preservation or enhancement of the environment as a fundamental component (Inskeep 1991). This managed approach is highlighted in Conservation International's ecotourism definition,

A form of tourism inspired primarily by the natural history of an area, including its indigenous cultures. ... Ecotourism also implies a managed approach by the host country or region which commits itself to establishing and maintaining the sites with the participation of local residents, marketing them appropriately, enforcing regulations, and using the proceeds of the enterprise to fund the area's land management as well as community development. (Ziffer 1989, 6)

Also contributing to this discussion is the IUCN's definition of ecotourism,

“...environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features – both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations” (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996, 20).

Lindberg and McKercher (1997) argue that as of the mid-1990s ecotourism is entering a period of maturity due to a clearer definition of the market (see Boo 1990; Eagles 1992; Weiler and Richins 1995), increased public awareness, and more formalized accreditation programs. Translating theory into practice has not been simple and as Brandon (1996, i) states, in most cases ecotourism has not lived up to expectations.

Defining ecotourism in practice has been problematic (Mowforth 1992; Brandon 1996). At least 35 terms related to ecotourism have been identified. Among the best-known of these are: nature tourism, nature-based or nature-oriented tourism, wilderness tourism, adventure tourism, green tourism, alternative tourism, sustainable tourism, appropriate tourism, nature vacations, study tourism, scientific tourism, cultural tourism, low-impact tourism, agro-tourism, rural tourism and soft tourism (Butler 1990; Backman et al. 1994; Wall 1994). These terms share some general concepts (particularly in that they are an alternative to mass consumptive tourism), but they are not necessarily synonymous to ecotourism. Ecotourism is not only an activity that links tourism and nature (Farrell and Runyan 1991), it must also reflect ecological as well as socio-cultural objectives (Inskeep 1987).

Nature based tourist activities cannot be equated with sustainable tourism unless they improve environmental protection (Norris 1992). For example, even though participants in wilderness, cultural or adventure travel may gain a deeper understanding of the places they visit, their appreciation does not necessarily protect or improve the natural or cultural environment in the areas visited. Visitors who may consider themselves to be nature tourists are not ecotourists if their visits ultimately degrade or destroy natural resources.

Some commentators distinguish between nature tourism and sustainable tourism by describing the latter as "more exclusively purposeful and focused on the enhancement or maintenance of natural systems" (Farrell and Runyan 1991). One can distinguish between traditional tour operators and principled tourism operators; the former frequently show no commitment to conservation or natural area management, merely offering clients an opportunity to experience exotic places and people before they change or disappear. The latter, on the other hand, have begun to form partnerships with managers of protected areas, and with local people, with the intention of contributing to the long-term protection of wildlands and local development, and in the hope of improving mutual understanding between residents and visitors (Wallace 1992). The premise that underlies sustainable tourism is that the enjoyment of future generations should not be affected negatively by visitors today.

Another dimension of sustainable tourism is recognition that the causes of resource degradation must be taken into account. In a majority of situations, national and international environmental pressures are often more harmful than either tourist activity or the local use of resources (Whelan 1991; Woodley 1993; Brandon 1996). Ultimately, the significance of tourism as a conservation strategy depends largely on it addressing the causes of local resource degradation external to tourism activity (Brandon 1996; Brandon and Margoluis 1996). Indeed, the fact that the causes of resource degradation often originate far from the site of the nature tour highlights one of the benefits of North American trilateral cooperation for tourism development. Trilateral cooperation can lead to resource conservation that would otherwise be unattainable by a sole country.

While theoretical definitions allow distinction among and even within the various tourism terms, ultimately it is the working definition which determines why tourism is developed and how it is managed. The following section will examine the working definitions of ecotourism within the three country's federal governments.

1.2 The Public Sector and Working Definitions of Ecotourism

In examining federal governmental definitions of ecotourism in Canada, Mexico, and the United States (See Box 1.1), it appears that there is a lack of consistency in defining the term. This lack of consistency in defining ecotourism is common throughout the Americas. For example, Edwards et al's (1998) comprehensive survey of national and state government tourism agencies in Canada, the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean found that 76 percent of the agencies created their own or adapted a published version to meet their needs or understanding of the term. This lack of consensus makes it difficult to develop criteria for ecotourism and to promote it effectively at a national level; it makes it even more difficult at an inter-regional level. From a trilateral perspective, this lack of consistency presents an opportunity to develop an integrated and collaborative approach. In reviewing the definitions from North America, it is evident that a central theme of ecotourism is its dependence upon the viability of the natural and cultural resources and that the industry must generate conservation and socioeconomic benefits.

Box 1.1 Federal Government Definitions of Ecotourism in North America

Canada

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) defines ecotourism as follows:

Ecotourism is purposeful travel that creates an understanding of cultural and natural history, while safeguarding the integrity of the ecosystem and producing economic benefits that encourage preservation. Ecotourism implies a scientific, aesthetic, or philosophical approach with a high level of interpretation (CTC 1997).

The CTC considers ecotourism in conjunction with adventure travel from a marketing and product development point of view. It defines adventure travel as an outdoor leisure activity that generally takes place in an unusual, exotic, remote, or wilderness setting, involves some form of unconventional means of transportation and tends to be associated with high or low levels of physical activity (CTC 1997).

The Department of Canadian Heritage, which includes Parks Canada, defines ecotourism as:

an enlightening nature travel experience that contributes to the conservation of the ecosystem, while respecting the integrity of the host communities (Canadian Heritage n.d., 4, 10).

Research conducted within Environment Canada for the Canadian Wildlife Service, on the demand for nature-based tourism, defined ecotourism as "travel to enjoy and appreciate nature" (Filion et al. 1992, 2).

Mexico

In Mexico, a 1994 strategy developed for the *Secretaría de Turismo* (Sectur) used the definition developed by the IUCN. Ecotourism in this program is defined as :

...environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features—both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socioeconomic involvement of local populations (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996, 20).

United States

While the United States has no official policy regarding ecotourism, the Department of Commerce uses the definition of the WTO and WTTC :

Ecotourism is ecologically based tourism which is a form of specialized nature tourism that emphasizes small-scale operations of tourism to natural areas and may include visits to places of traditional cultural interest. Emphasis is placed on environmentally sensitive development and visitor use (Edwards et al 1998, 138)

And a US Environmental Protection Agency publication defined ecotourism as:

"Ecotourism" is defined as travel and recreation to natural areas that is designed to contribute substantially to those areas' conservation and enhancement, through education and the dedication of tourism dollars to protect natural resources. Ecotourism is a relatively small component of the total nature tourism industry, but is growing rapidly.

(<<http://yosemite.epa.gov/osec/osechome.nsf/All/d-naturebasedtourism.html?OpenDocument&~~DMTK>>)

The following sections will assist in expanding upon the definition of ecotourism by providing more background details on who ecotourists are and what the demand is for the industry.

1.3 Ecotourist Profiles

Historically, tourist profiles have been generated by the tourism industry to plan and manage visitor demand at a particular destination. These profiles are often based on gathering information on the socio-demographic characteristics and travel attitudes of visitors in an attempt to characterize a market segment. This section will attempt to characterize ecotourists based on their socio-demographic characteristics and travel attitudes. Since the majority of research on ecotourists and tourists traveling to enjoy nature is site or destination specific, sound market research for the North American continent as a whole is limited or unavailable. Even so, there are a number of useful studies that are helpful in defining the nature tourist market.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Ecotourism Study

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in the United States was one of the first organizations which developed an "ecotourist" profile of visitors to Latin American countries through a 1988 study carried out in five countries in the Americas and the Caribbean (Boo 1990). The study involved surveys of foreign, nature-oriented tourists, undertaken at the international airports in Belize, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, and Mexico. The profile that emerged from the WWF revealed that for 73 percent of those contacted, it was their first visit to the country in question. The study also indicated that a majority of these tourists also traveled with their families and were interested in learning more about the natural and cultural history of the destination (Boo 1990, 43). In examining trip expenditures and length of stay, Boo (1990, 35) found that while average length of stay of the nature-oriented tourist was shorter than that of the conventional mass tourists (13 days vs. 14.7 days), the nature-oriented tourists spent more money on their trip. The average daily expenditure of these nature-oriented tourists was US\$264 versus US\$173 for the conventional mass tourists.

Box 1.2 World Wildlife Fund 1988 Latin American Ecotourist Profile

Mode of Travel		Main Activities		Level of Satisfaction	
Alone	21%	Birdwatching	58%	Very satisfied	67%
With family	36%	Wildlife observation	55%	Satisfied	21%

With friends/colleagues	23%	Boat trips	42%	Not very satisfied	4%
On a tour	20%	Botany	31%	Disappointed	0%
		Hiking/trekking	28%		
		Local cultures	25%		
		Jungle excursions	23%		
		Mountaineering	22%		

Source: Boo 1990, 42-45.

Canadian Ecotourists

A comparative study of Canadian ecotourists by Eagles and Cascagnette (1995) also provides useful information on ecotourist characteristics. Their data is based on four separate studies that have been combined to develop a socio-demographic and travel attitude profile. Results show that ecotourists are somewhat older, that the male/female ratio varies, that they are well educated, have incomes well above average, and have a strong desire to learn about the natural, cultural and historic aspects of their destinations (Eagles and Cascagnette 1995, 24, 26) (see table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Canadian Ecotourists—Sociodemographic and Travel Attitude Profile

Study Populations	Mean Age	Male/Female Ratio (%)	University Education (%)	Mean Income (\$C)	Motivations	Rank
Costa Rica	49	47/53	66	\$69,556	Wilderness	1
Federation of Ontario Naturalists	53	36/64	60	\$52,361	Nature Study	2
					Photography	3
					Tropical	4
					Forests	5
					Birds	6
Canadian Nature Tours	54	55/45	65	\$69,295	Trees/Flowers	
					Mammals	7
					Lakes/stream	8
Kenya	49	45/55	47	\$72,523	Parks	9

Source: adapted from Eagles and Casganette (1995)

HLA Canadian/US ecotourist industry survey results

In 1994 the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta commissioned an ecotourism study of ecotourists in Canada and the United States (HLA 1994). The research included: a

random telephone survey in seven major metropolitan areas in Canada and the United States; a survey of North American and overseas travel trade firms; a mail survey to ecotourism client lists provided by the travel trade; and interviews and focus groups with the travel trade and industry.¹ For the purposes of the study, ecotourism was defined broadly to include nature, adventure or culture experiences in rural surroundings. Selected results from the surveys are presented below and provide information on why ecotourists choose certain destinations and tours. The results are helpful in suggesting strategies for planning and development of the industry.

¹ Approximately 200 randomly selected telephone interviews were conducted in each of Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto and Winnipeg and a total of 1,384 surveys were completed.

Box 1.3 HLA Canadian/US Survey Results

Importance of Natural Setting and Environmental Values

- The natural setting is the critical factor in the delivery of a quality ecotourism product.
- Emerging trends include an increase in environmental concerns as a key factor in destination selection, and the growth in tourism as an educational or learning experience.
- The marketplace is increasingly seeking products that respect the environment.
- A critical market influence on ecotourism is the large “baby-boomer” population with the time, education and money for quality and educational travel.
- Parks and protected areas rate very highly in importance with both the general consumer and the more experienced ecotourist.
- The experience is enhanced by guides and interpretative programs.

Importance of Activities and Active Vacations

- The markets are seeking multiple activities. There is an increasing interest in soft adventure experiences or active (but not strenuous) vacations. There is also growth in the popularity of specific activities such as hiking and kayaking.
- The general consumer is seeking an outdoor experience which is active, but less adventuresome and activity-specific than the one sought by experienced ecotourism travellers.
- Activities are second in importance to the natural setting.

Importance of the Type of Accommodation

- The experienced ecotourism traveller places greater importance on the experience in a natural setting than on the accommodation.
- The markets prefer mid-range accommodations, with a stronger preference by experienced ecotourists for accommodation that adds to the experience such as rustic lodges, smaller scale and less conventional accommodation.²

Important Source of Information in selecting a tour or destination

- Word-of-mouth referral from friends, family and others, is the primary source of information for markets in choosing their next ecotourism vacation.
- Clubs, organizations such as conservation group, speciality travel, nature and outdoor magazines, and the travel trade are important marketing channels to reach ecotourists.

Tourism Canada Adventure Tourism Profile

Another study conducted in Canada by the former Tourism Canada (1995) (now replaced by the Canadian Tourism Commission) focused on adventure travel or active vacations in nature. The findings from this study are useful in understanding profiles of ecotourists who are engaging in tours that require varying degrees of activity-based adventure. Table 1.2 presents the profile of adventure travellers in Canada.

² Not captured by this study is the fact that the ecotourism market also includes some very high-end accommodation, especially in remote and pristine environments.

Table 1.2 Adventure Traveller Profile of Selected Activities, 1995

Adventure Activity	Sociodemographic information	
Nature viewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52.6% are women • 75% are over 35 years of age 	31% travel alone
Wildlife viewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54.2% are men • 47% are between 35 and 44 years of age • 23.4% are over 55 years of age 	76.6% travel with a spouse
Canoeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62% are men • 54% are less than 34 years of age • 40% are between 35 and 54 years of age 	47.8% travel with friends
Dog sledding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65.4 % are women • 39% are between 20 and 34 years of age • 26 % are between 35 and 44 years of age 	42.4% travel with a spouse 28 % travel alone
Snowmobiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73 % are men • 28% are between 20 and 34 years of age • 0% are between 35 and 44 years of age • 24% are between 45 and 54 years of age 	43.7% travel with friends 23% travel with a spouse

Source: Tourism Canada 1995.

The Tourism Canada study also found that 57 percent of the adventure travel market is represented by Canadians who like wilderness, adventures, parks and ethnic culture.

Summarizing the data

In attempting to develop a profile of the nature-oriented tourist market in North America, the surveys reveal that while some information is available there remains a lack of information regarding this market segment. The available information suggests that the nature-oriented tourist tends to be older, has a graduate degree, higher levels of disposable income and enjoys travelling with family or friends. Their motivations reflect an interest in learning about the natural and cultural history of their destination. Data is also helpful in identifying subsets within the nature tourism. For instance, Wight (1995) found that ecotourists can be categorized under a range of interests in nature that varies from specialist (ie, scientific) to generalist (ie, casual interest) and who engage in activities that require a high to low degree of physical effort. Specialist groups might include birdwatchers, photographers and scientists, while generalist groups are those interested in enjoying the scenery and different cultures found in natural areas (Wild 1994). These distinctions are important for identifying the visitor market and improving the efficiency of visitor management of the industry (Eagles and Cascagnette 1995). Further research is needed to better understand the characteristics, and motivations of those who visit nature tours in the North American context.

The HLA study (1994) also raises another important consideration. With the expansion of nature tourism to protected areas, and an increasing awareness of environmental concerns on the part of travelers, there is an important need to ensure the development of a quality product that conserves the natural and cultural resources that are the basis of the industry. Ensuring that nature tourism is sustainable is paramount. By better understanding who nature tourists are, protected area managers will be better able to develop mechanisms for managing and minimizing the negative impacts of tourism.

More research is also needed on how to inform tourists of projects and companies that are implementing sustainable tourism practices. There is broadening interest among consumers for nature-based tourism that not only respects the environment but also benefits local communities (HLA 1994). This is evident from the proliferating array of guidebooks and travel literature. Early publications such as *The Good Tourist* (Wood and House 1991) have been joined by many more, such as *The Nature Company Guide to International Ecojourneys* (Holing 1996) that are assisting tourists in selecting companies that have shown a genuine awareness of their role in protecting the environment. Internet Sites are also increasingly an important source of information. Web based information include databases, forums and list-servers. To name just a few, there is Yahoo's ecotourism site (<http://www.yahoo.com/Recreation/Travel/Ecotourism/>), Green Travel's World Ecotourism Directory (<http://www.green-travel.com/GTECOLIN.HTM/>), Eco Travels in Latin America clearinghouse (<http://www2.planeta.com/mader/>) and York University's Sustainable Tourism Research Interest Group—STRING web-based site (<http://www.yorku.ca/research/dkproj/string/rohr/>) which is a comprehensive collection of sustainable tourism internet resources. In addition to Internet Sites, conventional organizations including the Ecotourism Society, Conservation International and World Wildlife Fund, to name a few, identify tourist destinations that are implementing nature conservation strategies and respect local cultures.

1.4 Demand for Ecotourism

1.4.1 Trends in the Global Tourism Industry

One of the major challenges in determining ecotourism demand for North America is in defining the market. In general, tourism researchers evaluate markets through economic studies at the national, regional, or community scale, that identify arrivals and expenditures of foreign and domestic travelers (Fretchling 1987; Gunn 1994). However, due to the difficulty in defining what ecotourism actually is, accurate data on market demand has been difficult to generate. As Cater (1994) points out, the sheer diversity and broad range of interests involved in the industry—from nature reserves to national parks, from local tourist associations to government departments, from tour operators to conservation organizations—have made not only defining ecotourism problematic but made market studies a challenge. In addition, the countries of North America do not separate out values for the accurate measurement of ecotourism from their national accounts that deal with conventional tourism. As a result, estimates on ecotourism demand have to be extrapolated from general industry statistics and tourism trends. There are no definitive studies available that are specific to ecotourism demand in North America. This has led to varying projections on the growth of ecotourism. This section will present available data

on tourism trends, in a North American context, to illustrate that even with a lack of data, trends indicate that this tourism sector is one of the most rapidly growing tourism markets.

Tourism is considered one of the fastest growing industries in the world. From 1988 to 1997, the number of international arrivals worldwide increased by 5 percent annually reaching over 500 million in 1993 (Vellas and Becherel 1995). In terms of market share, the US market ranks second behind Europe with 21 percent of the world's total international tourist arrivals (Vellas and Becherel 1995). A breakdown of arrivals and receipts in the Americas from 1988-1993 is provided in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 International Tourist Arrivals and Receipts in the Americas

Year	Arrivals (000)	Change (%)	Share of total world arrivals (%)	Receipts (US\$ millions)	Change (%)	Share of total world receipts (%)
1988	83,462	9.47	21.76	49,830	18.56	25.06
1989	87,398	4.72	20.26	57,029	14.45	26.75
1990	93,424	6.89	20.40	67,138	17.73	26.04
1991	96,947	3.77	21.24	74,056	10.30	28.42
1992	101,080	4.26	20.99	83,595	12.88	28.21
1993	106,525	5.39	21.30	95,545	14.30	29.48

Source: WTO cited in Vellas and Becherel 1995.

The data reveals that increasing tourist arrivals in the Americas are increasing the regions share of total world receipts which, as of 1993, represents 30 percent of the world market. In breaking this information down into the North American sub-region, which includes Canada, Mexico, and the United States arrivals and receipts for 1992 represented 76 percent and 78 percent respectively of the market (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4 North American Tourist Arrivals and Receipts

Country/North American sub-region	Tourist arrivals (000)	Tourist receipts (US\$ millions)
North America	76,659	65,537
Canada	14,741	5,679
Mexico	17,271	5,997
United States	44,647	53,861

1.4.2 Evaluating Tourism Trends in the Ecotourism Industry

Ceballos-Lascuráin (1996, 3-5) identifies six trends in the global tourism industry that are impacting the development of ecotourism in North America. These include:

- continued growth of international (7 percent/year) and domestic tourism,
- higher-than-average growth in number of international arrivals in the Americas (5.6 percent),

- diversification of tourism and growing interest in more alternative and specialized activities such as ecotourism,
- increased interest in travelling to natural settings and less disturbed areas due to a growing global environmental consciousness,
- increased interest in “activity” holidays such as birdwatching, hiking, and canoeing, and
- increased interest in exotic cultures and locations.

As a result of these trends, North American businesses dedicated to ecotourism are gearing up for growth as the number of ecotourists continues to expand (Wild 1996, 93). In 1988, *the Economist* reported that “the fastest-growing sector of tourism is travel based on the study of nature” (*The Economist* 1998a). The HLA 1994 consumer survey conducted in seven major Canadian and US cities revealed a combined market potential of more than 13 million people for nature-culture-adventure type of travel from these cities alone (HLA 1994, 5-12). The *Secretaria de Medio Ambiente Recursos Naturales y Pesca* estimated that ecotourism in Mexico grew at a rate of 10 to 15 percent between 1995 and 1996, faster than conventional tourism which was estimated at 8 percent for the same time period (Semarnap 1996a). In 1991, ecotourism was considered the fastest growing segment of the travel industry in the United States accounting for approximately 10 per cent of international travel for pleasure (Pleumarom 1994, 4). The United States Travel Data Center’s (USTDC) 1992 survey indicated that 7 percent (8 million) of US travelers had taken at least one ecotourism trip and 30 percent (35 million) claimed they would take one within the next three years (USTDC 1992). Evidence from visitation to protected areas in North America also suggests an expansion of the ecotourism industry (see Table 1.5).

Table 1.5 Arrivals to National Parks in North America

Country	Number of Arrivals	Number of Arrivals	Source
Canada	20 million (1988)	21 million (1993)	Eagles 1998, 264
Mexico	not available	not available	n/a
United States	260 million (1991)	300 million (2000 estimate)	Margolis 1997, 50

The data in this section should be read with a degree of caution, as the definitions of ecotourism are broad, vague, and inconsistent. However, taken together, and in conjunction with anecdotal evidence, these studies suggest growth in visitation to protected areas and expansion of the ecotourism market. The challenge is how to best accurately measure the demand in a North American context.

1.4.3 Measuring Market Demand

In Canada, national tourism indicators have been generated as part of a ten-year review of the tourism industry’s economic performance. This study is one of the world’s first long-term studies to measure tourism’s contribution to a nation’s economy. Results found that between 1986 and 1996 tourism grew at 25.5 percent in Canada, nearly eight percent faster than the Canadian economy (Wilson 1998). The United States has developed a travel and tourism satellite account that closely parallels the one pioneered by Canada. The account is based on emerging standards

of the World Tourism Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). According to the US satellite accounts, released for the first time in the summer of 1998, total tourism spending by US residents and international visitors accounted for approximately US\$300 billion, or five percent of GDP in 1992 (Meis 1998, 5). It is anticipated that Mexico will also follow this lead. The satellite account allows tracking of the total direct contribution of travel and tourism to a country's GDP and will provide a new means for comparing tourism's contribution to the North American economy. A forthcoming update to the Canadian Tourism Satellite Account will offer further direct comparisons on the competitiveness of the various industries and commodities in the tourism sectors of the respective economies (Meis 1998, 5). While these accounts will be invaluable in tracking tourism market trends in North America, they still do not directly address the ecotourism market.

One new tool specific to the ecotourism sector is the *North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS)*. NAICS replaces the former Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system, which provides enhanced industry comparability among the three NAFTA trading partners. NAICS includes a new classification (712) for "Heritage Institutions." Within this classification, the industry sector (712190) "comprises establishments primarily engaged in operating, maintaining and protecting nature parks, nature reserves or conservation areas" according to the Canadian definition. Examples include bird sanctuaries, natural wonders/tourist attractions, caverns, nature parks, conservation areas and wildlife sanctuaries (Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 12-501-XPE). In the United States, the industry sector (712190) is "Nature Parks and Other Similar Institutions" and is described as comprising "establishments primarily engaged in the preservation and exhibition of natural areas or settings" (NAICS 1998, 665). The NAICS should assist in improving the availability of data on ecotourism at a North American level in the near future.

1.5 Natural and Cultural Resources of North America

North America contains a wealth of natural and cultural resources. The following section provides details to some of those resources in which nature-based tourism could be developed. It is not a comprehensive ecological or anthropological inventory but simply highlights the breadth and diversity of the continent's natural and cultural heritage.

1.5.1 Natural Resources

Ecological Regions and Landscapes

The ecological regions of North America and the wide spectrum of ecosystems they represent contain a rich biodiversity that may be considered the basis of the continent's nature tourism resources. Each country, for practical purposes, tends to promote its tourism regions on a geographical basis. While this approach is convenient from a political perspective, ecosystems and ecological regions rarely correspond to country boundaries. It is useful, therefore to consider North American tourism resources from a regional perspective with emphasis on the natural features and topography of the region.

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) has identified 15 major ecological regions in North America (CEC 1997, 9-14). These provide the broad backdrop to the ecological mosaic of the continent. Each ecological region is unique and possesses site-specific attractions for tourists. Table 1.6 and Figure 1.1 illustrate how 12 of the 15 ecological regions in North America are shared by at least two of the three countries. The Arctic Cordillera and the Hudson Plains regions are found solely in Canada, and the Tropical Dry Forests region is exclusive to Mexico. The United States possesses no major ecosystem entirely within its national borders. It is clear that ecosystems do not respect political or territorial boundaries, and that specific natural features may well be shared by two or more countries. This reinforces the advantages of a cooperative approach to the development of tourism activities based on these naturally zoned ecological regions.

Table 1.6 Level 1 Ecological Regions in North America

Region	Country(ies)	Area (km ²)	Human population	Population density per km ²
Arctic Cordillera	C	218,225	1,050	.005
Tundra	C, U	2,856,850	26,000	.01
Taiga	C, U	2,799,230	55,000	.02
Hudson Plains	C	334,530	10,000	.03
Northern Forests	C, U	2,363,825	4,000,000	1.7
Northwestern Forested Mountains	C, U	1,788,950	800,000	0.4
Marine West Coast Forests	C, U	692,970	6,500,000	9.4
Eastern Temperate Forests	C, U	2,578,435	160,000,000	62
Great Plains	C, M, U	3,543,875	34,000,000	9.6
North American Deserts	C, M, U	2,027,460	8,000,000	4.0
Mediterranean California	M, U	198,975	30,000,000	151
Southern Semi-Arid Highlands	M, U	270,340	10,000,000	37
Temperate Sierras	M, U	634,485	40,000,000	63
Tropical Dry Forests	M	246,260	13,000,000	52.8
Tropical Humid Forests	M, U	311,070	20,400,000	65.6

• Key: C=Canada, M=Mexico, U=United States

Source: Based on data in CEC 1997.

Mountain Range & Water Systems

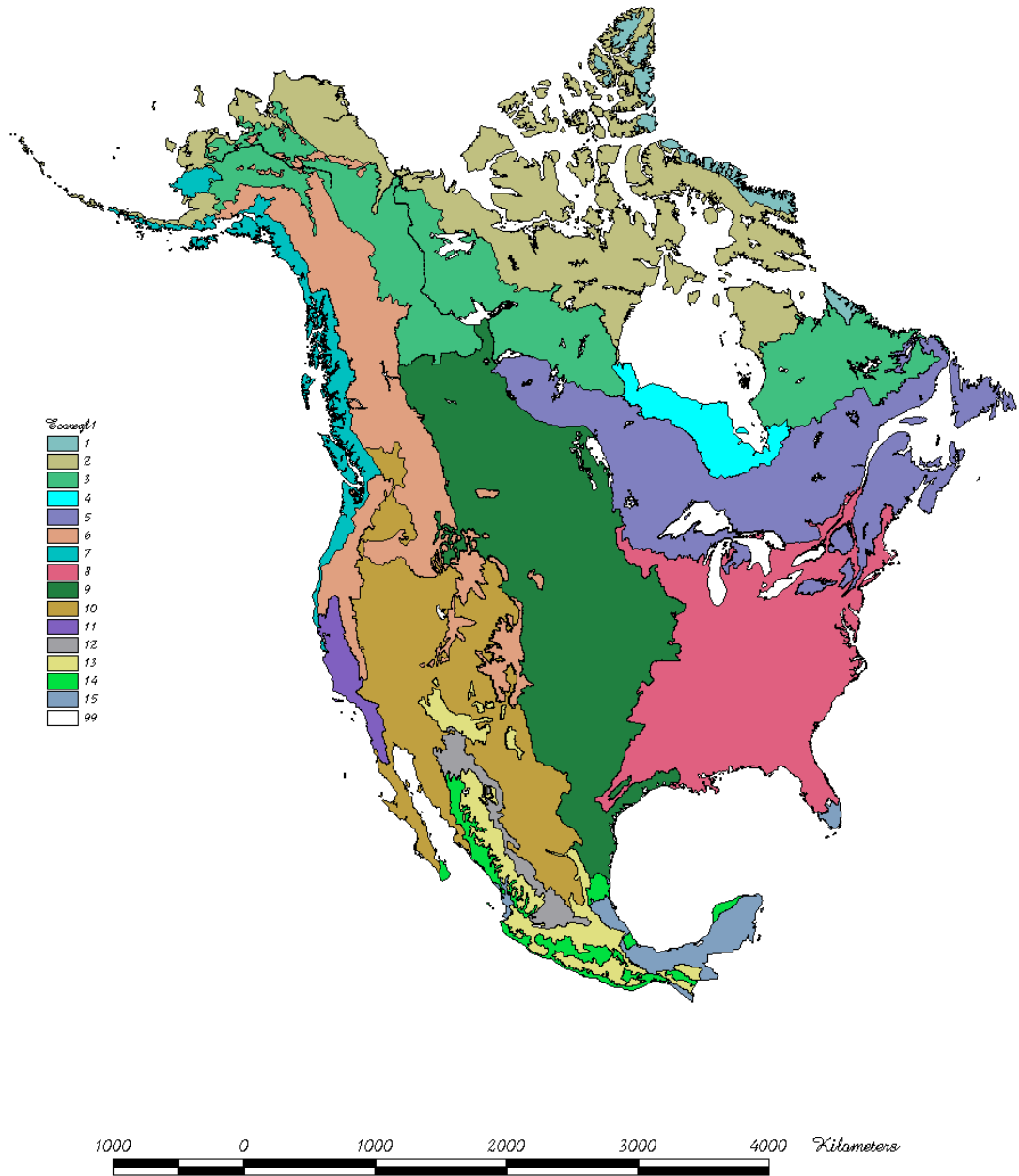
The variety and extent of natural areas in North America offer the potential for a broad range of tourism activities. Tourism may occur in forests and woodlands, canyons and caves, mountains and deserts, rivers and lakes and in many other of North America's natural or relatively undisturbed landscapes.

Nature enthusiasts interested in trekking and hiking are attracted to the mountainous scenery that is impressive and beautiful in all three countries. Indeed, North America contains a continuous mountain chain that stretches from the Alaska Range, through the Canadian and US Rockies to

the Mexican Sierra Madre. Other important mountain ranges with tourism value include the Cascade Range, the Sierra Nevada, the different Baja California ranges and, as the sole mountain range of the extreme easternmost part of the continent, the Appalachians. The tallest mountains of North America are also important tourism attractions. Among the highest are Mt. Denali (McKinley) in Alaska, which is the tallest peak in North America (6,194 m). The second highest peak in North America is Mt. Logan in Canada (6,050 m) and the third is Citlaltepétl (or Pico de Orizaba) in Mexico (5,747 m). These mountains contain important forest resources, a rich and varied wildlife and are frequently climbed by enthusiasts from around the world.

Others interested in rafting, canoeing or kayaking look to the rivers and lakes which are an abundant and distinctive feature of the landscapes in Canada and the United States. Water systems have traditionally played a very important role in outdoor recreation and boating, fresh water fishing and swimming are activities practiced and enjoyed by many millions of North Americans.

Figure 1.1 Ecological Regions of North America



1 – Arctic Cordillera	6 – NW Forested Mountains	11 – Mediterranean California
2 – Tundra	7 – Marine West Coast Forests	12 – Southern Semi-Arid Highlands
3 – Taiga	8 – Eastern Temperate Forests	13 – Temperate Sierras
4 – Hudson Plains	9 – Great Plains	14 – Tropical Dry Forests
5 – Northern Plains	10 – North American Deserts	15 – Tropical Humid Forests

Source: CEC 1997, 9.

Fauna and Flora

The natural landscapes of North America support an abundance of wildlife including mammals, birds, plants, reptiles, amphibians and fish. In terms of mammal species, it can be seen from Table 1.7 that Canada is habitat to 193 species, Mexico to 450 species and the United States to 428 species. Worldwide Mexico contains more mammals than any other country accounting for 10.4 percent of the global total and the United States, close behind, ranks third.

Table 1.7 also indicates the number of bird species. Approximately 13.4 percent of the world's total number of bird species exist in North America and about 161 species are endemic to the continent.

Table 1.7 North American Species: Mammals, Birds and Higher Plants, 1990s

North American Species: Mammals, Birds and Higher Plants Species, 1990s												
	Mammals				Birds				Higher Plants			
	Total # of known species			No. of Species per 10,000 km ² {a}	Total # of known species			No. of species per 10,000 km ² {a}	Total # of known species			No. of Species per 10,000 km ² {a}
	All species	Endemic species	Threatened species		Breeding species	Endemic species	Threatened species		All species {b}	Endemic species	Threatened species	
World	4,629 {d}	X	X	X	9,672	X	X	X	270,000 {e}	X	X	X
Can	193	7	7	20	426	3	5	44	2,920	147	649	299
Mex	450	140	64	79	769	89	36	135	25,000	12,500	1,048	4,382
US	428	101	35	45	650	69	50	68	16,302	4,036	1,845	1,679
NA	1,071	248	106	X	1,845	161	91	X	44,222	16,683	3,542	X

Notes: a. Values are standardized using a species-area curve. B. Includes flowering plants only. D. Includes cetaceans. E. World total includes vascular plants. Threatened species data are as of 1996, except for higher plants, which are as of June 1993.

Source: World Resources Institute. *A Guide to the Global Environment, 1998-1999*, Data Table 14.2, 322-323.

Of the three countries, Mexico has the largest number of bird species. This is due to its strategic biogeographic location. Around 1,040 species (80 percent of the continents number of bird species) inhabit, 769 breed regularly and 89 (55 percent) are endemic to Mexico. It is interesting to note that Mexico only occupies 9 percent of the total land area of the continent. Mexico also occupies 12th place worldwide in terms of number of bird species. Mexico also has the highest number of Endemic Bird Areas (EBAs) on the continent. Endemic Bird Areas (EBAs) are defined by Birdlife International as areas with at least two bird species with a restricted-range. Of the 221 EBAs identified worldwide, Mexico ranks fourth globally with a total of 14 EBAs.

These characteristics constitute a great birdwatching asset for Mexico, since birdwatchers are attracted by endemic bird species and are interested in visiting countries with a high number of EBAs. By some accounts, birdwatchers are the largest of all nature-watching groups worldwide and birdwatching is one of the fastest growing outdoor pastimes in the United States. Sources estimate the number of birdwatchers in the United States to be between 52 and 80 million, and to spend around US\$16 billion a year in the pursuit of their hobby (Gray 1996; Murdock 1997; USFWS 1997; Ceballos-Lascuráin 1998a).

The floral biodiversity of North America is also a great natural asset (*also* Table 1.7). Canada is habitat to 2,920 species, Mexico to a total of about 25,000 higher (flowering) plant species and

the United States to 16,302 species. These Mexican higher plant species represent approximately 10 percent of the world total and around half of these species are endemic.

Table 1.8 denotes the reptiles, amphibians and freshwater fish species found in North America. As the table illustrates, there are 82 species of reptiles and amphibians in Canada, 972 in Mexico and 513 in the United States. Mexico ranks first in the world for number of reptile and amphibian species and 56 percent (547 species) of these are endemic to the country.

Table 1.8

North American Species: Reptiles, Amphibians and Freshwater Fish, 1990s										
	Reptiles				Amphibians				Freshwater Fish	
	Total # of known species			No. of species per 10,000 km ² {a}	Total # of known species			No. of species per 10,000 km ² {a}	Total # of known species	
	All species	Endemic species	Threatened species		All species	Endemic species	Threatened species		All species	Threatened species
World	6,900	X	X	X	4,522	X	X	X	25,000 {d}	X
Can	41	0	3	4	41	0	1	4	177	13
Mex	687	394	18	120	285	195	3	50	384	86
US	280	75	28	29	233	149	24	24	822	123
NA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Notes: a. Values are standardized using a species-area curve. B. Threatened species include a few marine species. D. World total includes both marine and freshwater fish species; freshwater species make up around 40-50 percent of this estimate. Threatened species data are as of 1996.

Source: World Resources Institute. *World Resources: A Guide to the Global Environment, 1998-1999*, Data Table 14.3, 324-325.

In terms of freshwater fish, there are 177 species in Canada, 384 in Mexico and 822 in the United States (*also* Table 1.8). The United States has the highest known number of species of freshwater fish in the world. This is due in part to the fact that the fish in many countries have not been studied in detail and there are no available figures. It is interesting to note that the number of species does not necessarily reflect country size but rather its geographic location. To illustrate, in Ecuador, a very small tropical country, a total of 706 freshwater fish species have been identified. This suggests that the figures for other larger tropical countries may well be higher.

Insects are also of interest to tourists and occur in abundance throughout North America. Insects are the most species-rich of all major faunal and floral groups, and are found from the Tropics to the Tundra, in water, wood, plants, soil and even inside the bodies of other animals. Over a million different species have been identified worldwide and estimates of the total number of species are as high as 30 million. About 100,000 species are estimated to live in North America, where the highest concentration occurs in the tropical areas in Mexico. One of the insect groups which has proven popular among nature enthusiasts are butterflies, due to their vivid colors and delicate beauty. It is estimated that there are over 12,000 species of butterflies and moths in North America. The Monarch butterfly, for example is the only insect in the world that has a continental-scale migration travelling through Canada, Mexico and the United States, and is consequently dependent on ecosystems in all 3 countries for its survival. Virtually the entire

eastern population of this species spends the winter in a limited fir forest in central Mexico. Observing this concentration of over 60 million wintering Monarchs in several hectares of coniferous forest is a very popular nature activity.

Marine Species and Coastal Areas

Coastal areas are also important tourism destinations. These include undisturbed coastal zones, comprised of natural features such as sandy beaches, rocky outcrops and areas of diverse marine life found in tidal zones and mangroves. Mangroves are particularly important from an ecological standpoint since they constitute rich nurseries for many forms of life, including oysters, crabs and waterbirds. Mangroves are found on tidal estuaries and muddy coasts in many tropical and subtropical areas. In North America mangroves are found on both coasts of Mexico (covering around 10,000 km²) and on the Gulf Coast of the United States (covering around 2,000 km²). There are no mangroves in Canada.

Oceans cover about 71 percent of the world's surface. They hold a significant proportion of living biomass and play a vital part in regulating the global climate. Much remains to be discovered about the diversity of life in the seas, although it is well known that diversity of the highest species is much greater in the sea than on land or in freshwater (WCMC 1994).

The maritime area of North America is immense (including the exclusive economic zone it is over 15 million km²), as is the total length of coastline of this continent (over 120,000 km). The Continent is delimited on its east and west coasts by the two biggest oceans in the world, the Pacific and the Atlantic, in the north, by the Arctic Ocean, and in the south by the Caribbean Sea. Marine and coastal areas contain numerous and varied tourism attractions.

Many different species of marine mammals inhabit the waters surrounding North America. These species have proven to be a great tourist attraction. Whale watching, for example, has become extremely popular as a tourist activity over the last decade (see box 1.4). Worldwide estimates indicate that there are over 4 million whale watchers who spend approximately \$US400 million annually on excursions (Hoyt 1993).

At present, the total number of known fish species in the world is about 25,000, of which roughly one half are marine species (WRI et al. 1998). There are no saltwater fish inventories for any of the three North American countries. North America also possesses an enormous wealth of ocean fish as well as attractive coral reef ecosystems in its subtropical and tropical latitudes.

Coral reefs, typically found in tropical marine waters, are popular tourist attractions since they contain an immense amount of biodiversity and many brightly colored fish and plants. Canada has no coral reefs, and in the United States they exist only south of Florida, where there are over 6,000 patch reefs. Mexico contains by far the greatest extension of coral reefs on the Continent. Reefs are found off the coast of Veracruz and all around the Yucatán Peninsula and Campeche Bank. Coral communities are found on the Pacific Coast, particularly around Baja California and off the coast of Guerrero.

Box 1.4 The Migratory Pacific Gray Whale

Whale watching has become a very popular tourist activity. It is conducted in 295 communities in 65 different jurisdictions worldwide; in 1994 an estimated 5.4 million people spent more than US\$700 million on this kind of tourism. Growth in the number of whale watchers has been estimated at 10 percent per year and growth in revenues at over 16 percent per year. In the United States whale watching occurs on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, the Gulf of Mexico and in the Hawaiian Islands (Spalding and Blumenfeld 1997, 6). In Canada whale watching occurs on both the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts and in the Arctic (Spalding and Blumenfeld 1997, 13). Whale watching in Mexico occurs on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, the Gulf of Mexico and the Sea of Cortez.

In North America, whale watching plays an economic role in several communities including among others, Tofino and Telegraph Cove, British Columbia; Tadoussac, Quebec; Friday Harbor, Washington; and Provincetown, Massachusetts. The main species watched are Humpback Whales, Gray Whales, Northern and Southern Right Whales, Blue Whales, Minke Whales, Sperm Whales, Short-finned Pilot Whales, Killer Whales, and the Bottlenose Dolphin (Spalding and Blumenfeld 1997, 4).

As a non-consumptive practice, whale watching is promoted as an industry that is compatible with the premise of sustainable development. Unfortunately, unmanaged growth of this tourist activity has proven that the high volume and intense human interest in these sea creatures can result in harmful impacts to the animals. There are potential short term (changes in behavior), medium term (changes in distribution and migratory routes) and long term (changes in reproductive success) effects which may result from this human attention (Spalding and Blumenfeld 1997, 3).

In the effort to promote whale watching that is economically and ecologically sustainable, various forms of regulatory initiatives have been taken in several tourist areas. In Tadoussac, Quebec, Canada, for example, regulatory initiatives have emerged as guidelines for tour boat operators and partnerships between tour operators and conservation authorities. Guidelines include booklets and pamphlets suggesting measures such as minimum distance between tour boat and whale and how and at what speed a tour boat should approach an animal. Partnerships between tour operators and conservation authorities are mutually beneficial and result in tour boat – whale interactions that are believed to be less disturbing to the whales.

The primary objectives of guidelines and legislation regarding whale watching are protection of whales from harmful effects and minimization of disturbance of whales during tourism activity (Spalding 1998, 184-188). Establishment of North American standards would promote a whale watching industry that avoids the ‘boom and bust’ development that has come to characterize many nature tours and thereby encourage a long-term and prosperous future for the industry.

Protected Spaces

Often a region or species becomes a tourist attraction because it is rare or endangered. It is now widely recognized that tourism itself can be a threat to these fragile ecosystems and that adequate planning and management are of utmost importance to avoid degradation of these resources. North America contains a number of protected spaces (see tables 1.9 and 1.10).

For the last 300 years, some parts of North America have experienced a tremendous and rapid alteration of their natural environments and, consequently the destruction of wildlife. However, the development of a strong conservation movement is evident in the establishment of many large national parks and other categories of protected areas that began in the United States with the creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872. Yellowstone was the first national park in the world, and it remains one of the most popular tourist destinations. Canada created its first national park at Banff in 1885 and shortly thereafter, in 1898, Monte Vedado del Mineral de El Chico became Mexico's first national park.

At this time there are a total of 2,402 legally protected spaces in North America representing 219,267,000 ha (Table 1.9). Of these protected spaces, 141 are part of international systems, 64 are biosphere reserves, 21 are world heritage sites, and 56 are wetlands that have been designated of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

At the national level, the United States occupies first place in the world in number of legally protected areas (1,615) and in total protected area (122,604,000 ha). Canada follows with 718 protected areas (92,110,000 ha) and Mexico with 69 protected areas (4,553,000 ha).

Table 1.9

National and International Protected Areas, 1997															
National Protection Systems										International Protection Systems{a}					
All Protected Areas (IUCN Categories I-V)			Totally Protected Areas (IUCN Cat. I-III)		Partially Protected Areas (IUCN Cat. IV-V)		% of Protected Areas (IUCN Cat. I-V) at least		Biosphere Reserves		World Heritage Sites		Wetlands of International Importance {b}		
#	Area (000 ha)	% land area	#	Area (000 ha)	#	Area (000 ha)	100,000 ha in size	1,000,000 ha in size	#	Area (000 ha)	#	Area (000 ha)	#	Area (000 ha)	
World {c}	10,401	841,041	6.4	4,502	499,446	5,899	348,433	12.1	1.5	337	219,891	126	127,001	895	66,840
Can	718	92,110	10	431	43,126	287	48,984	15.2	2.9	6	1,050	7	10,664	35	13,038
Mex	69	4,553	2.4	46	1,996	23	2,556	13	2.9	11	6,688	2	898	6	701
US	1,615	122,604	13.4	812	70,244	803	52,360	9.5	1.6	47	21,144	12	10,134	15	1,164
NA	2,402	219,267		1,289	115,366	1,113	103,900			64	28,882	21	21,696	56	14,903

Notes: a. Areas listed often include nationally protected systems; b. Total area of wetlands of international importance for the world is given for 891 Ramsar sites; total area for the remaining sites is not available; c. World and regional totals for national protected areas exclude Greenland. World totals exclude Antarctica.

Source: World Resources 1998-1999. Data Table 14.1, 320-321.

Canada, Mexico and the United States contain a number of protected areas. Table 1.10 lists protected areas subject to differing policies and measures that help promote their conservation.

Table 1.10 Protected Areas in North America

Canada	United States	Mexico
Aulavik National Park	Acadia National Park	Benito Juárez National Park
Auyuittuq National Park	Arches National Park	Bonampak Natural Monument
Reserve	Badlands National Park	Bosencheve National Park
Banff National Park	Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument	Calakmul Biosphere Reserve
Bruce Peninsula National Park	Big Bend National Park	Cañon del Sumidero National Park
Cape Breton Highlands National Park	Bryce Canyon National Park	Cascada de Basaseáchic National Park
Elk Island National Park	Canyon de Chelly National Monument	Cumbres de Monterrey National Park
Ellesmere Island National Park Reserve	Chaco Canyon National Monument	El Chico National Park
Forillon National Park	Cherokee National Forest	El Cielo Biosphere Reserve
Fundy National Park	Crater Lake National Park	El Gogorrón National Park
Georgian Bay Islands National Park	Craters of the Moon National Monument	El Pinacate y Gran Desierto de Altar Biosphere Reserve
Glacier National Park	Crow Creek Gold Mine National Park	El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve
Grasslands National Park	Denali National Park	El Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve
Gros Morne National Park	Dinosaur National Park	Isla Contoy Special Biosphere Reserve
Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve	Everglades National Park	Isla Isabel National Park
Iuklut Nogan National Park	Glacier Bay National Park	Izta-Popo National Park
Ivvavik National Park	Grand Canyon National Park	La Michilía Biosphere Reserve
Jasper National Park	Grand Teton National Park	Lagunas de Chacahua National Park
Keparikujik National Park	Great Smokey Mountains National Park (the most visited National Park)	Lagunas de Montebello National Park
Kluane National Park Reserve	Haleakala National Park	Mapimí Biosphere Reserve
Kootenay National Park	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	Mariposa Monarca Special Biosphere Reserve
Kouchibouguac National Park	Hot Springs National Park (the smallest National Park)	Montes Azules (Selva Lacandona) Biosphere Reserve
La Mauricie National Park	Joshua Tree National Monument	Palenque National Park
Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve	Kenai Fjords National Park	Pantanos de Centla Biosphere Reserve
Mount Revelstoke National Park	Kluane National Park	Pico de Orizaba National Park
Nahanni National Park Reserve	Mammoth Caves National Park	Ría Lagartos Special Biosphere Reserve
Pacific Rim National Park Reserve	Mesa Verde National Park	Ría Celestún Special Biosphere Reserve
Point Pelee National Park	Mount Rainier National Park	
Prince Albert National Park	Navajo National Monument	
Prince Edward Island National Park	Redwood National Park	
	Rocky Mountain National Park	

Pukaskwa National Park Riding Mountain National Park St. Lawrence Islands National Park Terra Nova National Park Vuntut National Park Wapusk National Park Waterton Lakes National Park Wood Buffalo National Park Yoho National Park	Olympic National Park Sequoia National Park Shenandoah National Park Wrangle Mts. National Park (the largest National Park) Yellowstone National Park Yosemite National Park Zion National Park	Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve Sierra de Manantlán Biosphere Reserve Sierra de Santa Marta Special Biosphere Reserve Tulum National Park Yaxchilán National Monumnet
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Note: A National Park Reserve is an area set aside as a national park pending settlement of any outstanding Aboriginal land claim.

1.5.2 Cultural Resources

Tourism attractions also include cultural sites—often inextricably linked to natural elements. North America has been home to human civilizations for well over 12,000 years, and traces of their traditional and cultural history correspond to prehistoric, pre-Columbian, European colonial, and present times. Data on the earliest cultures in North America is most complete in areas where glacial activity was limited or non-existent, such as in the southernmost portions of the Continent.

Pre-Columbian cultures occurred throughout much of North America. Many, including the Olmec, Maya, Toltec, Aztec, Mixtec, Zapotec and Tarascan, occurred in Mexico. These civilizations developed notable cities and ceremonial sites, produced singular works of art, and achieved much in terms of science and agriculture. They, along with other cultures that thrived prior to European contact, have given North America a wealth of cultural heritage which constitutes a major asset for tourism development.

Native American tribes were the first inhabitants of the United States and provide the nation's oldest and perhaps richest cultural heritage. In addition to the ancient indigenous cultures that no longer exist, there are currently over 500 recognized Native American tribes and Alaskan native villages in the United States, as well as native Hawaiian peoples, many of whom have ancestral roots in the United States which may date back over ten thousand years.

The native cultures of North America have typically been divided into geographic regions or cultural areas, including the Arctic, northern and eastern Woodlands, central Great Plains, Pacific Northwest, Southwest and Pacific Island regions. Distinctive natural and cultural resources appear in each of these regions. These include, among other things, evidence of human activity in the form of structures (such as mounds, cliff dwellings, adobes, kivas, teepees, hogans and longhouses), artifacts (such as tusk and wood carvings, basketry, jewelry, woven cloth, ornamented skins, weapons and tools), and burial and cremation sites. The ancient cultures also established rich traditions of intimacy with the natural world which render many natural

resources, such as waters, landforms, plants and animals, cultural heritage resources of the tribes as well.

Many tribal remains, artifacts and structures have been looted or removed to museums, universities and other institutions; others remain in their original locations, either on currently existing Indian Reservations or within the traditional territories of the Tribes. These cultural resources may thus, along with natural resource areas, be potential sites of tourism activities. In fact, due to the ecological traditions embodied in Native American cultures, tribal natural and cultural resources are a perfectly suited focus of tourism, and probably constitute a primary desired target of this activity based on the worldwide fascination with Native American cultures and their traditionally intimate relationship with the natural world.

In the US, natural and cultural resources that are tribal in nature are considered under US federal law and policy to be the property of the Tribes; it is therefore necessary to respect the legal status of US tribes, tribal lands and resources when developing policy regarding tourism. In the contiguous United States, most Native Americans live on or near reservations which are held by the United States in trust for the Tribes. This trust land, although federally owned and ultimately subject to federal law, is not public land and is subject to different law and policy. It may also be checker-boarded with abutting public land controlled by a federal agency such as the National Park Service (NPS), US Forest Service (USDA FS) or Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Of critical significance are the facts that tribal governments are the primary managers of tribal trust land and tribal natural and cultural resources located both on and off current reservations; and that all federal agencies and departments, including NPS, USDA FS, BLM, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service must consult with tribes on a government-to-government basis before taking any action which affects tribal members, lands or other resources. In the context of tourism, these are important issues because tribal governments must authorize access to tribal natural or cultural resources (and many, for a variety of religious or political reasons, may not wish to); they must also have a say in how tourism activities involving their lands and resources are conducted; and they must be the primary recipients of any economic benefit gained by these activities.

The European colonial past of the three countries has also left a rich heritage of French, Spanish and English origins. By way of illustration in Mexico, the *Secretaría de Turismo* (Sectur) has launched a successful program called *Ciudades Coloniales*, which strives to conserve and develop as tourist destinations many of Mexico's colonial cities. Mexico also has many villages and towns which retain their pre-Hispanic past through a mixture of Spanish and Indian heritage. Handicrafts, traditional cuisine, music, ancient ceremonies and folkloric dress are all a very important part of Mexico's heritage and touristic appeal. Box 1.5 illustrates tourism development based on both natural and cultural resources and shared by countries.

**Box 1.5 International Heritage Corridor Examples -
Collaborating Across Borders**

Los Caminos del Rio Grande in Mexico and the United States

A heritage corridor includes sites and landscapes that are both geographically and thematically related and provide unique frameworks for understanding the historical, cultural and natural development of communities and their surroundings and for encouraging economic tourism development. The broad purposes of designating a heritage corridor are three-fold: (1) to enhance and protect natural and cultural landscapes and historic sites; (2) to improve historical understanding and appreciation; and (3) to stimulate local community development.

A Bi-National Heritage Corridor named *Los Caminos del Rio* (meaning the road along the rivers) was established in 1992 and extends 200 miles along the Lower Rio Grande River from Laredo to Brownsville, Texas and from Columbia to Matamoros, Mexico. In Mexico the river is called the Rio Bravo. This international heritage corridor was created to enhance the shared historical and natural heritage that exists between the United States and Mexico and help promote and develop local communities through heritage tourism. The Los Caminos del Rio Corridor involves a partnership among an organization set up under the auspices of the Texas Historical Commission, Sectur and INAH, Mexico's National Anthropology Institute. Two twin corporations were created, one on either side of the border, to manage the corridor.

Champlain-Richelieu Valley Heritage Corridor Initiative in Canada and the United States

US National Park Service (NPS) is currently studying the feasibility of recognizing an international heritage corridor along the historic waterway and the adjacent lands of the Upper Hudson River, Lake George, Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River which covers a large region in the States of New York and Vermont and the Province of Quebec (the "Champlain-Richelieu Valley"). Linked together, the rich cultural landscapes and historic sites in the Champlain-Richelieu Valley recount an important part of the formative history of the United States and Canada and the relationships among early French and English explorers and settlers, First Nation peoples and the natural landscape. Preliminary discussions among US and Canadian government officials at the federal level and among officials in New York, Vermont and Quebec regarding this cross-boundary initiative have met with great interest. The International Corridor initiative has great potential for improving the promotion and protection of cultural and natural resources and further solidifying cross-boundary relations.

Such an initiative will build upon existing cross-boundary management of natural and cultural resources in the Champlain-Richelieu Valley which takes the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the Governors of New York and Vermont and the Premier of Quebec in 1988, which was renewed in 1992 and 1996. This MOU provides that the two States and Province will coordinate planning, cultural tourism development and pollution control to restore and protect natural and cultural resources in the Lake Champlain watershed.

1.5.3 Ecotourism Assets: A Framework for Planning and Analysis

Ecotourism natural and cultural assets exist in enormous number and variety. Natural assets are frequently associated with cultural elements (both past and present) and these cultural elements may include archeological sites, living villages and traditions, folkloric art, and historical monuments and sites. Both natural and cultural assets provide significant allure to the ecotourist and are part of the ecotourism phenomenon.

In view of the enormous number and variety of ecotourism assets, a number of methods to plan and analyse the development of an ecotourism site exist. For example, Ceballos-Lascuráin (1994) suggests dividing ecotourism attractions into three categories: focal, complementary and support attractions (see Table 1.11). Ceballos-Lascuráin (1994) also suggests that this methodology could be used at a national or even North American level to help assess competitive advantages, develop ecotourism strategies and assist in planning exercises.

Table 1.11 A Method for Planning and Analyzing Ecotourism Attractions

Focal Attractions

A focal attraction is the most distinctive and appealing feature of the natural and/or cultural heritage found in a specific region. Focal attractions constitute intrinsic and singular elements of the area or region, and are the main reason for ecotourists' travel to that location. Canada, Mexico, and the United States all have World Heritage Sites, which may be considered part of their "focal" ecotourism attractions at the national level (see Table 1.12).

Complementary Attractions

A complementary attraction is an element of natural and/or cultural heritage found in a specific area or region. Complementary attractions do not possess the singular attractiveness of the focal attractions and complementary attractions alone might not be enough to entice an ecotourist to travel a considerable distance. However, complementary attractions provide added value to an area and further reasons to visit it, and thus contribute to a richer and more varied experience, perhaps inducing a visitor to remain a longer period of time in the area. In this way, they provide the opportunity for further tourism spending and socioeconomic benefits. Complementary attractions may also help diffuse a potential concentration of tourists in an area that includes focal attractions.

Support Attractions

A third level of ecotourism attraction is the support attraction, which includes infrastructure that facilitates a visit to a specific area and provides a visitor with services and comfort. Support attractions can include ecolodges, restaurants, interpretive centers, access roads, observation towers, guiding services, horseback riding and boating services. Support attractions service the visitor but are not the principal reason for visiting a specific destination.

Source: adapted from Ceballos-Lascurain (1994).

Table 1.12 World Heritage Sites in North America

Canada	United States	Mexico
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Park (1978), • Nahanni National Park (1978), • Dinosaur Provincial Park (1979), • Anthony Island (1981), • Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Complex (1981), • Wood Buffalo National Park (1983), • Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks(1984), • Québec (Historic Area) (1985), • Gros Morne National Park (1987), • Lunenburg Old Town (1995). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mesa Verde National Park (1978), • Yellowstone National Park (1978), • Everglades National Park (1979), • Grand Canyon National Park (1979), • Independence Hall (1979), • Redwood National Park (1980), • Mammoth Cave National Park (1981), • Olympic National Park (1981), • Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site (1982), • Great Smokey Mountains National Park (1983), • San Juan National Historic Site and La Fortaleza (1983), • The Statue of Liberty (1984), • Yosemite National Park (1984), • Monticello, and the University of Virginia, Charlottesville (1987), • Chaco Culture National Historic Park (1987), • Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (1987), • Pueblo de Taos (1992), • Carlsbad Caverns National Park (1995). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Center of Mexico City and Xochimilco (1987), • Pre-Hispanic City and National Park of Palenque (1987), • Pre-Hispanic City of Teotihuacan (1987), • Historic Centre of Oaxaca and the Archaeological Site of Monte Alban (1987), • Historic Centre of Puebla (1987), • Sian Ka'an (1987), • Historic Town of Guanajuato and adjacent mines (1988), • Pre-Hispanic City of Chichén-Itza (1988), • Historic Centre of Morelia (1991), • El Tajin, Pre-Hispanic City (1992), • Whale Sanctuary of El Vizcaíno (1993), • Historic Centre of Zacatecas (1993), • Rock Paintings of the Sierra de San Francisco (1993), • The Earliest 16th Century Monasteries on the slopes of Popocatepetl (1994), • The Prehispanic Town of Uxmal (1996), • The Historic Monuments Zone of Querétaro (1996), • Hospicio Cabañas, Guadalajara (1997). • Historic Monuments Zone of Tlacotalpan (1998)
<p>Canada and the United States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tatshenshini-Alsek/ Kluane National Park/ Wrangell-St.Elias National Park and Reserve and Glacier Bay National Park (1979), • Waterton Glacier International Peace Park (1995). 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archeological Zone of Paquime, Casas Grandes (1998)
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Notes: This list includes the date of designation as a World Heritage Site in brackets. This list includes both natural and cultural sites.

This method of classifying ecotourism attractions into three categories may be applied at the site-specific level. Box 1.6 illustrates this methodology using the Ría Celestún Special Biosphere Reserve.

**Box 1.6 Ría Celestún Special Biosphere Reserve
Yucatán, Mexico**

Focal Attraction: The Ría Celestún Special Biosphere Reserve harbors nesting and wintering colonies of thousands of Greater Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*). These colonies are a great ecotourism attraction both for Mexican nationals and foreigners. If this focal attraction were the only reason to visit Ría Celestún most visitors would spend only enough time at the reserve to see the flamingos.

Complementary Attractions: Celestún also has interesting complementary attractions that add value to the reserve and entice ecotourists to remain for a longer period of time thereby generating more revenue for the local community and the protected area. These complementary attractions include an interesting mangrove ecosystem, the unique hydrology of the *ría*, crocodiles, and other water and seabirds.

Support Attractions: Boat trips are offered by the local inhabitants for watching the flamingos and other birds and wildlife. In addition there are several modest hotels and lodges in the village.

Planning for environmentally sustainable tourism can occur at the international, national, regional, and local levels. The major components of integrated tourism planning at any level include: land use plans; environmental impact assessments; legislative, regulatory, and enforcement measures; research and monitoring; training and education; and local participation (USEPA et al. 1995, 19).

1.6 Impacts of Tourism Development in Natural Areas: Economic, Sociocultural and Ecological

This section will present an outline of the economic, social, and ecological impacts of tourism development in natural areas in order to assist in the evaluation of its potential as a sustainable development option. The following discussion is not an exhaustive list of tourism impacts; such analysis is beyond the scope of this report and much has already been written on this subject (see Weaver 1998; Mathieson and Wall 1982; Pearce 1992; WTO/UNEP 1992; Butler 1991). Box 1.7 provides an abbreviated listing of the potential costs and benefits of ecotourism development.

Box 1.7 Potential Costs and Benefits of Nature-based Tourism Development	
Economic Impacts	
<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Costs</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *local revenue generation *foreign exchange *employment *promotes linkages to other industry sectors (ie, arts and crafts) *regional economic stimulus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *start-up/ongoing expenses *low-paying, seasonal employment *unstable market *economic leakages *opportunity costs
Sociocultural Impacts	
<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Costs</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *fosters host/guest environmental awareness/cultural exchange *cultural revitalization/preservation *community pride *accessibility of industry to society *promotes aesthetic/spiritual experience *locally-controlled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *disrupts cultures *imposes foreign value systems *displaces local people *labor competition from the outside *local resentment *outsider resentment of traditional practices *loss of local control
Ecological Impacts	
<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Costs</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *protects environment *promotes restoration of habitat *fosters environmental ethic *wildlife pays, so wildlife stays (protection of species) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *ecological carrying capacity can be exceeded leading to degradation *exposure of fragile areas to development *decrease in biodiversity *disrupts natural ecosystems, fecundity and survival of flora and fauna.

Source: Adapted from Weaver 1998.

Economic Impacts

Tourism is looked upon favorably as an industry that provides a strong and stable economy for the host area (Gunn 1994). For most countries, it is an important component of their national economic development strategy. The impressive dollar figures representing receipts generated through tourism in Box 1.8 indicate the enormous market value of the tourism industry to the North American continent. Local communities receive economic benefits through income and employment in the form of wages, salaries, and profits. These benefits are often earned by local populations through the sale of handicrafts, serving as guides, and the provisions of services, such as concessions and accommodations (Zube and Bush 1990).

**Box 1.8 Contribution of Tourism to the National Economies
in North America**

According to the WTO's international tourism receipts, Canada, Mexico and the United States are among the world's top 20 tourism earners. Each country's 1997 tourism earnings and world standing are as follows:

Canada

Canada earned US\$ 8.9 million dollars in international tourism receipts, a 0.7% increase over 1996. In terms of international standing, Canada is 11th as a tourism earner.

Mexico

In 1997, Mexico placed 15th in international standings as a tourism earner. Tourism receipts totaled US\$ 7.6 million dollars in earnings, a 9.5% increase over 1996.

United States

The United States has maintained a 1st place position in international tourism receipts for over a decade. As the number one tourism earner in the world for 1997, the United States earned US\$ 75 million in tourism receipts, an increase of 7.4% over 1996.

source: Tourism Highlights 1997, World Tourism Organization, Chief of Statistics, Economic Analysis and Market Research, Madrid, Spain. (<<http://www.world-tourism.org/>>)

There is, however, increasing recognition that the economic benefits of tourism are not without their costs. Some researchers warn that the industry is, in some cases, an unstable source of income due to market fluctuations and financial leakage (Boo 1992b; Milne et al. 1995). Whether the host community will actually reap the benefits will often depend upon such factors as the nature of the site, the type of tourist, whether there is an organized package tour or independent visits, the average duration of the stay, and the availability of supporting facilities and infrastructures. For the ecotourism industry, use of local materials, people, and products is critical for promoting a small-scale industry that stimulates local economies. In many cases, particularly with respect to package tours in developing countries, 60 percent to 80 percent of the money spent by tourists leaks back to tour operators or agencies located, for the most part, in the developed countries or regions (Mills 1996). In addition, the facilities and services needed for supporting tourist attractions place added stress on existing infrastructures and will demand a certain amount of land which once may have served other uses, such as agriculture. Typically, the costs in supplying water and waste disposal, electrical power and public security are borne by the host community (Butler 1991; Gunn 1994). If tourism is seasonal, it also may result in long economically fallow periods in a community.

Besides generating foreign exchange receipts, the industry is also noted for providing employment and promoting regional growth. Box 1.9 illustrates the contribution of the tourism industry to national employment figures in the three countries. Many economic policy makers argue the industry is attractive in regions experiencing economic decline, especially in areas suffering from resource collapse and economic dislocation (Power 1996; Lindberg and

McKercher 1997). These areas are often rural and remote regions that have the greatest potential for ecotourism development.

With the ecotourism industry emphasizing small-scale development, the contribution of this niche market to national employment figures is likely to be minimal. However, Brandon (1996, 25) points out that nature-based tourism has generated substantial employment on a national basis in such countries as Nepal, Tanzania, and Costa Rica. It is questionable however whether this type of tourism is actually ecotourism with these countries promoting a "mix" of tourism types.

**Box 1.9 Selected National Tourism Employment Figures
in North America**

Canada

The CTHRC has assessed the adventure tourism and outdoor recreation sector of the Canadian Tourism Industry from an employment perspective. In 1994, they estimated that 57,400 people (4 percent of the tourism workforce) worked in the sector, with an expectation of 2.6 percent growth per annum to the year 2005. The work force was 59 percent male and only 26 percent of the jobs were full time, with the balance being seasonal or part-time positions. The sector was dominated by younger workers, with 43 percent under 25 years old and 65 percent under 35 (CTHRC 1995).

Another survey estimated C\$43.6 million in wage income in 1992, with an average number of 4.8 employees per business in the adventure travel sector. Of these jobs, 68 percent were full time. Trail riding, canoeing, snowmobiling and other winter activities were the major contributors to employment, representing 54 percent of all adventure travel sector jobs (Industry Canada 1995, 71).

Mexico

Tourism presently generates 1,722,000 direct jobs in Mexico, which means that about 6 million Mexicans depend on tourism for their livelihoods. Tourism also generates 4,305,000 indirect jobs. Most of the tourism employment in Mexico relates to traditional tourism, suggesting significant opportunities for new job creation through ecotourism development, especially in more rural and remote areas.

United States

Wildlife watching in the United States creates 1 million jobs, US\$24.2 billion in wages, US\$323.5 million in state income tax, and US\$3.8 billion in federal income tax (USFWS 1998, 1). Travel to the United States National Parks Service areas generated direct and indirect economic impact for local communities of US\$14.2 billion, and supported almost 300,000 tourist-related jobs during 1996.

Tourism often equals employment, but more often than not, local people in developing countries (or regions) are hired to carry out low-level, low-paying jobs, while people from the developed countries (or regions) retain administrative positions (Brandon 1996). In many cases the quantity and quality of employment opportunities for men and women is a concern for policy makers. The majority of women tend to hold the seasonal, low-paying jobs with men in managerial

positions (Levy and Lerch 1991; Breathnach et al 1994). In many cases, this structure clearly does not respect and acknowledge equality among, not only women and men, but also between different cultures. The labor market maintains the master/servant, male-dominated, imperialistic model of historical North-South relationships. With the sustainable tourism literature emphasizing the fair and equitable distribution of economic benefits for all social groups in a community, one of the challenges of ecotourism is ensuring equal access to the local labor market.

Sociocultural Impacts

The less one culture communicates with another, the less likely they are to be corrupted, one by the other; but on the other hand, the less likely it is, in such conditions, that the respective emissaries of these cultures will be able to seize the richness and significance of their diversity (Lévis-Strauss 1961).

This statement reflects a fundamental paradox of tourism. Cross-cultural exchange is probably the greatest social value of tourism, but it can also lead to the corruption of one culture by another and a homogenization of cultures. In many remote tourism destinations, tourism has helped to revitalize cultural traditions, increase community pride, and acted as a positive force in fostering host/guest relationships (Inskeep 1991; Nickels et al. 1991). In the majority of situations, however the towns and communities most affected by tourism rarely have control over its development. Most tourism projects have an outside sponsor, such as developers or governments which often proves to be an unsustainable method of developing tourism resulting in a number of detrimental impacts.

Detrimental impacts to the sociocultural environment of the host communities are invariably attributed to tourists who disrupt cultures by their disrespectful behavior in their selfish pursuit of pleasure (Turner and Ash 1976; Wells 1993). Social impact studies carried out in a number of countries have revealed that a majority of local residents believe that increased numbers of tourists cause or enhance existing social problems. Among the problems identified were an increase in crime, the introduction of drugs and prostitution, in particular, child prostitution (Putteney 1990; Gunn 1994). Erosion of local culture due to tourist behavior, conflict between generations, and loss of local language are also concerns (Pearce 1992). Tourism has also been charged with diminishing the quality of cultural artifacts. Where artisans once took time and pride in creating works reflective of their culture's richness, tourist markets have encouraged the demand of mass produced, cheap imitation souvenirs for tourist consumption (Healy 1992a).

To address this, one of the core principles of ecotourism is the participation and involvement of local communities in and near the natural areas (Boo 1992b). Ecotourism can promote environmental stewardship to both visitors and locals (Ross and Wall 1999). Both passive and active education is possible using informative materials, signs, guided tourism, presentations and other types of interpretations. This can add to the visitors' experience and encourage appropriate behavior. Consequently, it is not only the communities hosting tourism who are the beneficiaries, but the tourist too is significantly rewarded.

The participation of local residents in sustainable tourism projects is also an important element for policymakers and researchers evaluating the success of the industry. Since many tourism projects are located in or adjacent to protected areas, it is important to understand the role of local residents in protected area management. In the past, many protected areas excluded local residents and lead to unsustainable results. During the 1990s however, this short-coming was recognized and current philosophy emphasizes linking conservation of protected areas with local social and economic development through such methods as Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs). The aim of ICDPs is to provide local residents with alternative sources of income to improve local living standards, mitigate poverty, and promote sustainable economic development (Brandon 1996). Hough (1988) argues that one of the biggest obstacles for conservation is how to build linkages for local participation in the management process to strengthen communication and trust. The philosophy underlying sustainable tourism development is one way that local residents can participate in protected area management. Such participation can include inclusion in the decision-making process and economic endeavors such as the sale of handicrafts, serving as guides, and the provision of services. Local community participation in the development and management of tourism is understood as a critical component for measuring its sustainability.

Ecological Impacts

Ecotourism has been advocated by many as a strategy for natural resource conservation, but others have questioned its true conservation value. Ehrenfield (1992) describes how efforts to commercialize conservation, including ecotourism, are very problematic due to their biological and economic complexity and often cannot fulfill their intended purpose. It is clear that while tourism can provide economic incentives for the preservation of species and natural systems, it can also destroy the resources on which it depends (Berle 1990).

Tourism can be a source of funding to maintain or enhance environmental integrity of natural systems. It can supplement government conservation budgets and provide incentive for private sector conservation (Whelan 1991; Boo 1992a; Lindberg and Huber 1993). In private sector conservation efforts, successful strategies to generate capital and defray ecologically sound management costs include establishing entrance fees and donation opportunities (Sherman and Dixon 1991; Boo 1992a; Lindberg and Huber 1993). And in many cases, a percentage of the money generated from tourism is directly applied to the conservation of the environment (Brandon 1996). In Rwanda and the Galapagos islands, entrance fees have produced significant revenues, however in other areas fees are only nominal (Ziffer 1989). Among conservation officers in East Africa, for example, the often voiced principle is “wildlife pays, so wildlife stays”(WTO/UNEP 1992).

Revenue from tourism development can be a motivating factor for conservation initiatives, but the industry can also seriously threaten the integrity and viability of the natural systems and the ecological costs of ecotourism are widely recognized (Boo 1990; Dearden and Rollins 1993; Brandon 1996). Tourism can exceed the ecological limits of the area (its “carrying capacity”) and become transformed from what was intended to be a non-consumptive renewable resource industry to yet another short term “boom and bust” enterprise (Romanova 1989; Butler 1992a).

There are many documented cases where tourism has resulted in serious damage to fragile environments.³ Tourism can create litter, trail erosion, water pollution, alterations in animal behavior or reproduction rates and depletion of natural resources from hunting and plant collection. In a review of 166 studies on the effects of nonconsumptive recreation on wildlife, Boyle and Samson (1985) found that recreationists affect wildlife by altering habitat, causing disturbance and direct mortality. They also found that while mechanized forms of recreation create the most serious impacts, casual intrusion by foot could also significantly affect vulnerable species. In addition to exceeding the carrying capacities of sites, transportation, waste material, and increased pressure on areas contributes to environmental degradation. Unintentional and intentional acts committed by insensitive tourists ranging from littering, throwing away lit cigarettes or matches, walking off the beaten path, scrawling graffiti on monuments, and taking away “free souvenirs” from sites further degrades the environment of ecotourist destinations. This fact is not lost upon the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), who warns against uncontrolled development,

Many previously unexploited areas have been irreparably spoiled and monuments dilapidated beyond repair. Host communities are seriously destabilized by an industry that often seeks quick profits regardless of any other consideration.⁴

Tourism and the environment are not merely interrelated, they are interdependent (Pigram 1980). In fact, in a seminal publication Budowski (1976) points out that the relationship between those promoting tourism and those advocating conservation of nature can take three different forms: conflict, coexistence and symbiosis (see Box 1.10).

Box 1.10 Potential Relationships between Tourism and the Environment

1. **Conflict:** Tourism and nature conservation can be in conflict, particularly when the presence of tourism and what it implies is detrimental to nature.
2. **Coexistence:** Coexistence can exist between those promoting tourism and those promoting conservation when neither tourism or conservation is well developed in an area. This is rarely a static situation, particularly because an increase in tourism is apt to induce substantial change. This relationship is followed by either a mutually satisfactory relationship (symbiosis) or by conflict (if things go wrong).

³ Just two of many examples: the ancient site at Stonehenge in the United Kingdom was closed indeterminately to tourists, due to repeated acts of vandalism, such as graffiti, and to erosion in the circular paths which caused stones to topple over. Similarly, the Lascaux Caves in France containing historic paintings dating from 15,000 to 13,000 BC had to be closed to the public after serious deterioration was caused by exposure to moisture and CO₂. *Heritage Sites at Risk: some places neglected, others too much visited*, Houston Chronicle, 18 October 1997.

⁴ Press Release, *supra* note 1.

3. **Symbiosis:** In this relationship tourism and conservationists are organized in such a way that both derive benefits from the relationship. From the conservationists point of view, the natural assets are conserved or evolve towards an even more satisfactory condition. This relationship leads to the realization that conservation of nature can be a useful tool for achieving a better quality of life.

Source: adapted from Budowski 1976.

The relationship between tourism and the environment is often characterized by coexistence moving towards conflict (Budowski 1976). There are several reasons for this, including inadequate management. For this reason, many (Inskeep 1991; Wight 1993b; Brandon and Margoluis 1996) have urged that preservation or enhancement of the ecological resources is a fundamental component of any rational tourism plan. Further, that while it is clear that tourism use of an area will cause change, and negative change can be critically damaging, positive change is the goal and good management intervenes between use and its effects (Farrell and Runyan 1991).

Conclusion

It is impractical to list here all relevant economic, social, and ecological impacts (positive and negative) that tourism activities may incur, moreover each case should be examined within its own specific context. However, it is necessary to include for each impact study an understanding of the benefits and costs, and to identify the stakeholder and appropriate levels of analysis (local/regional/global) in order to obtain a comprehensive long-term understanding of the sustainability of ecotourism to the North American continent. Moreover, as the demand for tourism to natural areas increases into the new millenium, information that provides details to on-site conditions that promote, or do not promote harmony to an area's economic, sociocultural and ecological systems has become indispensable (Boo 1992a; Valentine 1992; Lindberg and McKercher 1997).

1.7 Some Key Issues

- Sustainable tourism is defined, in theory, as tourism development that minimizes its negative impacts and maximizes its positive impacts on the sociocultural and ecological environment through planning and management.
- Ecotourism is a niche market within sustainable tourism. It is sustainable tourism to natural areas and there are numerous definitions of ecotourism that are attempting to translate theory into practice.
- Tours can be ecologically-based but not ecologically sound.
- A clearer understanding of sustainable nature tourism is emerging in the mid-1990's due to more formalized accreditation programs.
- Canada, Mexico and the United States have different working definitions of the term ecotourism both within and among the countries.
- Surveys of ecotourist profiles in Latin America, Canada, and the United States found that on average, an ecotourist tends to be older with a graduate degree, have a high level of disposable income, and enjoys travelling with family or friends.
- Conservation of the cultural and natural resources is a key factor to continue attracting nature-oriented visitors.
- Popularity of guidebooks suggests that tourists are actively selecting companies that have a genuine interest in protecting the natural and cultural environment.
- Accurate data on ecotourism is difficult to find due to varying definitions of the term, non site-specific census methods and a lack of relevant studies.
- Trends indicate conventional tourism has risen over the past decade and continues to do so. They also suggest a diversification and increase of tourism into alternative and specialized activities such as ecotourism, birdwatching, hiking, canoeing, visiting natural settings and interesting cultures.
- Key North American natural and cultural tourism assets include ecological regions and landscapes; fauna and flora; protected spaces and species; cultural populations, sites and artifacts.
- Ecotourism creates economic, sociocultural and ecological impacts. These impacts may enhance the economic, sociocultural or ecological environment, hence creating positive impact, or they can detract from these issues creating negative impacts.
- While tourism is considered by some as a stable source of income, research has shown that market fluctuations and financial leakage can drastically reduce the positive aspects of tourism development creating very insecure employment.
- Participation by the local community is key to the long-term viability of tourism.
- Increased tourism is believed by some local residents to increase existing social problems including crime, use of drugs, prostitution and in particular child prostitution. Other social concerns include erosion of local culture, conflict between generations, loss of local language, and diminishing the quality of cultural artifacts.
- History has proven that if tourism is not properly planned and managed and exceeds the limits of the area, its carrying capacity, the industry is transformed from a non-consumptive renewable resource venture into a short term "boom and bust" enterprise.

- Ecotourism is often developed in relatively remote wilderness areas. These areas can be in or near residential communities. As a result, ecotourism development may have specific economic and sociocultural impacts on these communities.
- Successful ecotourism management minimizes its negative impacts and maximizes its positive ecological, sociocultural and economic impacts.
- Those promoting tourism and those promoting nature conservation can exist in three types of a relationship: conflict, coexistence or symbiosis. A symbiotic relationship, where both those promoting tourism and those promoting nature conservation benefit is the ultimate goal.

CHAPTER 2

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK: ACTORS, APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN NORTH AMERICA

2.1 Introduction

The countries of North America have not traditionally cooperated to develop or promote tourism. Rather, Canada, Mexico, and the United States have tended to develop tourism regionally within their own countries and to promote tourism within national boundaries. Nevertheless, an international visitor might not view the borders of the three countries as barriers to their travel experience. A tourist arriving in Vancouver, Canada may travel down the West Coast of the United States and depart from Los Angeles.

Similarly, a tourist who is specifically interested in nature tourism and outdoor experiences may be undeterred by national borders. Thus, a trip to Big Bend National Park in Texas in the southern United States, may also involve a visit to Maderas del Carmen National Park in the northern Mexican state of Coahuila; or hiking the length of the Appalachian mountain chain may be undertaken section by section over several years, perhaps beginning in the United States and ending in Canada. In addition, many international boundaries do not respect the ecological dimensions of nature tourism resources of North America, such as migrating birds, whales or Monarch butterflies, thus conservation efforts of these species is best considered cooperatively by the three countries. From a commercial point of view, there are large tour operators that sell outdoor and nature tourism experiences throughout North America, selecting specific destinations and experiences and marketing them.⁵

North America, with its diversity of geography, climate, and cultures could be considered under one umbrella to find ways to develop and promote sustainable tourism as a region. The three countries might usefully search for mechanisms to jointly develop new nature tourism products and experiences, and to cooperatively promote sustainable tourism to both domestic and international travelers. Such efforts could build on their joint commitment to environmental and conservation issues, and might lead to the establishment of standards, accreditation, and mechanisms to help manage and monitor the ecological costs and benefits of nature tourism.

Section 2.2 identifies a number of the key stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism development in Canada, Mexico, and the United States through a review of international organizations, governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and tourism industry representatives. This section is by no means an exhaustive study of the stakeholders, other more extensive compilations exist (see Edwards et al. 1998; Ecotourism Society 1999), but is meant to provide a framework for exploring the opportunities for trilateral cooperation and intersectoral coordination in a North American context. This review of the key

⁵ The large European tour operator *EXPLORE* offers small group exploratory holidays around the world, and their tours to the Americas include Canada, Mexico and the United States, as well as Central and South America.

actors involved in North American sustainable tourism is followed by section 2.3 which describes some of the many collaborative activities taking place both within and between the countries of Canada, Mexico and the United States.

2.2 Actors Related to Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism involves a number of actors including government officials, local communities, protected area personnel, the tourism industry, nongovernmental organizations, financial institutions and consumers (see Table 2.1). Each of these play a role during the development process of sustainable tourism. While there are no set roles for each of the many tourism actors, a brief description of some of their key functions is: government officials are responsible for policy and the infrastructure that facilitates conservation and economic objectives, local communities are key information sources for local ecological and socioeconomic issues, protected area personnel provide natural resource management methods; the tourism industry influences how the destination is developed; and nongovernmental organizations can facilitate information exchange between the local communities and tourism developers and provide financial and technical assistance; financial institutions also provide economic assistance; and consumers can influence the tourism market through education that allows them to make educated decisions with their tourism dollars (Boo 1992a). It must be emphasized that these roles are flexible, non-exclusive and may change over time.

Table 2.1 Sustainable Tourism Actors

-
- government officials,
 - local communities/residents,
 - protected area personnel,
 - the tourism industry,
 - nongovernmental organizations,
 - financial institutions, and
 - consumers/tourists.
-

Source: adapted from Boo 1992a

The following is an overview of international and national organizations, governmental agencies, and institutions that are playing an important role in providing technical and financial support for the development of sustainable tourism policies and programmes. Each organization is categorized under the heading of international organizations, governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and tourism industry representatives. This is not a comprehensive listing, but is meant to provide some details to the diversity of organizations, institutions, and representatives involved in sustainable tourism planning in North America.

2.2.1 International Organizations

The following is a selected listing of international organizations that are providing technical and financial support for the development of sustainable tourism policies and programs. Table 2.2

provides a summary of the focus areas of each organization outlined in this section. Detailed descriptions of the organizations can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 2.2 International Organizations involved in North American Sustainable Tourism: Their Roles and General Areas of Interest			
AREA OF INTEREST	CANADA	MEXICO	UNITED STATES
Environment, Protected Areas	CEC, ICLEI, IUCN, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP	CEC, ICLEI, IDB, IDRC, IUCN, OAS, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP, USAID	CEC, ICLEI, IUCN, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP
Sociocultural issues, Local communities	CEC, ICLEI, IUCN, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP	CEC, GEF, ICLEI, IDB, IDRC, IUCN, OAS, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP, USAID, WB	CEC, ICLEI, IUCN, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP
Economic Development	CEC, CIDA, ICLEI, IUCN, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP	CEC, CIDA, GEF, ICLEI, IDB, IDRC, IUCN, OAS, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP, USAID, WB	CEC, ICLEI, IUCN, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP
Sustainable Development/ Tourism	CEC, ICLEI, IUCN, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP, WTTC, WTO	CEC, GEF, ICLEI, IDB, IDRC, CIDA, IUCN, OAS, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP, USAID, WB, WTTC, WTO	CEC, ICLEI, IUCN, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP, WTTC, WTO
Education/training Technical assistance	CEC, ICLEI, IUCN, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP, WTTC, WTO	CEC, GEF, ICLEI, IDB, IDRC, IUCN, OAS, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP, USAID, WB, WTTC, WTO	CEC, ICLEI, IUCN, SCBD, CSD, UNESCO, UNEP, WTTC, WTO
Financial Assistance	CEC	CIDA, CEC, GEF, IDRC, IDB, OAS, UNEP, USAID, WB	CEC

2.2.2 Federal Government Organizations

The governments of each of the three countries approach the development of tourism differently. There are disparate approaches to the development and promotion of tourism from the decentralized state-by-state approach of the United States, to the mix of provincial responsibility for tourism with federal-industry cooperative marketing in Canada, to a relatively centralized approach in Mexico with a recent shift to decentralization.

Despite different approaches and different institutional structures, there are commonalities among many of the issues that face each country in developing sustainable tourism policies and programs. In order to achieve a North American perspective, there is a need for broad national principles related to sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism issues cut across departments and disciplines, and the coordination of policies and programs is limited.

One common theme within the three countries is the delegation of a majority of tourism policies to regional levels. Even Mexico, the only country in North America with a Ministry of Tourism and representation at the cabinet level, is decentralizing its industry. While one of the basic premises of sustainable tourism is local community involvement, this still requires coordination

at a national level if conservation and socioeconomic benefits are to be of value from an ecosystem perspective and for national economies. In Canada and the United States, both Parks Canada and the US National Park Service approach tourism from an ecosystem point of view. They acknowledge that infrastructure and facilities must respect natural laws, and that management does not end at park boundaries. Similarly, sustainable tourism initiatives led by communities and municipalities must be considered in a context of regional and national tourism strategies for these initiatives to be successful.

Table 2.3 highlights the areas of responsibility of different government agencies in each of the three countries, and demonstrates that issues related to sustainable tourism cut across many departments. Appendix 2 provides a detailed description of government agencies in the three countries.

Table 2.3 Government Agencies and Responsibilities Related to Tourism			
	Canada	Mexico	United States
Environment, Natural Protected Areas and Natural Resource Management	Environment Canada Canadian Wildlife Service Department of Canadian Heritage Parks Canada (National Protected Areas) Natural Resources Canada Canadian Forest Service	Semarnap Unidad Coordinadora de Asuntos Internacionales Coordinación de Delegaciones Federales INE Coordinación General del Sistema Nacional de Areas Protegidas Conabio	Environmental Protection Agency Department of Agriculture Forest Service Department of Interior National Park Service Bureau of Land Management Fish and Wildlife Service
Cultural Issues	Department of Canadian Heritage Parks Canada (National Historical Sites) Department of Indian and Northern Affairs	INI SEP INAH Conaculta	BIA Department of Interior National Park Service Bureau of Land Management Fish and Wildlife Service
Tourism	Canadian Tourism Commission* Department of Canadian Heritage Parks Canada	Sectur Fonatur	USNTO* Department of Agriculture Forest Service Department of Interior National Park Service Bureau of Land Management Fish and Wildlife Service

Socioeconomic Development	Industry Canada	SHCP Sedesol	Department of Commerce Department of Agriculture USHUD
Transportation	Transport Canada	SCT	Highway Administration
Marine	Department of Fisheries and Oceans	Semarnap	Department of Commerce NOAA Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service
Statistics	Statistics Canada	INEGI	

*CTC and USNTO are both public-private partnerships

2.2.3 Nongovernmental Organizations

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are increasingly playing a critical role in providing technical assistance and some financial support for sustainable tourism development in North America. The following list provides an abbreviated version and sample of some of their activities. Appendix 3 provides a detailed description of these NGOs.

AREA OF INTEREST	CANADA	MEXICO	UNITED STATES
Environment, Protected Areas	CERF, CI, IISD, TES, TNC, QLF, WI, WWF	ASK, CI, ECO, IISD, TNC, PRO, QLF, TES, WI, WWF	CI, EDF, IISD, NAS, TES, TNC, QLF, SC, WI, WWF
Sociocultural issues, Local communities	CI, IISD, TES, TNC, QLF, WI, WWF	ASK, CI, ECO, IISD, PRO, TES, TNC, QLF, WI, WWF Alcadeco	CI, EDF, IISD, NAS, TES, TNC, QLF, SC, WI, WWF
Economic Development	CI, IISD, TES, TNC, QLF, WI, WWF	ASK, CI, ECO, IISD, PRO, TES, TNC, QLF, WI, WWF	CI, IISD, NAS, TES, TNC, QLF, SC, WI, WWF
Sustainable Development/Tourism	CERF, CI, IISD, TES, TNC, QLF, WI, WWF	ASK, CI, ECO, IISD, PRO, TES, TNC, WI, WWF	CI, EDF, IISD, NAS, TES, TNC, QLF, SC, WI, WWF
Education/training Technical assistance	CERF, CI, IISD, TES, TNC, WI, WWF	ASK, CI, ECO, IISD, PRO, QLF, TES, TNC, WI, WWF	CI, EDF, IISD, NAS, TES, TNC, SC, WI, WWF

2.2.4 Academic Institutions

Due to the growth of the global nature-based tourism industry, institutions of higher learning are increasingly offering courses and conducting research on the subject of sustainable tourism development. These universities play an important role in providing information for sustainable

tourism development through scientific research and technical support. Table 2.5 provides a partial listing of universities in North America.

INTEREST	CANADA	MEXICO	UNITED STATES
Ecotourism/ Nature-based Tourism	Brock University Lakehead University McGill University Simon Fraser University Trent University University of Alberta University of Guelph University of Northern British Columbia University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM) University of Victoria University of Waterloo University of Western Ontario	Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico Instituto Tecnologico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey Universidad de Quintana Roo Instituto Politecnico Nacional Universidad La Salle Universidad Autotonoma Metropolitana	California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo Clemson University Colorado State University Duke University George Washington University Michigan State University Oregon State University University of Hawaii University of Idaho University of Maine - Orono University of Missouri - Colombia University of New Hampshire University of Vermont Yale University University of Texas

2.2.5 The Private Sector

The private sector of the nature-based tourism industry includes tour and lodge operators, travel agents, restaurant owners, vendors, industry associations and other enterprises that have links to nature tourism. These businesses and agencies promote and market tourism destinations, offer services, such as tours, food and accommodations, sell merchandise, educate the traveler and pursue environmental goals. An example of efforts toward environmentally sound tourism development is ecolodges (see Box 2.1).

Box 2.1 Product Development – Ecolodges

A product of the ecotourism industry is packaged lodge accommodation in remote, natural areas. According to The Ecotourism Society, “the term ecolodge is an industry label used to identify a nature-dependent tourist lodge that meets the philosophy of ecotourism” (Hawkins et al. 1995).

At a purist level an ecolodge will offer a tourist an educational and participatory experience, be developed and managed in an environmentally sensitive manner and protect its operating environment. An ecolodge is different from mainstream lodges, like fishing and ski lodges and luxury retreats. It is the philosophy of ecological sensitivity that must underlie, and ultimately

define, each operation. It is this philosophy that the client is seeking both from the lodge operator and from government in their support of resource conservation.

The most important thing about an ecolodge is that the ecolodge is not the most important thing (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1997). It is the quality of the surrounding environment that is most important; the local attractions both natural and cultural, and the way ecotourism circuits are set up, operated and marketed, also the way in which local populations are actively involved in the process.

The principal attraction of an ecolodge to the tourist is that it provides the opportunity to be close to nature (in some cases, supplemented by interesting cultural elements). An ecolodge is always part of the support attraction of an ecotourism destination, and should never be intended as a focal or complementary attraction.

The major distinction between an ecolodge and a traditional lodge is that in the latter the main attractions are of an artificial character, as well as the facilities and activities which take place there (such as golf, tennis, gymnasiums, jet-skiing and water-skiing, windsurfing, or swimming pools). The main attractions of an ecolodge are its natural setting and nature-based activities which allow for a better appreciation and enjoyment of the ecological environment. In the conventional resort-type lodge, much of the site (such as patios, terraces, lawns, garden compositions, sporting fields, water basins, and swimming pools) is typically reconfigured and the tourist's experience and environment very controlled.

In any ecolodge project there is the need to apply a new approach to architecture, now widely termed as ecological design or "ecodesign." One definition of Ecodesign is "any type of design that minimizes environmentally negative impacts by integrating itself with the surrounding ecosystem" (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1997). According to this definition, the main principles of ecodesign are: solutions grow from place; ecological accounting informs design; design with nature and, make nature visible. A new approach to physical planning and architectural design is required for fragile and undisturbed ecosystems.

The following section includes a brief selection of the marketing information provided by some industry associations in the three countries

Industry Associations -- International and National

Canada

The Canadian National Aboriginal Tourism Association (CNATA)

The Canadian National Aboriginal Tourism Association (CNATA) was formed in 1992 with a mandate to promote aboriginal tourism throughout Canada, while maintaining the absolute integrity and honor of the country's aboriginal peoples, their lands, and their cultures. (<<http://www.vli.ca/clients/abc/cnata/cnata3.htm>>).

Mexico

The Mexican Association of Adventure Travel and Ecotourism (Amtave)

The Mexican Association of Adventure Travel and Ecotourism (Amtave) is a group of about 40 plus travel providers, with various interpretations of "ecotourism". The group was formed in 1994 (<<http://www.amtave.com.mx/>>).

United States

Pacific Asia Travel Association

Founded in Hawaii in 1951, the Pacific Asia Travel Association, better known as PATA, is a not-for-profit travel industry association which promotes the Pacific Asia area's travel and tourism destinations, products, services and the interests of its members through: (1) networking (2) marketing, promotion & sales (3) destination promotion (4) travel marts/trade shows/sales missions. PATA also serves as a central resource for information and research, travel industry education and training and quality product development with sensitivity for culture, heritage and environment.

The Pacific Asia Travel Association believes that the present and future success of the region's travel industry depends on environmental and cultural preservation. In 1992, PATA introduced its "Code for Environmentally Responsible Tourism" to strengthen the principles of preservation that have guided the Association since its founding. Today PATA's members and Chapter members refer to the PATA "Code" as a guide to responsible tourism planning and operation around the world through the PATA Green Leaf program (<<http://www.infocentre.com/news/pata.htm>>).

Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), USA

The Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) is a Washington DC-based national, non-profit association that serves as the unifying organization for all components of the US travel industry, the third largest retail industry and one of the largest employers in the nation. The mission of the Travel Industry Association of America is to represent the whole of the US travel industry to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the United States. TIA fulfills

this mission by accomplishing these objectives: (1) To promote a wider understanding of travel and tourism as a major US industry that contributes substantially to the economic and social well-being of the nation; (2) To bring cohesion to the travel industry and provide communication forums for industry leaders; (3) To serve as the authoritative source for travel industry research, analysis and forecasting; (4) To initiate and to cooperate with governmental entities in the development and implementation of programs, policies and legislation that are responsive to the needs of the industry; (5) To intervene in those issues and initiatives that would directly affect the facilitation and promotion of travel to and within the United States; and (6) To develop and implement programs beneficial to the travel supplier and consumer. (<<http://www.tia.org/whatstia/default.asp>>).

2.3 Approaches and Activities Related to Sustainable Tourism in North America

Partnerships among actors involved in sustainable tourism are emerging in North America for many purposes including, the conservation of natural resources or features of the local community, public-private sector programs to identify common areas of interest and collaboration, and marketing and product development. As this section highlights, partnerships between actor groups have developed within a country as well as between countries.

2.3.1 Conservation Approach and Activities

Linking Revenue Generation and Resource Protection

Tourism can generate earnings that are earmarked for conservation through park fees, concession fees from tour operators, and tourist contributions and donations. For example, tourism helps to maintain the national parks in the United States (NAS 1992). Without revenue generated by tourism, the parks would be poorly maintained and protected and the resource would decline. The ability to charge tourists fees and to retain the fees for park management is key to ecosystem restoration and preservation. However, tourism also creates pressure to use the land for unsustainable activities (NAS 1992).

The long-term generation of revenue from nature tourism is contingent upon the protection of the natural area tourist visit. The revenue generated by parks and protected areas in North America may be substantial, but this must be weighed against the promoters responsibility to face both the opportunities and challenges in ensuring that economic benefits are contingent upon the principles of sustainable development.

Some of the costs of developing and maintaining protected areas and ecotourism facilities can be recovered through mechanisms to capture revenue such as user fees (McIntyre and WTO 1993). User fees may take the form of entrance fees to parks, museums and wildlife reserves or through such programs as hotel and visitor taxes. A hotel tax may be a percentage (such as 2 to 6 percent) of the room price. The amount collected by the hotels may be deposited into a conservation trust fund which finances, for example, protection, education and promotion programs in the region.

Hotel cost recovery programs exist in certain cities in North America. A visitor tax may be collected upon a visitor's entry or exit to a country. Belize has recently adopted a visitor tax program that is used towards

conservation programs. Such tax programs, to be equitable and effective, must be established through legislation that provides the amount of tax to be charged, the obligation to collect and contribute into a fund, the creation of the fund and its management and defined purposes (Bowles et al. 1998). If the visitors are well-informed on the need and use of the tax, having to pay an additional expense should not cause problems. Mechanisms of revenue generation are listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Revenue Generation Mechanisms

Fees:	Charges for using an area or facility. Admission to parks or monuments, special fees for accomodation, guide services, trophy hunting, diving, trekking or even rescue fees are common examples.
Concessions:	Fees charged for licenses to provide services to visitors. Common types of services include food, lodging, transportation, interpretation and retail stores.
Sales and Royalties:	Percentage of the earnings from activities or products. Examples include monies earned from the sale of books, photographs, postcards, film or items made from resources at the site.
Taxation:	Monies resulting from the sale of goods and services used by tourists. This category includes taxes to items such as hotel rooms, food and entry or exit airport fees.
Donations:	Voluntary amounts can be solicited from tourists for a range of causes including special projects or routine maintenance. The restoration of historic architectural features, improved species protection, or community activities such as school fundraising efforts or medical clinics.

Source: adapted from Brandon (1996, 8).

Revenue generation is one of the main motivating factors behind nature-based tourism development. All countries appreciate that the revenue generated by tourism is an important contribution to national economies, however it is misleading simply to measure the gross expenditures of tourists as these may exaggerate the benefits from tourism. Caution is, therefore, advisable as economic distortions arise from the presence of taxes and subsidies, market power, externalities, terms of trade effects, government revenue effects, labor market effects, and foreign exchange effects.

Agencies responsible for parks and protected areas in North America have a mandate to protect those areas. They also have the opportunity to demonstrate that nature tourism can fulfill their protection mandate. They can be leaders in helping to develop tourism policies and strategies that show the positive link between revenue generation and resource protection.

In Canada, over 14 million person-visits were recorded in Canada's National Parks in 1996-97 (Canadian Heritage 1997, 186). Parks Canada's financial plan allows the Parks program to keep the revenues it generates and manage its affairs in a more business-like market-responsive fashion. Prior to 1994, all revenue was deposited in the government's Consolidated Revenue Fund. Parks Canada expects to double its revenues (over a five-year period) from C\$35 million to \$70 million by 1999/2000 (Canadian Heritage 1997, 186). Revenue generation efforts include the implementation of a new fee structure in 1994 and, where possible, cost recovery through fees for services such as camping and mooring. Certain attractions, such as hot-springs, selected

golf courses and town sites, had their activities transferred into revolving funds, and operate on a financially self-sustaining basis.

The significance of other sources of revenue from activities that are compatible with ecotourism often goes unnoticed or does not have a high profile in agencies whose prime focus is not tourism. In the forestry industry in Canada, for example, both the timber and non-timber forest industries have increased their contributions to Canada's GDP since 1961. The forest landbase supports a number of non-timber industry sectors, including outfitters, recreation and vacation camps, and ecotourism operators, which create jobs and generate income. Revenue from outfitting operations, and other recreation and vacation camps, increased steadily between 1986 and 1993 from C\$242 million to C\$346.2 million. Campgrounds and trailer park revenues increased from C\$229.9 million to C\$340.4 million during the same period (Canadian Council of Forest Ministers 1997, 36).

Canadians also value wildlife for both economic and social reason. Surveys conducted by the CWS show that the great majority of Canadians believe that it is important to maintain abundant wildlife (86 percent) and to protect endangered or declining wildlife species (83 percent); an estimated 19 million Canadians were involved in some form of wildlife related activity or recreational fishing. Canadians spent C\$8.3 billion on fish and wildlife related recreational activities in 1991, supporting 188,000 jobs, contributing C\$10.2 billion to the GDP, and generating tax revenues of C\$4.6 billion. Other survey results show that thousands of birdwatchers spend almost C\$6 million a year on accommodation, food, travel and equipment during the spring bird migration at Point Pelee National Park (CWS 1995).

In general, the socioeconomic benefits of ecotourism in Mexico are still few and far between. Some ecotour operators are starting to develop their businesses and are able to employ new staff, but most are just surviving and a few have recently ceased operations. Local populations have not been very successfully involved in the ecotourism process and its potential benefits.

In Mexico, the opportunities for revenue generation from ecotourism in natural and protected areas have not been emphasized. Although tourism is an important mainstay of the economy, occupying the second or third place in foreign exchange generation (behind oil production and, sometimes, manufacturing), traditional or mass beach tourism has been the mainstay of tourism activity since the 1950s.

In the United States, national parks and other protected areas are underfunded. The Forest Service, for example, has a backlog of US\$1 billion in work to be done on recreation facilities and trails. Poor pricing of resources creates a bias in favor of unsustainable tourism activities. Entrance fees and user fees are poorly priced and thus do not bring in enough income. The prices for use of national parks do not reflect the fair market value of the visitor services provided, or the real costs of sustainable management and operation of the protected areas. In 1998, an experiment began in 50 parks whereby managers would be allowed to retain 100 percent of new fees to improve recreation facilities and wildlife habitat. In addition to local sharing, some of the revenues generated by park entrance passes and other federal use permits (for recreation use permits or boat taxes) go into the "Land and Water Conservation Fund" which is used to acquire more conservation/recreation areas. Congress is supposed to have, but has failed to, appropriated

the money contributed to this trust in full for this use. A balance of over US\$10 billion has accrued (Cody 1995, 5-6).

In the United States, for example, federal resource agencies (BLM, USDA FS, USFWS, NPS) generate receipts for the US treasury. Included are access and recreation fees. No agency consistently collects more than it expends. However, they do ensure that money is shared to benefit the state and local areas where the federal land is located. The money transfer is calculated based upon a percentage sharing arrangement. Some is shared through payments in lieu of taxes (applies to the National Forest System, National Park System, BLM lands, and part of the National Wildlife Refuge System) (Cody 1995, 4-5). However, despite these fee-sharing arrangements, there is a lack of significant local returns.

In the United States, according to the USFWS, sixty-three million Americans (31 percent of the population), spent US\$29.2 billion in 1996 to observe, feed and photograph wildlife. Indirect or ripple effects from these activities are calculated at US\$85.4 billion. State sales tax alone is estimated to reach US\$1.04 billion. Estimated spending on wildlife related recreation, adjusted for inflation, has grown by 21 percent since 1991. Spending for equipment accounts for 57 percent of the total spending; food, lodging and transportation constitute 32 percent; and "other" is 11 percent (USFWS 1998,1).⁶

Visitor Impact and Visitor Capacity Management

The majority of National Parks in Canada are reporting significant impairment to ecological integrity, particularly in smaller and more southern parks. Within the parks, major stresses are from visitor use and visitor/tourism facilities, from controlling fire so that it can not play its ecological role, and from infrastructure such as transportation/utility corridors. The key stresses external to national parks are from forestry, agriculture and urbanization. Active management will require visitor capacity management and more regional land use planning (Canadian Heritage 1997, 41-47).

In parks such as Point Pelee, Parks Canada has initiated "operation spreadout" to physically distribute birdwatchers over the region, rather than allow them to concentrate in the National Park. The annual bird migration, which results in intense use of the Park, occurs within a corridor that covers an area wider than the park.

Some commentators claim that tourism in natural areas provides an incentive to protect them, or that, in some cases, it even renders the areas worth saving. In the United States, for example, one commentator has suggested that, "...wilderness enthusiasts have major influence...[t]heir strongly held personal philosophy requires pristine environments for their personal search for meaning. As a result, seeking protection for large areas is widespread in the United States and is a positive environmental activity" (Eagles 1995).

⁶ At 34,000 interviews, this is the most comprehensive survey of wildlife-related recreation in the United States.

However, the pressure on natural areas from tourism can have a negative environmental impact and other commentators claim that no place is safe from the voracity of America's leisure class, and that the US Bureau of Land Management is in a "combat" management mode because US reserves of wilderness are being negatively impacted by too many millions of visitors (Adler and Glick 1994, 47).

Notwithstanding the above, all tourism has some impact on both the natural and cultural environment in which it occurs. Sustainable tourism seeks to minimize and control any negative impact, and can actually contribute positive conservation benefits and even contribute to the restoration of degraded ecosystems and the rejuvenation of local cultures. In achieving its conservation aims, sustainable tourism seeks the involvement of tourists and host communities alike, with tourism revenues and tourism activities providing both conservation and community benefits. Managing visitor impact must be considered from a community perspective and examine both environmental and cultural impacts.

Educational programs can help promote an awareness of the issues involved in minimizing the negative impacts and maximizing the positive impacts of visitors. This increased awareness among school children, stakeholders and visitors may encourage them to become responsible stewards of the natural and cultural heritage and ambassadors for national parks and protected areas.

Public and Private Sector Partnerships

The Canadian Interdepartmental Network on Sustainable Development Strategies (CINSDS) has expressed a desire to determine common areas of interest and concern among all federal departments and agencies. In a review of all sustainable development strategies for the CINSDS, one commentator recommended that in the interests of efficiency and performance measurement, the departments and agencies collaborate to prepare and meet commitments and action plans for a coherent federal response (Dougherty et al. 1998, 18).

Several agreements in Canada involving federal, provincial and territorial governments, and Aboriginal authorities, have led to cooperative management efforts for wildlife, fish and forests. These include the Canada Forest Accord, the Wildlife Policy for Canada, the Recovery of Nationally Endangered Wildlife Species at Risk strategy (Renew), the Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation, provincial and territorial conservation and sustainable development strategies, wildlife and wetland policies, forest management plans and protected area strategies (Environment Canada 1995, 13).

The *Canadian Oceans Act* (1997) requires three federal departments to work together to establish marine protected areas.⁷ The Act requires a coordinated approach to ensure that the federal government works with provincial and territorial governments, as well as Aboriginal groups and individual communities to advance marine conservation. This cooperative approach is expected to enhance the protection of marine species, habitats and ecological processes and

⁷ The departments of Fisheries and Oceans, Canadian Heritage (including Parks Canada), and Environment Canada (including the Canadian Wildlife Service).

cultural resources, as well as provide opportunities for new environmentally sustainable economic development. Opportunities for marine-related ecotourism activities in Coastal Canada are specifically mentioned in the development of a National Strategy for Oceans Management (Fisheries and Oceans Canada 1997, 14).

The CTC and Parks Canada have shared information on projects and programs related to ecotourism over the past several years. For example, staff from Parks Canada sat on the CTC's review committee to oversee the development of a strategic framework for adventure travel and ecotourism.

Parks Canada has worked with the private sector to develop tourism and interpretation programs that support their mandate to protect and present national parks. Examples include the building and management of a major visitor and interpretation center by a private company, training for private sector tour guides by Parks Canada staff members, and development of research-oriented tours in conjunction with a tour company.

Parks Canada works with several cooperating associations and not-for-profit groups that undertake programs and activities in direct support of Parks Canada's mandate. Parks Canada may provide sales and service outlets, inventory storage and offices for these groups. The Canadian Parks Partnership is one such organization that has successfully approached industry groups for sponsorship and joint promotion. For example, a partnership with a hiking boot manufacturer resulted in contributions to the partnership for every pair of boots sold, and in promotion of the partnerships' aims.

The Canadian Coast Guard in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, was involved in establishing the Regional Action Committee on Alternative Uses of Lighthouses in the Atlantic Region. Conservation and tourism interests may be taken into account at lighthouses that are no longer required by the Coast Guard.

In 1995, an agreement was signed among several key Mexican government institutions, including Semarnap and Sectur⁸ with the object of acting jointly and sharing resources in the development of programs aiming to achieve goals linked with conservation of the natural and cultural heritage, and to foster the cooperative development of tourism in Mexico. Results stemming from this are not clear.

In the mid-1990s the Mexican Executive Commission of Tourism (*Comisión Ejecutiva de Turismo*) was created. It is made up of representatives of several government institutions (including Sectur) as well as 36 private sector organizations (including some conservationist NGOs). The goal of this commission is to resolve tourism-related issues that fall within the competence of two or more public sector offices, with the object of harmonizing the effects of different activities. At present there is no sub-group or task force that focuses on ecotourism.

⁸ Also including INE, The National Commission for Water (*Comisión Nacional Del Agua*)—Conagua, Nacional Financiera, Fonatur, Conaculta, INAH and INI.

Recently, Semarnap, Sectur and Fonatur joined forces to develop the Program for Ecotourism in Natural Areas in Mexico (*Programa de Ecoturismo en Areas Naturales de México*). In addition, a corresponding manual with strategic guidelines was developed by INE in 1997 and has received limited distribution (INE 1997).

In the United States, federal programs such as the Natural Area Partnership and the Forest Stewardship program exist to encourage the creation and operation of ecotourism on private lands. The Forest Legacy Program buys conservation easements to protect natural areas. However, there is a growing controversy over conflicting use of federally controlled natural areas, regardless of which agency is in control. States in the Western United States where the majority of federally held land exists, are concerned about private property rights and states rights. In addition, there are growing conflicts over uses of federal lands that include activities such as hunting, fishing, timber harvesting, grazing, recreation and mineral extraction. There are even growing conflicts among recreation users. For example, mountain bikers and operators of power driven vehicles take issue with hikers and others who find mechanically assisted activities inconsistent with the protection of natural areas (Cody 1995).

In the United States, the Department of Housing and Urban Development makes rural economic-development funds available to communities to create strategies, including those focused on ecotourism (Whiteman 1996, 98).

Community Initiatives - Aboriginal and Local Community Partnerships

As of 1997, approximately one third of Canada's 38 national parks had cooperative management boards with local Aboriginal peoples. The cooperative management of new national parks with local Aboriginal peoples is evolving, both in those parts of Canada under comprehensive land claims negotiations, and in regions where treaty rights within a national park are recognized.

The Canadian Wildlife Service promotes cooperative management of certain National Wildlife Areas with Aboriginal communities. Any tour operator wanting to visit these areas would have to approach the community and its wildlife management board for permission to enter, and to obtain the appropriate licenses.

The CTHRC is working in cooperation with Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada (ATTC), Canada's Aboriginal Tourism Industry Association, to develop national standards for Aboriginal tourism guides and interpreters. Building on existing CTHRC national standards, specific Aboriginal content and training elements would be managed and approved by ATTC. A critical concern for ATTC is that Aboriginal tourism products be authentic.

Studies conducted on behalf of several Aboriginal communities in Canada, have shown there is a demand from tourists wanting to learn about Aboriginal culture and experience traditional ways of living. Challenges exist related to the extent communities and individuals wish to share their traditions with tourists. Presenting current lifestyles to tourists, with a blend of modern and traditional ways of living, may also be a challenge or may not meet tourists' expectations.

In Mexico, the National Indigenous Institute (*Instituto Nacional Indigenista*)—INI, which strives to conserve indigenous traditions and to improve the standard of living of Mexican Amerindian groups, has shown interest in developing ecotourism as a tool for sustainable development and for cultural heritage conservation. Although few concrete results have been achieved, some isolated ecotourism efforts have been carried out by indigenous communities in Mexico:

- The Tarahumaras of Chihuahua have established an “ecolodge” in a Sierra Madre locality called Arareco, on the shore of a reservoir. Although some foreign tourists have visited the lodge, organization and marketing impediments have meant that the project has not been very successful.
- *Ecoturismo Comunitario*, based in San Cristóbal de Las Casas in Chiapas, has recently started a community ecotourism development in the Laguna Miramar. *Turismo Ecológico y Cultural del Pueblo Maya*, “Maya Ik,” also based in San Cristóbal, is likewise just beginning some community-based tourism development although a lack of effective tools for communication such as fax and e-mail makes promotion and marketing difficult.
- *Viajes Ecoturísticos Schiiaa-Rua-Via* is carrying out a community-based ecotourism project (with local Zapotecs) in the Sierra de Juárez in Oaxaca, with funding from the WWF and The British Council. An application for further funding has been made to the GEF.

In the village of Cuetzalan, Puebla, located in a cloud forest area of the Sierra Madre Oriental, the local communities have also recently started to get involved in ecotourism activities. From two hotels in 1960, Cuetzalan had at least eight in 1997. Plans were underway that year to open at least two more hotels, including another “ecotourist” hotel. The two existing ecotourism hotels with cabins (one of them has its own small tavern, along with its own local mushroom production), offer a variety of nature walks around their grounds, as well as to nearby waterfalls and waterholes, and trips to nearby ruins of Yohualichan. These tours are conducted primarily by young indigenous men from one of the nearby communities (Greathouse Amador 1997).

In the United States, a role has evolved for local communities in the management and marketing of protected areas, typically in gateway communities. Community involvement in ecotourism in the United States is still in its formative stages and thus without clear direction.

The trend toward ecotourism in parks and wildernesses around the world is a bit different from what we have in the United States. Ecotourism in foreign countries has centered on support for local communities (but) if park neighbors [in the United States] see an economic benefit from the park, they are more likely to support its vital issues (Tennesen 1998, 29).

In the United States, all federal agencies and departments must consult with Native American tribes on a government-to-government basis. Tribal governments control access to their natural and cultural resources and must have a say on how ecotourism is developed on their own lands.

North American Coordination

There is an opportunity for Canada, Mexico and the United States to cooperate on several initiatives related to ecotourism. At present, there are a few examples of coordination among the three North American countries that might be relevant for ecotourism development.

- Parks Canada has a relationship with the US National Parks Service, the Bureau of Land Management and several US universities. There are also links between the Canadian and US Park Warden Associations.
- The Canadian Wildlife Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have considered harmonizing their surveys on the value and economic significance of wildlife.
- In Mexico, the National Council for Standards and Certification (*Consejo Nacional de Normas y Certificación*)—Conocer, has invited the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC) to provide input to the development of national skills standards and certification for tourism. The two organizations will continue to work together with an initial focus on tourism and hospitality standards for hotel staff. The CTHRC is interested in cooperation in other areas, such as certification for heritage interpreters.
- The US Department of the Interior and Semarnap in Mexico have signed a letter of intent to jointly manage adjacent protected areas in the US-Mexican border region.

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation has a unique opportunity to build on these initiatives and put forward the first trilaterally coordinated effort for integrated and cooperative development of ecotourism in North America.

A partnership that has developed between an international NGO and several local communities in all three countries is illustrated in Box 2.2.

Box 2.2 Wetlands International's Shorebird Project: Linking Communities, Wetlands and Migratory Birds Across Three Countries

Wetlands International – the Americas, an international NGO, and the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) have formed a partnership to create a Canadian-Mexican-US pilot project called “Linking Communities, Wetlands and Migratory Birds.” Financed through the North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (NAFEC), this one-year-old project symbolically links wildlife areas in all three countries. This pilot project links the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) of Chaplin/Quill Lakes in Saskatchewan, Canada (host to 45 percent of the flyway population of Sanderlings) with the Great Salt Lake in Utah, US (one of the largest salt water lakes in North America and home to between 2 and 5 million shorebirds representing 36 species) to the Marismas Nacionales in Nayarit, Mexico (one of the last stepping stones in North America for shorebirds during their southward migration).

The goal of this project is "to strengthen the awareness and capacity of local community groups adjacent to the sites by providing knowledge and tools to manage the wetlands." To achieve this, Wetlands International - the Americas works in cooperation with a broad range of partners including the public and private sectors, nongovernmental organizations, research organizations, and community stakeholders. Examples of these are the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation; the Mexican Secretariat of Environment, Natural Resources, and Fisheries; the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources; Manomet Center for the Conservation Sciences; Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey; and the Municipality of Rosamorada in Nayarit. Each of the partners helps to raise awareness by exchanging information and educational materials between sites, and distributing them to schools and the local communities, and holding meetings with local stakeholders.

One of the main components of this project is to evaluate ecotourism as a development alternative for promoting biodiversity conservation. In the first stage of this project the various communities and organizations conducted a biological and socioeconomic assessment of each site, developed a web page which is accessible from all three sites, and designed a “Guide to Linking Communities.” During the second stage of this project, three schools, one from each site, will be linked via mail and the internet; a test group of tourists will visit Marismas Nacionales; and a newsletter will be produced. The tourist test group will evaluate the sites as ecotourism destinations and this information will be discussed with community stakeholders to decide what features of the tourism experience, such as guidelines or limits, need improvement or development.

Future activities of this project include encouraging other important bird areas` representatives to join this tri-national project in its effort for biodiversity conservation.

Source: Padilla, M., personal communication.

2.3.2 Marketing and Product Development Approach and Activities

In the tourism industry, tour operators use a number of strategies to reach their markets. Researchers define a tour operator's marketing strategy in a context of a core marketing system. This system is comprised of suppliers, the tour company, marketing intermediaries, and customers. For tour operators, success depends upon being responsive to a dynamic marketing chain.

Tour operators employ a variety of marketing tools to reach clients. They may advertise, use direct mail, attend consumer shows, give public slide shows, send out newsletters or distribute brochures. Increasing numbers of operators advertise in specialty travel magazines or newspapers which reach their target markets. They may try to obtain free editorial space in

newspaper travel pages. Travel writers are often invited on trips in the hopes that a travel article might be published about the host company's tours.

Many operators develop mailing lists based on past clients, client referrals and lists they sometimes purchase. Word of mouth is particularly valuable if past clients recommend tours to their network of friends and acquaintances. Much of the direct selling in ecotourism travel occurs through networks of contacts and referrals that are not immediately obvious or available to new entrants. It takes time to develop these networks and build the reputation that attracts clients and leads tourists to operators without the need for promotion. The personal contact between the guides and clients during a trip is particularly valuable for making repeat sales. Although it is the tour company that offers the products for sale, it is very often the guide that makes the next sale to a satisfied client.

Operators reach out to clients personally when they attend consumer travel shows or give public lectures and slide shows about their trips. New consumer shows are emerging each year, and well-established ones such as the Great Outdoors Adventure Fair in San Francisco are drawing bigger crowds and more operators. The personal contact between an operator and a potential customer make these shows valuable for direct sales. They also offer an opportunity to gather information on market preferences (Wild 1996).

As well as making direct marketing efforts, North American operators are forming alliances with domestic and foreign tour operators and wholesalers. Marketing agencies are setting up to act as the link between consumers and operators. Toll free numbers enhance these services. Networks are being rapidly extended through on-line computer connections and many, even small operators have set up their own home pages on the internet (see Box 2.3). New CD-ROMs are appearing from operators or as a compilation of tours.

Box 2.3 The Important Role of the Internet in Promoting Ecotours

Mexico

The Internet is rapidly becoming a popular method for tourists to select their trips to Mexico and is an important source of information for many travelers. One of the web sites, *El Planeta Platica: Eco Travels in Latin America*.⁹, promotes responsible tourism in this region. Contact lists are included so that web viewers can contact travel companies, language schools or environmental groups directly. This website is updated a dozen times a month and *Eco Travels in Latin America* is a popular Internet clearinghouse of environmental news and nature-based tourism information for the Americas. As a resource center, it provides more than 8,000 pages of short articles and in-depth scholarly reports. Included is the “Exploring Ecotourism” page which provides a quick review of definitions and applications of this unique form of tourism, as practiced in the Americas. The goal behind this website is to create a niche which explores the options pursued throughout the hemisphere that promote environmental conservation, cultural understanding and local economic development. This web site includes an index of Mexican-based environmental travel providers.¹⁰ A section on Mexican birds and birding is also included, with a list of providers who specialize in birding tours. At present, there are only three Mexican-based bird watching operators listed and only one foreign provider of birding tours¹¹ indicating many operators are not yet represented on this network.

Some Other Internet Sites that Advertise Nature-based Tourism

Conservation International
The Ecotourism Society's Ecotraveler
The EcoTravel Center
Yahoo! EcoTours Index
Yahoo! Birding Index
Yahoo! National Parks Index
America Outdoors
Association for Experiential Education
American Hiking Society
CampNet
Hiking Index
The All-American Hiking and Backpacking Trail Guide
HikeNet
WhaleNet
World Wildlife Fund

⁹ <http://www.planeta.com>.

¹⁰ At present, around 45 operators and other service providers are listed. Some of these agencies (and Amtave members) are listed with their e-mail address and web sites providing more detailed information on their services and itineraries. However, a number of the web sites are currently not in service.

¹¹ Ecoturismo Yucatán (southeastern Mexico), Secretos del Bosque (Guanajuato), Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda (Querétaro) and Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT) (Austin, Texas).

Direct selling by operators has been a major element in the sale of nature-based tourism trips in North America, and it will continue to be so as operators' marketing networks and alliances are broadened and strengthened. Specialty travel agents will continue to grow, working within existing tourism networks and developing links with particular operators. Standard travel agents will sell more nature tours as they learn more about them, and as their clients ask for these types of trips. Nature-based tourism is moving into the mainstream of travel options. Finding and matching clients with the right kind of trip will determine success.

Recent trends in the demand for tourism in natural areas have resulted in an array of tours and packages promoted as adventure travel, green travel, heritage travel, eco-travel, and ecotourism. A 1992 US Travel Data Center study showed more than 85 percent of travelers surveyed claimed that they are likely to support or patronize travel companies that help preserve the environment (USTDC 1992, 42; Wild 1996).

Issues and programs related to ecotourism marketing and product development in the three countries are presented below. Common marketing themes include a private sector focus, cooperative marketing, web sites and the use of the internet for information, promotion, sales and bookings. Product development initiatives include the packaging of activities, interpretation, transportation and accommodation for all inclusive packages.

Cooperative Marketing and Product Development

Canada

In its strategic framework for Adventure Travel and Ecotourism, the CTC identifies the need to improve both the sector's product base and its organization. Despite its potential, Canada attracts only a fraction of the huge North American market; North America is seen as a draw for its own large affluent population and for visitors from around the world (CTC 1997, 1-2). The challenges identified by the CTC with relation to marketing, include the note that members tend to work independently, thereby missing opportunities to leverage their individual marketing budgets, and that cooperative ventures would likely achieve better results. The three main marketing and promotion channels currently in use with mixed success are marketing directly to consumers, marketing by tour operators and wholesalers within North America, and marketing overseas through tour wholesalers (CTC 1997, 8).

In an effort to achieve cooperative marketing advantages, the CTC is funding the development of adventure travel and ecotourism "product clubs" which encourage small and medium-size businesses to work together to develop opportunities in this sector. The aims of this program are to increase the range and quality of products, to build business networks to increase the exchange of information, and to encourage cooperative ventures/partnerships. Concrete results include cooperative product development, all-inclusive packages, and cooperative marketing.

The CTC is promoting the use of the Internet for adventure travel and nature tourism operators. The Internet allows potential travelers access to detailed information such as tour itineraries, background information, and newsletters. The CTC is currently pilot-testing its CTX or Canadian Tourism Exchange through its site on the worldwide web. Information modules

include tourism news, tourism databases and industry watch, and an advertising and promotion exchange. A database of adventure travel and ecotourism operators across Canada, is now being compiled and inputted to the CTX.

Parks Canada has set up an External Relations branch responsible for building relationships with the public and promoting new tourism products within parks such as research adventures. As well as attracting people to the parks, Parks Canada is promoting “indirect” tourism, by taking the parks to the people through such efforts as educational programs and television. They are seeking partnerships with the private sector, and have been approached by large corporations interested in being identified with and supporting the aims of Parks Canada.

Parks Canada identifies the following destinations as likely candidates for new tourism products:

- areas that are easily accessible and have a good base of natural resources (flora and fauna), such as national parks on the prairies,
- the Arctic; northern lights (*aurora borealis*), polar bears,
- aboriginal communities and surrounding traditional lands,
- birdwatching areas, particularly migration routes and stopovers (such as the Bay of Fundy) ,
- areas with large land and marine mammals,
- coastal areas, sea-kayaking, hiking and whale watching, and
- shoulder seasons, anecdotal evidence from Parks Canada suggests that “real” ecotourists are visiting before or after the peak summer visitation to avoid the crowds. Parks Canada has made a conscious effort to stretch the visitor seasons, but the park does not always have the resources to maintain staff over a longer period.

Mexico

Sectur’s main functions are the promotion and marketing of tourism, both at the national and international levels. However, little progress has been made in nature tourism, and most promotional activities tend to concentrate on traditional attractions (particularly beach tourism), as well as archeological sites and colonial cities.

Due to its enormously rich and attractive natural and cultural heritage and its strategic location alongside some of the world’s biggest nature tourism markets—the United States and Canada—Mexico could become one of the most popular nature tourism destinations in the world (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1988). However, Mexico’s natural assets are not developed or promoted as nature-based tourism attractions, with the result that this enormous potential remains untapped. As Ceballos-Lascuráin (1988) points out,

Mexico is a biological paradise, possessing the greatest natural diversity in North America. With only one-fourth the land area of the United States, it possesses more plant species and many more kinds of animals than its northern neighbor. Yet the tourist attractions of Mexico that are known to most visitors are the cities, the beaches and the archeological sites. Little is available to guide the visitor through Mexico’s magnificent outdoors.

Since the late 1970s, a number of foreign nature tour companies have offered excursions to Mexico. Most of these operators have catered to birdwatchers. However, some, including the American Museum of Natural History, also offer tours for enthusiasts of Mexican culture. Most of these operators engage their own foreign tour leaders, but they frequently include local operators or guides. The first Mexican nature tour operator was ECOTOURS, founded in 1984.¹² ECOTOUR's main clientele consisted of birdwatchers and archeology enthusiasts from the United States and Canada.

In the early 1990s a number of Mexican-based, specialized tour operators began offering different nature, cultural and adventure oriented trips to Mexico. In 1994, Amtave was created. It grouped specialized travel providers.¹³ Amtave recently collaborated with Sector to produce an illustrated brochure that presents a series of options for carrying out nature, culture and adventure oriented tourism activities (Sector n.d.).

Most ecotourism promotion is carried out by the private sector operators in Mexico, including the ecotour operators themselves. Mexico also benefits from promotion by foreign tour operators leading trips to Mexico and the Internet which has become a popular tool among travelers to select their trips.

Sector also has a web site, although it does not fully address ecotourism.¹⁴ Under "Attractions and Activities," there is a one-page description of "Eco-Tourism and Adventure," which are described together as "a new kind of getaway" and "a new perspective on life." No information on ecotourism destinations or services is provided and the page has not been updated since 1995.

United States

The states and/or private tour companies market most US tourism. Because of the local nature of ecotourism and its to date rather private sector focus, marketing has likewise been local and mostly private. There is little tourism marketing and promotion at the federal level. Indeed, in the United States, the federal government is decreasing its involvement in tourism promotion. The United States recently eliminated the US Travel and Tourism Administration (USTTA), and replaced it with the public/private partnership, the US National Tourism Office (USNTO), from which one can expect a diminished federal government focus.

In addition, budget cuts and a lack of resources have resulted in greater demands on NPS, USFWS, USDA FS, and BLM staff, leaving them little time to address ecotourism. Despite this, then Deputy Secretary of the Interior, John Garamendi, in a speech at the 1996 Western Summit on Tourism and Public Lands, made the department's mandate clear: "Let there be no doubt, we

¹² Turismo Ecológico Mexicano, S.A. de C.V., founded by Richard Wilson and Hector Ceballos-Lascuráin. Tours were offered throughout Mexico, Guatemala and Belize, and lasted between 10 and 14 days on average. This agency operated between 1984 and 1992, during which time it was one of very few Mexican ecotour operators.

¹³ Currently Amtave has about 56 members. They have a website, but at present it is not working.

¹⁴ <http://mexico-travel.com>.

expect federal land managers to be part of developing tourism in their locations to build a constituency for preservation of public lands and build the economy in rural areas.” (Department of the Interior 1996)

There is at least one clear role for the federal government, even though the majority of tourism marketing is private. While some private promoters adhere to ecotourism principles, some private marketing perpetuates the “see it before it is spoiled” attitude. Often there is a blurring of the distinction between sustainable nature tourism and unsustainable outdoor adventure tourism. Criteria for accreditation might help consumers distinguish between the two.

2.4 Some Key Issues

- Tourists visiting North America may design their trip according to ecological features and not according to political boundaries. This presents an opportunity for collaboration among Canada, Mexico and the United States to market North America as a destination.
- There are a number of local, international and national organizations, government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and private sector initiatives involved in sustainable tourism development in North America.
- Partnerships among sustainable tourism actors are emerging in North America to conserve the natural resources or features of the local community, to identify common areas of interest and possible collaboration, and for marketing and product development.
- There is often a lack of distinction between sustainable and unsustainable tourism. Accreditation might help consumers distinguish between the two.

CHAPTER 3

POLICY/REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

3.1 Legal Tools and Incentives: Canada, Mexico and the United States

Given the space restrictions of this Report and its objectives to serve as a discussion paper and to prompt further inquiry into the potential for sustainable tourism development in North America, this section contains only a brief description of certain legal tools and incentive programs that may be useful in this context. The following is not a comprehensive analysis but serves to illustrate how a legal and policy framework can help shape sustainable development.

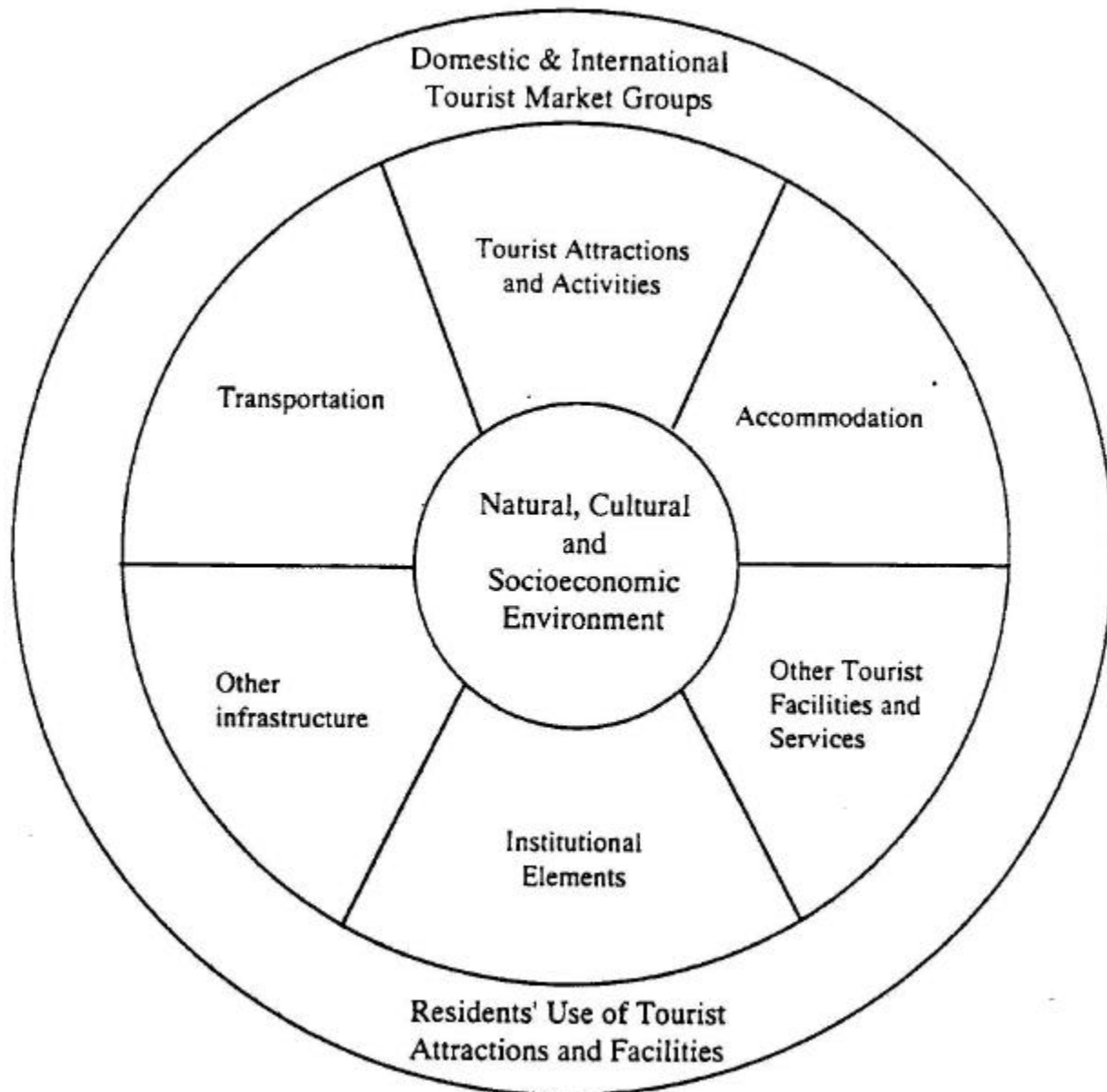
3.1.1 Land Planning and Zoning

The sustainable tourism approach to planning is both collaborative and integrated (Inskeep 1991; Jamal & Getz 1995). All those sharing an interest in the development of tourism to natural areas must be involved in the planning process. An integrated plan incorporates economic, sociocultural and ecological concerns. The objectives are to achieve resource preservation and economic development. Long-term conservation of both the resources and the industry overrides the pursuit for short-term gains. Such long-term conservation requires the successful implementation of the integrated plan and ongoing monitoring to ensure that the plan's objectives are met and to make necessary adjustments in response to change.

In most jurisdictions across North America, local governments are required to adopt general planning policies and land-use zoning for their respective territories. The local community often possesses detailed information about the affected lands and natural resources and their participation in the decision-making process makes effective implementation of the decisions more likely. States/provinces and the federal governments also play a significant role in planning for regions that extend beyond local boundaries. Regional, state/provincial and national governments are also involved in the siting of major infrastructure, such as road networks, airports, railways and ferries, and in setting aside state and national parks and reserves. National building construction standards impact upon how development may proceed and may be used to mitigate environmental damage. These governments should also be involved to assure that plans are consistent with the goals of sustainability.

Environmental damage caused through tourism may result from many diverse sources. An important source of damage is due to a lack of or inappropriate site planning and management. Managing the development of tourism entails the adoption of planning strategies and guidelines to control and mitigate the negative impacts of tourism without sacrificing its benefits. Tourism planning must be comprehensive and include consideration of the key components of tourism. These components include the natural, cultural and socioeconomic environment, residential use of the tourist area, the domestic and international tourist markets among others as indicated by Figure 3.1

Figure 3.1: Tourism Planning Pie Chart



Source: *Tourism Planning: An Integrated and Sustainable Development Approach*, Edward Inskeep, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1991.

Implementation of a tourism plan may be achieved, in part, through zoning. Zoning is the demarcation of a territory into distinct units within which specified uses, such as industrial, commercial and residential, may be carried out. Restrictions to the density, height, set-backs and forms of structure within a zone are typically provided in zoning by-laws and ordinances and are important in managing the development of tourism. The location of infrastructure, such as roads, electricity and sewers, will also affect how and where development can occur.

Zoning has also taken on more innovative forms and been applied to protect ecologically sensitive areas. The term “ecological zoning” may be used generally to refer to the establishment of ecologically important areas to be protected through public ownership or regulation. National parks and wildlife reserves are good examples of ecological zoning. Professor Wilson has described the process of ecological zoning as follows,

Parcels of land will have to be set aside as inviolate preserves. Others will be identified as the best sites for extractive reserves, for buffer zones used in part-time agriculture and restricted hunting, and for land totally convertible to human use. In the expanded enterprise, landscape design will play a decisive role. Where environments have been mostly humanized, biological diversity can still be sustained at high levels by the ingenious placement of woodlots, hedgerows, watersheds, reservoirs, and artificial ponds and lakes. Master plans will meld not just economic efficiency and beauty but also the preservation of species and races (Wilson, 1992, 315).

It is not enough to merely fence off a parcel of land as a protected area. Parks and reserves are not immune from the negative impacts caused by external development pressures. For example, extractive mining and lumber harvesting on the outskirts of a park have a significant impact on the health of the park and the entire ecosystem. Buffer zones may be created to ensure that adjacent uses are compatible with the objectives of a protected area. An example of a type of buffer zone was recently established around the joint Provincial-National Marine Park in the Saguenay-St. Lawrence region of Quebec. The park itself includes only Quebec public lands and covers part of the Saguenay River and St. Lawrence estuary. A Coordination Zone comprised of several local municipalities bordering the Marine Park has also been established to ensure appropriate use and development in relation to the Park. Members of the Coordinating Committee include federal, provincial and local government officials, First Nations representatives and local citizens (Environment Canada and MEF 1995).

3.1.2 Water, Time and Distance Zoning

In North America water-based tourism is of great importance. An emerging and innovative solution to addressing issues concerning conflicting uses and environmental degradation of water resources is water-surface zoning. Water-surface zoning may be used to avoid conflicts among user groups by restricting where activities associated with these groups may be carried out. Water zoning is similar to local land use zoning in that it may be used to divide an area into different uses and density levels. For example, specific areas of a lake may be designated for swimming, while others are to be open to water-skiing and fishing. This would help to prevent fishing lines become tangled up with water-skiers who, in turn, cut dangerously close to swimmers. Uses in each zone need not be exclusive, but should be complementary.

Time zoning limits the hours during which certain activities can occur. Many lakes and coastal zones already set “safety curfews” restricting water-skiing or motor boating after daylight hours. This same principle may be expanded to regulate boating hours during the day or establish on and off days for different types of boats and other water sports. It should be noted that regulating boat access through water and time zoning raises certain jurisdictional/constitutional issues regarding navigation and natural resource management. A review of these issues is beyond the scope of this report, but must be addressed if the adoption of such zoning tools is considered in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

What may be described as “distance” zoning would apply in the context of species protection. Distance zoning protects sensitive species, such as whales or manatees, by defining a distance, for example, 100 feet (approximately 30 meters), that must be kept between the species and humans. Therefore, the zone of protection shifts with the movement of the species. The need for distance zoning is increasing with the ever-increasing pressures of tour operators and the public to view “wildlife” in their natural habitat and as we learn more about the detrimental impacts that human contact and boats may have on such species.

3.1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment

Legislation requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for certain projects and activities exists in Canada, Mexico and the United States. EIA is important in the context of tourism development as a tool to measure and mitigate against negative impacts that a project may have on the environment (McIntyre and WTO, 1993). In most EIA processes alternatives to the proposal must be evaluated. Government

agencies studying tourism projects in the context of an EIA should be aware of ecotourism approaches as viable and favorable alternatives to traditional, mass tourism.

The following briefly describes the EIA process at the federal level in the three countries.

In Canada, the federal government adopted the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA), which came into force in January 1995. This Act governs environmental assessment at the federal level and requires an environmental assessment where a federal authority supports a private or public sector project in one or more of four ways: (1) by being the proponent of the project; (2) by providing money for the project; (3) by providing land for the project; or (4) by issuing some form of regulatory approval for the project.

The decision to do an environmental impact assessment is made by whatever federal authority is required to conduct the environmental assessment and is made in reference to a comprehensive study list and regulations adopted pursuant to the Act. The environmental assessment of projects described on the comprehensive study list must address the following factors: (1) the purpose of the project; (2) alternative means of carrying out the project; (3) the need for any follow-up program; (4) the effect of the project on renewable resources; and (5) additional topics as may be required by the authority. The Act defines environmental effects to include socioeconomic impacts of any environmental effects of the project.

If the project is on the comprehensive study list, then the responsible authority must provide an opportunity for members of the public to provide written and oral comments on a draft initial assessment report. Provincial governments in Canada also have legislation respecting environmental impact assessments within the provincial sphere of authority.

In Mexico, the requirements for carrying out an EIA is provided in the General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection (*Ley General del Equilibrio Ecológico y Protección al Ambiente*) and the Regulation under the Ecology Law Regarding Environmental Impact Assessment (*Reglamento de Impacto Ambiental de la Ley de Ecología*). The General Directorate of Ecological Zoning and Environmental Impact (*Dirección General de Ordenamiento de Zonas Ecológicas e Impacto Ambiental*) of the National Ecology Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Ecología (INE)*), which is part of the Secretariat of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries (*Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca (Semarnap)*) is responsible for carrying out the federal EIAs.

An EIA is required for works or undertakings that may cause ecological imbalances or exceed the limits and conditions set forth under the applicable environmental laws and Official Mexican Standards (*Normas Oficiales Mexicanas (NOM)*). Such works and undertakings shall be subjected to the conditions established by Semarnap through the Environmental Impact Assessment process, with the aim at minimizing the adverse effects on the environment.

As in Canada, the Mexican EIA process is aimed at protecting the environment, as well as preserving and restoring the ecosystems for the purpose of avoiding or minimizing the adverse effects on the environment of works and activities undertaken by humankind. In carrying out the EIA process, Semarnap must take into account the whole of the ecosystems, not only those resources which are exploited or affected. Public participation in the environmental impact assessment process is provided in the relevant law through notification and consultation procedures.

In the United States, the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) requires preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) for any major federal action that significantly affects the quality of the human environment. What may be considered as “private” projects may also be subject to an EIS if such projects include federal financing, assistance, or project approval. Major federal actions also include the adoption of most official policies, formal plans, or programs, as well as the approval of specific projects.

The EIS should contain a discussion of the need for the proposed action, as well as alternatives, including a “no action” alternative, and impacts. The lead agency with jurisdiction over the project determines the

scope of the EIS. The EIS must identify appropriate mitigation measures. In the case of private projects, development is subject to both state and local EIS requirements.

Public participation is seen as critical for a successful environmental assessment process under NEPA. The public must be given access to a broad range of information, including: all background information considered during scoping; the draft and final EIS along with all underlying information, any comments, and any mitigation monitoring results. Any interested person or organization may submit comments on a draft and a final EIS.

3.1.4 Other Environmental Standards and Programs

Other than zoning and EIA/EIS, there exists a host of laws and regulations applicable to ecotourism projects that form part of the legal framework for ecotourism development and management. These include air and water pollution standards. Waste treatment and disposal standards are also of primary importance. A strengthening of these standards in the tourism industry and strict enforcement would serve to favor sustainable tourism over traditional tourism.

There exists in all three countries specific legislation relating to resource management that applies to ecotourism development concentrated around such resources. For example, in Canada, the new *Oceans Act* (1997) calls for integrated management of activities in estuarine, coastal and marine waters. The thrust of the Act is conservation and protection and provides for the establishment of Marine Protected Areas.

In 1988, the *General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection* was adopted by the Government of Mexico which created the National System of Natural Protected Areas (*Sistema Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas* (Sinap)). The objective of creating the Natural Protected Areas is to harmonize ecological issues with socioeconomic development in Mexico in a sustainable way. In Mexico, “coordinated programs will be applied to diversify funding sources and mechanisms, to incorporate ecological tourism services” within the Natural Protected Areas (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1995-2000*, 266).

In the United States, the *Wilderness Act*, passed in 1964, provides for the setting aside of wilderness areas. In 1985 there were 455 wilderness areas designated, which contained 89,000,000 acres of land. Any federal land can be designated as wilderness (Eagles 1995). Opportunities for marine-based ecotourism may benefit from the *Oceans Act*, which has provided funding for the creation of marine refuges.

These are but a few examples of national programs in Canada, Mexico and the United States that complement the goals of and provide a framework for ecotourism development in North America.

3.1.5 International Commitments shared by Canada, Mexico and the United States

Canada, Mexico and the United States demonstrate a degree of international coordination by the fact that they are all signatories to important international environmental conventions that have a significant bearing on the development of ecotourism. The goals of many of these international conventions support ecotourism as they are aimed at protecting the cultural and natural resources upon which ecotourism depends. The following is a selected list and brief description of important international commitments shared by the three countries.

The *Convention on Biological Diversity*, ratified by over 160 countries including Canada, Mexico and the United States, is aimed at the development of national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Article 8 of the Convention provides that each contracting party shall, “as far as possible and as appropriate,” regulate or manage “biological resources important for the conservation of biological diversity whether within or outside protected areas, with a view to ensuring their conservation and sustainable use.” Ecotourism has a potentially central role in ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

The *Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat*, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 and entered into force in 1975 (Ramsar Treaty) has as its objective to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands now and in the future, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value. The Ramsar Treaty provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are presently 113 Contracting Parties to the Convention, with 965 wetland sites, totaling 70.5 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. All three North American countries have designated sites under the Ramsar Convention, and new areas continue to be added. Protecting wetlands is important, not only for maintaining critical habitat for species within each country, but also for providing refuge for migratory bird species. Canada has 36 Ramsar sites representing over 13 million hectares. Mexico has 6 sites representing almost 1.1 million hectares and the United States has 17 sites covering almost 1.2 million hectares.

The *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Natural and Cultural Heritage* combines the protection of natural and cultural heritage, and recognize that tourism may play a significant role in sustainable development. World Heritage Sites, by reason of their special historic, natural, scientific or aesthetic qualities, have universal value and attract tourists from all over the world. By generating revenue and drawing world attention to their importance, tourism can be a positive force for the preservation of World Heritage. However, the unprecedented growth of tourism raises concerns over the environmental and cultural integrity of these destination areas. Planning for ecotourism or “heritage” tourism would allow appreciation of these sites and their long-term protection (Drost 1996). Canada, Mexico, and the United States are all signatories to the World Heritage Convention and have listed World Heritage Sites. There is a great deal to be gained for these countries by sharing and coordinating planning strategies to protect and promote these sites.

The *Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna* (CITES) entered into force in 1975 and has been signed by Canada, Mexico and the United States. The objective of CITES is to protect certain endangered species from over exploitation by means of a system of import/export permits.

The Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is based on the concept that it is possible to achieve a sustainable balance between the conservation of biological diversity, economic development, and maintenance of associated cultural values. MAB programs may serve as models of regional integration and may include ecotourism development.

Severe degradation of wetland habitats has been accompanied by a sharp decline in waterbird and shorebird population across North America. The decline triggered the signing of a 15 year agreement, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), by Canada and the United States in 1986. Mexico signed the NAWMP Update in 1994. Since the establishment of the NAWMP, more than 810,000 hectares of wetlands and adjacent upland habitat have been secured and enhanced across North America. The commitment and vision of the plan is to “achieve waterfowl conservation while maintaining or enhancing associated ecological values in harmony with other human needs.” Among the many environmental and socioeconomic opportunities afforded by wetlands noted by NAWMP, are recreational capacity, tourism, aesthetics, nature study, research and education, and improved local economy. These benefits will all contribute to ecotourism (Canadian NAWMP 1994). In addition, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network links together sites in different countries of North, Central, and South America, that are essential to large numbers of migrating shorebirds.

In June 1992, delegates from nearly every nation in the world, including 107 heads of state or government, participated in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), or Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro. The *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* was adopted by the UNCED at the Earth Summit. The goal of this Declaration is to establish cooperation among member states to reach agreement on laws and principles promoting sustainable development. The Declaration addresses the following areas: natural resources; environmental impact of development; poverty; ecosystem

protection; the sharing of scientific ideas; public participation/public access to information; implementation of legislation; economic policies internalization of environmental costs and the “polluter pays” principle; notification of pollution incidents; Environmental Impact Statements; Indigenous cultures.

Agenda 21 or the “Earth’s Action Plan” was presented along with the Rio Declaration in the UNCED. *Agenda 21* sets out comprehensive strategies and programs to counter environmental degradation and promote sustainable development. While the Rio Declaration and *Agenda 21* do not directly impose binding legal commitments on the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States, their adoption as part of the UNCED outcomes gives the recommendations in these documents the force of a strong political commitment.

Common commitments and activities made and engaged in by Canada, Mexico and the United States are among existing best practices for conservation and sustainable development and can be used as a basis upon which agreements for the development of ecotourism might be built, whether related to specific areas protected under conventions, or applied more broadly for all ecotourism assets and attractions.

3.2 Voluntary Tools: Incentives and Guidelines

3.2.1 Incentives

In conjunction with regulatory regimes, incentives may greatly further the goals of protecting species and ecosystems. Incentive programs can influence private sector decision-making and garner public support for preservation. Government expenditures for strict regulation of land use of the purchase and management of protected areas can be very high. While incentive programs, such as tax deductions, may reduce government revenues slightly in the short term, in the long term, the overall economy benefits from the resulting resource conservation (Bowles et al. 1998). Conservation incentives can promote sustainable economic activities such as ecologically sound tourism and recreation.

Incentive programs may include income tax deductions, reductions, or exemptions for such actions as creating conservation easements or land donations. A conservation easement is a restriction on the rights to use land in a certain manner. For example, an owner of land may agree to grant a conservation easement which restricts developing the land so as to provide critical habitat for a threatened species. The owner continues to hold the land subject to the easement. Normally, the beneficiary of a conservation easement is a public agency or a NGO. Under a conservation easement, the restriction on the use of the land is said to “run with the land.” This means that future owners are similarly bound to respect the terms of the easement and will not be able to develop the land. They may continue to use the land so long as it does not impair the objectives of the easement.

Conservation easements may be used, with certain particularities, in Canada, Mexico and the United States. A number of programs exist such as the Wetlands Reserve Program in the United States (16 U.S.C. 3837, 3837a, 1994). Pursuant to this program, an owner may agree to grant an easement over wetlands and to implement a wetland conservation plan. Compensation for the limitations of use of the land and technical assistance is provided in many cases by the federal government. An example of a conservation easement in Central America is the Monteverde Cloud Forest National Park in Costa Rica. Under the terms of this easement, 42 acres of land has been set aside to protect the migratory habitat of the Quetzal. Tourists are allowed entry into this area by a cable car that is operated by a private local company (Bowles et al. 1998).

Another incentive which can generate positive benefits is simply recognizing good projects through an awards program. At various levels of government, a combination of monetary and non-monetary awards could be given in public recognition of successful efforts to preserve ecosystems, habitats, and the species within them. There could be public ceremonies in which the mayor, governor, or president would personally bestow medals, certificates, or plaques upon the honorees, with attendant coverage in the news media and permanent display of awards or

listing of recipients. Scholarships could also be awarded in the honorees' names. All this serves to reinforce good practices, inform others about innovative approaches and sends out the right messages to the public and to tourists.

Other incentives include eco-labels and industry accreditation programs. Eco-labels are placed on items for sale such as food products, paintings and postcards to indicate a manufacturing process that takes into account factors such as environmental and social impact. Eco-labels can also be associated with larger tourist infrastructure features such as buildings. An example of a labeling system is the Eco-lodge design (see chapter 2 of this report).

A number of accreditation programs also exist. The Green Evaluations Project measures a tourism sites compliance with The Ecotourism Society's (TES) guidelines for Nature Operators. International organizations have also created specific accreditation programmes. For example, the RARE Center for Tropical Conservation has developed an ecotourism and conservation guide training program and The WTTC has developed The Green Globe Certification Programme which is explained in box 3.1.

Box 3.1 GREEN GLOBE Certification

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) established the GREEN GLOBE (GG) organization in 1994. The organization owes its beginning to the former Secretary General of the Rio Earth Summit, Maurice Strong, who suggested that a means was needed to increase the tourism industry's responsiveness and the public's awareness of the industry's commitment to environmentally compatible development. Initially GG was developed as a membership organization - it currently has over 500 members in 102 countries including The Pan Pacific Hotel Vancouver, Explore Worldwide, Abercrombie & Kent, Holiday Inn Worldwide, many of the Intercontinentals (in Canada, Mexico and the US) to name but a few. Recently, however it expanded its mandate to include a certification programme. Developed in partnership with SGS, the world's largest testing, inspection and verification organization, GREEN GLOBE certification is achieved through independent third party verification.

The ultimate aim of the GG certification programme is to 'become the primary global standard of environmental commitment by the global Travel and Tourism industry' and to be 'recognized by the public as such'. Thus, GG not only emphasizes improving environmental performance but also is a marketing incentive for businesses as environmentally aware travelers will recognize the certification label. Its basic premise is that increasing numbers of travelers are becoming more environmentally and socially aware, and that environmental and social practices of the tourism industry will play a key role with the discerning consumer and their choices on where to spend their tourism dollars.

Currently supported by over 20 international industry organizations, the WTO, UNEP and the Earth Council, the certification programme is linked to Agenda 21 principles. It is a quality evaluative process that addresses the following key issues:

1. waste reduction, re-use, recycling,

2. energy efficiency, conservation and management,
3. fresh water management,
4. waste water management,
5. environmentally sensitive purchasing policies, and
6. social and cultural development.

An organization that wishes to be certified must address all these areas through a management system and must show continuous improvement in these areas against objective goals. Equally important, the organization must engage in stakeholder consultation to ensure that any other impacts (e.g., noise, hazardous wastes, sustainable design, health & safety) that are identified as significant are also addressed in the management system.

With these set as the requirements, any travel or tourism operation (e.g., urban or rural hotel, resort, attraction (including parks) or tour operator) can achieve certification. To date, four Caribbean hotels ranging from 10-215 rooms have received certification. In this effort, GG worked with local government agencies to launch the standard as part of a national environmental audit for sustainable tourism. So far audits planned this year include hotels and attractions in Manchester, UK (in preparation for the 2002 Commonwealth Games) and several beach resorts in Jamaica and the Mauritius. A number of Green Team Leaders courses for people working in the travel and tourism sector are also to be run. In total, more than 240 businesses (attractions, operators, hotels, resorts) from 38 countries have expressed interest in pursuing GG certification.

*For more information on GG, please visit WTTC's web page: <<http://www.wttc.org>> (look under Econett) or contact GREEN GLOBE via email: GREENGLOBE@compuserve.com

**Source: C. Cresswell (personal communication)
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3.2.2 Guidelines

Codes of Ethics, Guidelines and Charters

Voluntary codes of ethics are non-legally binding principles and guidelines that have received international recognition as important tools in environmental preservation. Agenda 21, tabled at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio in 1992, includes Chapter 30 entitled "Strengthening the Role of Business and Industry" which makes specific reference to the use of codes of ethics by industry to promote best environmental practice (UN Docs 1992). Increasingly, codes of ethics are being used in many industries to encourage environmentally responsible practices. The tourism and recreation industry has been one of the leaders in adopting environmental codes of ethics (UNEP 1995).

Tourism codes of ethics are generally part of an overall package that also includes certain mandatory regulations to properly control and manage tourism development. As such, codes may be viewed as supplementing the law and moving practice beyond minimum legal requirements.

Codes can fill in legal gaps and promote values, such as respect for nature and different cultures, which cannot readily be imposed through regulations. However, tourism codes deserve careful analysis to determine whether they provide sufficient justification and guidance to protect the environment. Without legal coercion to back up the implementation of voluntary standards, the role of moral persuasion to preserve the environment becomes critical (UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs 1974; UNEP 1995).

State and local governments, international and regional tourism groups, and environmental organizations are the primary initiators of codes of conduct targeting industry, tourists, and host communities. Codes are typically cast in terms of large principles and objectives, but may also be specifically directed to a site or an activity. Codes may also be addressed generally to tourists, to the tourism industry (eg. hotel owners and tour operators), and to the host community.

The following are excerpts of selected codes from North America and around the world to illustrate the general nature and diversity of these instruments. These are but a few of the hundreds of codes that exist.

Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism by Tourism Industry Association of Canada & National Round Table (for tourists and the industry):

Preamble: The tourism industry acknowledges its responsibility to help protect the environment and conserve resources, and will cooperate with other industry sectors and governments at all levels towards this end.

Code of Ethics for Tourists: Assist us in our conservation effort through the efficient use of resources including energy and water.

Code of Ethics and Guidelines for the Industry: Strive to achieve tourism development in a manner which harmonizes economic objectives with the protection and enhancement of our natural and cultural environment...Practice and encourage environmentally sound waste and materials management including reduction, reuse, and recycling.

American Society of Travel Agents: Ten Commandments on Eco-Tourism (for tourists):

Respect the frailty of the earth. Realize that unless all are willing to help in its preservation, unique and beautiful destinations may not be here for future generations to enjoy. Do not take away souvenirs from historical sites and natural areas.

Travel Industry Association of America: Things Businesses Can Do (for industry):

US businesses, particularly travel companies, must adopt environmental philosophies and supporting policies and strategies. "Green" travel companies should: ...pay attention to the double bottom line by placing equal value on ecological and fiscal considerations... Attempt to produce goods and services that do not harm the environment, and adopt processes and procedures that are kind to the environment. For example, "green" companies manufacture products using

the least possible amount of energy and producing the fewest possible number of toxic by-products.

Lake George, New York “Code for Responsible Boating” (for tourists):

Courtesy: Don't fish, scuba dive or anchor within 200 feet of active docks, boat houses or boats. Drive at safe, fuel-efficient speeds. Enjoy the natural quiet of Lake George. Avoid playing loud radios or stereos. Sound travels easily over water to everyone on the lake.

Don't bring non-native plants and animals to Lake George! Thoroughly clean boats and equipment including boat trailers before launching in Lake George. Remove all trapped water and allow to dry completely. Do not use live fish bait from other waters. Milfoil and zebra mussels are a threat to our waters! Let's keep them out.

World Tourism Organization, Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code:

A fundamental right for tourists is the following:

The right of everyone to rest and leisure reasonable limitation of working hours, periodic leave with pay and freedom of movement without limitation, within the bounds of law, is universally recognized. This right to leisure and freedom of movement is subject to certain ethical considerations which are enumerated in the Tourist Code: Tourists should, by their behavior, foster understanding and friendly relations among peoples, at both the national and international levels, and thus contribute to lasting peace.

At places of transit and sojourn, tourists must respect the established political, social, moral and religious order and comply with regulations in force. In these places tourists must also:

- (a) show the greatest understanding for the customs, beliefs and behavior of the host communities and the greatest respect for the natural and cultural heritage;
- (b) refrain from accentuating the economic, social and cultural differences between themselves and the local population;
- (c) be receptive to the culture of the host communities, which is an integral part of the common human heritage;
- (d) refrain from exploiting others for prostitution purposes; and
- (e) refrain from trafficking in, carrying or using narcotics and/or other prohibited drugs.

The Mauritian Code of Ethics for Tourism (for the host community):

Have pride in the multi-cultural island in which we live; introduce visitors to your music, that of your heart and your roots, your original and personal art and your

family cooking, which comes from your customs...Do not allow our spiritual rituals to be regarded as folk lore fit simply for filming. Teach our visitors respect for our sacred places.

The Antarctic Visitor's Code:

Antarctica remains relatively pristine, and has yet been subjected to large scale human perturbations. It is the largest wilderness on earth. Please keep it that way... Do not disturb or pollute lakes or streams; Do not collect or take away biological or geological specimens as a souvenir.

The Ecotourism Society's Guidelines for Nature Tour Operators:

Prevention of Environmental and Cultural Impacts: Minimize visitor impacts on the environment by offering literature, briefings, leading by example, and taking corrective actions.

Training: Give managers, staff and contract employees access to programs that will upgrade their ability to communicate with and manage clients in a sensitive natural and cultural settings.

The merit of voluntary codes of conduct in the tourism industry is three-fold: (1) they serve as a catalyst for dialogue and building partnerships among government agencies, the various industry sectors, community interests, special interest groups and other stakeholders in tourism development; (2) they provoke changes of behavior and practices through education and raising awareness as to the importance of sound environmental management and the respect for cultures; and (3) they encourage promotion of a quality environment and quality tourism (Salbu 1995).

A number of tourism codes provide that the local community should be considered in the tourism planning process. The *Pacific Asia Travel Association's Code*, for example, recognizes the need to ensure that community attitudes, cultural values, and concerns, including local customs and beliefs, are taken into account in the planning of all tourism related projects. Other codes go a step farther and would have representatives from local communities actually involved in the planning decision-making. For example, the *Australian Code of Environmental Practice* supports local tourism planning and calls for cooperation with relevant authorities and local communities for environmental planning.

To date, the effect of codes in bringing about improved practices has had mixed results. One of the current failings of tourism codes is that few people are aware that they exist. The adoption of codes remains an exercise, for the most part, that is carried out by a few experts in the field and thereby restricts the potential for open dialogue which is fundamental to the success of informing and implementing responsible environmental practices (Conrad 1987; Longstaff 1994). If positive changes are to be achieved through the use of voluntary codes, the adoption process must be one of collaboration that involves all of the stakeholders.

Moreover, it is often difficult for the general pronouncements in codes to be implemented. Beyond acting as a catalyst for dialogue and creating partnerships among stakeholders during the

adoption process, codes of conduct must be implemented if their potential benefits are to be realized. Methods which may be used to implement codes include: (1) education and training; (2) wide dissemination and publicity campaigns; (3) publications; (4) seminars and conferences; (5) pilot projects; (6) awards; and (7) technical assistance by international tourism organizations (UNEP 1995).

Consistent with the voluntary nature of these codes, the suggested methods for implementation are soft, which may explain the perceived lack of success in implementing codes. On the other hand, as those involved in the tourism industry are increasingly being reminded of their dependency upon the environment for the continued well-being and growth of the industry (as evidenced by the decline in tourism in areas where the environment has already been damaged), sound preservation practices instilled through the use of codes over time are steadily gaining acceptance as being in the industry's best, long-term interests (Salbu 1995; UNEP 1995).

The implementation process is not to be achieved overnight, and even when codes are put into practice, much of the language is cast in such general terms that it is difficult to determine whether the goals are being respected. Such abstract articulation of goals leaves open a large margin of discretion provoking some commentators to demand more specificity in codes to facilitate implementation and on-going monitoring (Baker 1993; Baram 1994). Too much specificity, however, may undermine the benefits of voluntary codes as flexible instruments capable of evolving as community values and concerns develop. It may be difficult to achieve consensus if guidelines are drafted in precise terms, or even worse, if consensus is to be achieved, it may be at the cost of higher environmental standards. Ideally, codes should draw a balance drawn between visionary objectives cast broadly and criteria that are more precise that serve as guidelines to achieve the objectives over time.

In general, compliance with a code of ethic is voluntary, not mandatory. Other forms of enforcement, such as sanctions, may be conceived if necessary. The United Nations Environmental Program concludes in its report on environmental tourism codes of conduct by suggesting that eventually codes may "need to become, to some degree, enforceable if they are to become primary management tools" (UNEP 1995, 59). The Antarctic Tour Operators Code is an example of an association that expels any members that do not adhere to their tourism code. To reach this stage of coercive enforcement, it would appear that there must be a certain degree of specificity in the code and community consensus as to the values and goals to be promoted through the codes. Without taking a position on means of enforcement, we may conclude, for the present, that voluntary tourism codes may be adopted without necessarily coercive means of enforcement and serve a useful purpose in developing community values around ecotourism issues, if they are made pursuant to a collaborative process, are widely distributed and are monitored.

Similar to Codes of Ethics are guidelines and charters. Several organizations have adopted models of environmental guidelines and charters. This section briefly introduces the subject, is not a comprehensive explanation of these efforts but is included to introduce existing activities in this area. By way of illustration, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) environmental guidelines are,

Box 3.2 WTTC Environmental Guidelines

A clean, healthy environment is essential to future growth - it is core of the Travel & Tourism product. The WTTC recommends these guidelines to Travel & Tourism companies and to governments and asks that they be taken into account in policy formation:

- Travel & Tourism companies should state their commitment to environmentally compatible development,
- Targets for improvements should be established and monitored,
- Environmental commitment should be company-wide,
- Education and research into improved environmental programs should be encouraged, and
- Travel & Tourism companies should seek to implement sound environmental principles through self-regulation, recognizing that national and international regulation may be inevitable that preparation is vital.

Source: <<http://www.wttc.org/>>

Similar to guidelines, charters are also used as models to develop and influence policies and programs adopted by the travel and tourism industry. Tourism Concern published this 12 point charter:

Box 3.3 Charter for Sustainable Tourism Development – Tourism Concern

12 points the document covers:

1. Long-term tourism development,
2. Sustainable use of resources,
3. Local consultation for acceptable development,
4. Development priorities (use of EIA and management techniques) ,
5. Safe products and services (choice of products and services with minimum environmental effects),
6. Facilities and operations (adopted at the destination zone to minimize environmental and cultural impacts),
7. Marketing and customer advice (provision of information about the physical and cultural environment to the public),
8. Employment education and training,
9. Monitoring and information disclosure,
10. Damage compensation,
11. Contributing to the common effort (cooperation between sectors), and
12. Long-term sustainable development.

Source: <<http://www.wttc.org/>>

3.2.3 Management Tools

A number of management tools are emerging for incorporating the array of stakeholder interests. These tools include, but are not limited to, intersectoral collaboration, public participation, mediation and consensus-building and indicators. A thorough discussion of these management tools is too vast for this report, however this section provides a brief introduction to some that are considered among the best practices for sustainable tourism development.

Intersectoral Collaboration and Public Participation

Managing for sustainable tourism requires incorporating a variety of economic, environmental and sociocultural interests from several concerned parties (Scace 1993; Nelson 1994). These parties can include actors from a number of community groups including government representatives, nongovernment organizations, tour developers, tourists, local communities, protected area personnel and financial institutions (Ziffer 1989; Boo 1992a). As Ziffer (1989) emphasizes, each of these concerned parties “has specific knowledge and expertise to contribute and they should have a say in how programs are designed and benefits distributed” during the tourism development process.

One of the current methods for incorporating the variety of economic, environmental and sociocultural interests is public participation. Public participation is a term that has as many definitions as there are attempts to describe it. Participation can simply mean "taking part," and the part can be small or large, depending on the interests involved (Sitnicki 1995). Participation

is more generally understood as a process “through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources, which affect them” as defined in the Participation Learning Group Final Report (World Bank 1996). The level at which the public participates in the decision-making process is often described as a continuum. Participation can be at a level where the public has little influence on the decision-making process (usually not involved at the conceptual stage of the project) to a much greater involvement in and control over the decision making process (from diagnosis to the monitoring stages of the project).

Identification of participants is key to the participation process. Individuals implicated in a project vary according to the context and can originate from any of a number of social or political groups. A highlight of past efforts is that particular attention be given to the local community, or those directly affected by the development (Wells and Brandon 1992). These groups are often in a marginalized situation resulting in their being excluded from the decision-making process. An event that has resulted in these individuals being referred to as the ‘voiceless’. It must be noted that to promote real participation, the option of not participating must also be offered to the communities (World Bank 1996).

Public participation as an essential process for sustainable development has been officially recognized among several governments and international agencies. For example, the Agenda 21 document states "environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level" (Principle 10 1992). Since the time of the Agenda 21 publication, several other international organizations have voiced their support of public participation in the decision-making process of project development. This OAS Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra (1994) highlights this idea,

“We will support and encourage, as a basic requisite for sustainable development, broad participation by civil society in the decision-making process, including policies and programs and their design, implementation, and evaluation. To this end, we will promote the enhancement of institutional mechanisms for public participation.

We will promote increased opportunities for the expression of ideas and the exchange of information and traditional knowledge on sustainable development between groups, organizations, businesses, and individuals, including indigenous people, as well as for their effective participation in the formulation, adoption, and execution of decisions that affect their lives.”

While a public participation process can bring benefits, it is also associated with shortcomings. Among the basic shortcomings are,

- Benefits from participation are often more obvious than the costs. An increase in public participation is generally accompanied by an increased need for organizational skills, time, and resources. Experience has demonstrated that the cost of participation is often higher for the poorest people and women. A fact frequently ignored by some practitioners. It cannot be

presumed that a poor community will automatically benefit from their increased participation, either financially or socially (Mayoux 1995, 241-51).

- Consensus among participants towards objectives and needs is not always possible. Participant objectives and needs often diverge due to the interests of the actors involved and experience has proven that a community is rarely composed of uniform opinions and conflicts may arise.

Mediation and Consensus-Building

In the context of the tourism industry, conflicts between resource use for tourism and for other industries (eg. forestry, mining, agriculture, fishing) are to be anticipated. In addition, the manner in which ecotourism is developed in a given area may also be subject to differing viewpoints. By bringing the diverse interests together and using collaborative techniques such as mediation and consensus-building, it may be possible to overcome differences and move towards effective and creative strategies that satisfy all concerned and meet the dual objectives of environmental preservation and economic development. Environmental Dispute Resolution (EDR) is one of the many techniques available to deal with conflict and may generally be defined as follows,

EDR offers a variety of approaches that allow the parties to meet face to face to reach mutually acceptable resolution of the issues in a dispute or potentially controversial situation. Although there are differences among the approaches, all are voluntary processes that involve some form of consensus building, joint problem solving, or negotiation. (Atherton and Atherton 1994, 10).

Environmental dispute resolution approaches are flexible and can be molded by the parties to help them arrive at workable and sound solutions. In the complex areas of tourism and natural and cultural resource management, policy-makers are increasingly turning to EDR techniques. EDR approaches would assist in building partnerships among the various actors, such as those described in chapter 2, to resolve conflict and establish management strategies regarding ecotourism development.

Experience has proven that the policies and programs produced through this approach are generally perceived as fair and acceptable. The results tend to be more pragmatic, easier to implement, longer-lasting and less costly than those arrived at through the conventional top-down process (Atherton and Atherton 1994; Urban land Institute 1994). However, not all issues are best resolved through a voluntary EDR approach. Therefore, it will first be necessary to ask whether EDR is appropriate. Usually, the government body most closely interested in the issues will be faced with this determination. If the response is affirmative to most of the following questions, EDR may be appropriate: Do conflicting interests make development or enforcement of a policy difficult without stakeholder involvement? Is there a conflict that has developed sufficiently so that the issues and the affected parties are identifiable? Do the parties have a reason to bargain? Is there a sense of urgency to settle the conflict? Is the outcome uncertain? Is there room for flexibility? Are the parties willing and able to consider a compromise? (SPIDR 1997).

Mediation, which is a form of EDR, may be defined as the intervention between conflicting parties or viewpoints to promote reconciliation, settlement, compromise, or understanding. Mediation involves the intervention of a neutral party, the mediator, who is skilled in using EDR techniques, in order to facilitate an agreement among the stakeholders. Consensus-building is much like mediation and often the terms are used interchangeably. Often the term “consensus-building” is used in the context of government policy-making when there is no actual dispute but potential for conflict exists (SPIDR 1997).

One of the important roles of the mediator is to identify and bring to the table all of the relevant stakeholders. In disputes over environmental issues, identifying stakeholders and getting them to agree to mediation is no simple task. Mediation is a voluntary process, therefore, parties cannot be forced into mediation but must feel that they have something to gain by being present at the table.

The mediator and the stakeholders will have to decide on a protocol or “ground-rules” that establish in general terms how the process will be conducted. The ground rules generally include the names of the parties, a general description of the issues and the goals to be achieved through the process, rules for respectful behavior, when and where meetings will be held, a closing date, and what happens if there is no consensus.

Next, the parties, with the help of the mediator, must identify the issues. For example, in the case tourism development around lakes or coastal areas, issues may include access by pleasure boats, the speed limits, waste disposal, noise and water zones (eg. swimming, boating, ecological zones). Once the range of issues has been identified, the parties must determine what the goals are to be achieved through the mediation process. For example, may be that the result of a mediation process will be a general management plan for recreational use of the lake or coastal area.

A mediator has no power to impose solutions and must remain neutral—if the mediator is felt to be partial to any side of the dispute, the process will surely fail (SPIDR 1997). That being said, the mediator may have confidential relationships with each of the parties and call separate meetings in order to fully understand the parties position without having it revealed in a public forum. This assists the mediator in shaping the mediation and moving the parties towards consensus.

When technical or scientific issues are at stake, the mediation process often involves the use of experts. The stakeholder group may be broken down into smaller working groups to focus on particular issues (eg. one group may be directed to study solutions to preserve a critical habitat for a threatened species, another may be asked to come up with plans to resolve conflicts among motor-boats, swimmers and sailboats). Work groups normally act in an advisory capacity and bring their ideas to the whole group for discussion and approval.

Consensus may take many different forms depending upon what the parties to a mediation wish to achieve and what meaning they give to the term. Commonly the term is used in the practical sense of, “Do we have an agreement everyone can live with - and that is feasible”? In principle, EDR processes do not operate by voting or majority rule (SPIDR 1997).

Finally, the mediation process should have a deadline. The stakeholders will be called upon to devote time and energy towards reaching consensus, but an end and a goal must be in sight to maintain a high level of interest and momentum and to avoid frustrations. The goal, identified at the outset, may be to agree on planning priorities and actions for managing and developing ecotourism. The agreement itself should set out clear steps to implement the plan and to monitor its effects over time.

Indicators

Indicators are management tools that reveal trends toward, or away from an objective. They provide information to decision-makers, promoting understanding of relevant issues, allowing timely intervention and enabling informed decision-making. When properly designed, indicators monitor change during the planning, implementation, and evaluation process and have proven key to effective and successful management. Planners in various professions and for many purposes use indicators. Some (Nelson et al 1993; Weaver 1995; Manning 1998) promote the use of indicators in the field of tourism based on the understanding that they help the tourism sector participate in regional planning and manage its own economic, social, and environmental impacts. Indicators also assist policy-makers in regional planning acknowledge site-specific implications of development in order to promote sustainability.

While it is understood indicators measure change, the actual definition of a sustainable tourism indicator is not as clear. Sustainable tourism indicators and their definition is an evolving field and there is no consensus on any one model (Weaver 1998, 8). Some suggest classifying indicators according to purpose or function, and others suggest actors and the normative and societal context. By way of illustration, Nelson et al (1993,14) suggest classifying indicators into ecological, economic, social and institutional groupings (see Box 3.4).

Box 3.4 Sustainable Tourism Indicator Index

1. Ecological

- species demographics,
- water quantity, quality and use,
- air quality,
- waste production and recycling programs,
- efficiency or resource use, and
- scenery degradation.

2. Economic

- a) Community
 - distribution of income, and
 - costs of tourism.
- b) Tourism Industry
 - business growth,
 - profits and losses, and
 - bankruptcy.

3. Social

- a) Community
 - jobs, quantity and quality,
 - migration to and from tourist destination, and
 - satisfaction and complaints about tourism.
- b) Tourists
 - number and flow of visitors,
 - proportion of repeat visitors,
 - length of stay, and
 - satisfaction and complaints.

4. Institutional

- laws and regulations regarding tourism development,
- infractions and court cases,
- incorporation of tourism in official plans,
- existence of tourism plans,
- interpretive information,
- government and private sector tourism organizations,
- NGO response to tourism, and
- existence of Tourism Codes of Ethics.
-

Source: adapted from Nelson et al 1993: 14

Other methods divide indicators according to categories. Manning (1995) for instance, suggests core and destination-specific categories:

- **Core indicators of sustainable tourism** are indicators intended for general application to all destinations. An international task force on sustainable tourism developed this grouping.

and

- **Destination-specific indicators of sustainable tourism.** These are applicable to particular ecosystems or forms of tourism and fall into two categories:
 - supplementary ecosystem-specific indicators: these apply to particular ecosystems and,
 - site-specific indicators: these are developed for the particular tourist site and reflect the unique attributes of the area.

In a similar fashion, others (WTO 1993a cited in Weaver 1998) recommend a division between national and site-specific indicators (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Nationwide and site-specific sustainable tourism indicators

Nationwide sustainable tourism indicators

- % of protected area within national territory,
- endangered spaces (area under stress) ,
- % of cultural themes and sites protected,
- travel intensity; no. of domestic and international trips per capita,
- use intensity; no. of 'hotspots', % UNESCO sites under stress, concentration of activity, % of all tourists visiting top 5 sites,
- Foreign or non-resident ownership,
- political stability index,
- national and sub-national strategies and adoption of environmental planning and codes of conduct, and
- foreign exchange leakage.

Site-specific sustainable tourism indicators

- Destination attractivity index,
- site-stress index,
- site protection; % of site for visitor use; use intensity,
- rate of energy and water consumption,
- tourists to resident ratio,
- endangered spaces; ecological stresses,
- % of foreign or resident ownership,
- integrated area management strategy including tourism, and
- existence of a comprehensive environmental review process.

Source: adapted from Weaver (1998).

As these various methods demonstrate, there is no specific method to categorize indicators at this time.

This lack of a specific method to categorize indicators does not detract from the many benefits properly designed indicators can provide. To illustrate, Manning (1995, 3) states that decision-makers are better able to:

- identify emerging issues, allowing prevention or mitigation;
- identify impacts, allowing action before they cause problems;
- support sustainable tourism development, identifying limits and opportunities; and
- promote management accountability, developing responsible decision-making built on knowledge.

Sustainable tourism indicators are used by all those involved in the planning and management of tourism development. Such individuals include tourism authorities at the international, national, regional, and local level including government managers responsible for a particular tourism sector, park managers and members of local communities concerned with tourism impacts (Manning 1995, 2). Each of these authorities will have a particular reason to use indicators, and these reasons can include measuring progress of capacity development, institutional strengthening, education and awareness or ecological integrity to name but a few.

Indicators are used where tourism authorities are planning, implementing, or evaluating tourism development. This can occur at all levels of management ranging through the international, national, regional and local level.

One of the main features of indicators is that they are not static. Over time an indicator's usefulness may become reduced and the need for new ones can also emerge. There are a number of reasons their usefulness may become reduced. It may be found that the indicator no longer adequately monitors change or, that the original objective has been met and measuring progress is no longer necessary. Equally possible, issues once considered inconsequential or overlooked may suddenly become very important and the need for new indicators becomes apparent.

While indicators are not static, many agencies and organizations (Manning 1995; ICLEI 1996; CUI 1997) believe effective indicators possess common features. By way of example, The Canadian Urban Institute (CUI 1997) suggests all indicators should possess the following criteria:

Canadian Urban Institute suggestions for indicator features:

- closely reflect the objective that is trying to be achieved;
- be measurable and verifiable;
- be relatively easy and inexpensive to gather; and
- possibly measure more than one objective.

Source: Adapted from CUI (1997).

Another set of criteria considered necessary and common to all effective indicators is compiled by The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). The ICLEI develops its indicators based on the following features:

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) suggestions for indicator features :

- use of indicator should be feasible. The collection and compilation of data to measure indicator must be feasible given the time and cost constraints;
- indicator should be measurable on a frequent basis. The monitoring of performance and trends over time demands consistent and comparable time-series data;
- indicators should be valid. Measures need to be based on quality data and acceptable standards of measurement and methods; and
- indicators must be relevant to local residents. Indicators must be understood and valued by their users.

Source: Adapted from ICLEI (1996, 175).

3.3 Some Key Issues

- Managing the development of tourism entails the adoption of planning strategies and guidelines to control and mitigate the negative impacts of tourism without sacrificing its benefits.
- Legal tools such as local zoning and development norms respecting such features as siting, height, setbacks and density of construction can permit ecotourism development in accordance with the goals of natural and cultural resource conservation.
- Governments at the regional, state/provincial and national levels play an important role in ecotourism planning to ensure consistency among local standards and in the siting of major infrastructure and in establishing protected areas.
- Ecological zoning, water and distance zoning are relatively new and particularly useful tools in the context of ecotourism planning. A study and sharing of the experiences in the application of such tools across North America would serve as a guide for local communities.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is another important tool in the context of tourism development to measure and mitigate against negative impacts that a project may have on the environment. Government agencies studying tourism projects in the context of an EIA should be aware of ecotourism approaches as viable and favorable alternatives to traditional, mass tourism.
- The legal framework for the creation and management of national and state/provincial parks and protected areas in Canada, Mexico and the United States, along with legislation protecting marine resources are also part of the legal tool-kit for ecotourism development available in these countries.
- The goals of many of the international conventions signed by Canada, Mexico and the United States support ecotourism as they are aimed at protecting the natural and cultural resources upon which ecotourism depends. The Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Treaty, the World Heritage Convention, CITES, Man and the Biosphere Program, the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 are examples of international conventions which promote

ecotourism as a strategy for conserving ecosystems and natural and cultural resources while permitting local economies to develop.

- State/provincial and national governments may create a positive economic and political climate for ecotourism development in North America through the adoption of incentive programs. For example, tax deductions and exemptions for the creation of conservation easements on private property and the donation of land to governments or NGOs as parks and protected areas, have proved to be valuable incentives for the voluntary conservation of ecotourism assets.
- Another incentive program involves the recognition of best practices with awards and honorary mentions. At various levels of government, a combination of monetary and non-monetary awards could be given in public recognition of successful efforts to preserve ecosystems, habitats, and the species within them.
- Some of the costs of developing and maintaining protected areas and ecotourism facilities can be recovered through mechanisms to capture revenue such as user fees. User fees may take the form of entrance fees to parks, museums and wildlife reserves or through such programs as hotel and visitor taxes.
- Voluntary codes of ethics are non-legally binding principles and guidelines that have received international recognition as important tools in environmental preservation. Tourism codes of ethics are generally part of an overall package that also includes certain mandatory regulations to properly control and manage tourism development. State and local governments, international and regional tourism groups, and environmental organizations are the primary initiators of codes of conduct targeting industry, tourists, and host communities. Codes are typically cast in terms of large principles and objectives, but may also be specifically directed to a site or an activity. Codes may also be addressed generally to tourists, to the tourism industry (eg. hotel owners and tour operators), and to the host community.
- Intersectoral Collaboration is an effective method for incorporating the various economic, ecological and sociocultural interests implicated in the sustainable tourism management process.
- Public participation is a widely supported approach that can help achieve ecotourism objectives by increasing benefits to local communities. This in turn can increase the communities' endorsement of conservation efforts. In order to be successful and to allow the poorest members of the community to participate, the public participation process must recognize the local sociopolitical structure and address the costs involved for the participants.
- North America has the opportunity to collaborate in the harmonization of definitions and policies regarding public participation in the decision-making process.
- An effective technique to resolving conflicts over resource use is environmental dispute resolution. The use of mediation and consensus-building in ecotourism planning and establishing regulations and voluntary conservation guidelines can greatly improve the implementation of such mechanisms.
- Indicators are tools that promote effective and successful project management. When properly developed, they provide information to decision-makers, promote understanding of relevant issues, allow timely intervention and enable informed decision-making.

APPENDIX 1: International Organizations

Commission for Environmental Cooperation

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is an international organization whose members include Canada, Mexico and the United States. The CEC was created under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) to address regional environmental concerns, help prevent potential trade and environmental conflicts and to promote the effective enforcement of environmental law. The Agreement complements the environmental provisions established in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The mission of the CEC is to facilitate cooperation and public participation to foster conservation, protection and enhancement of the North American environment for the benefit of present and future generations, in the context of increasing economic, trade and social links between Canada, Mexico and the United States. Sustainable tourism is a new program area under CEC's environment, trade, economy sector. The North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (NAFEC) is the funding mechanism of the CEC that provides grants for community based projects in Canada, Mexico, and the United States that promote the goals and objectives of the CEC and considers sustainable tourism projects. <<http://cec.org/index5.htm>>.

Canadian International Development Agency

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is the lead player in delivering Canada's official development assistance program. The cornerstone of the development assistance program is to support sustainable development in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world. The objective is to work with developing countries and countries in transition to develop the tools to eventually meet their own needs. CIDA focuses their efforts on six priority areas: (1) basic human needs; (2) women in development; (3) infrastructure services; (4) human rights, democracy, good governance; (5) private-sector development; (6) the environment. CIDA's assistance to tourism development programmes has been concentrated in the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa. <<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index-e.htm>> .

Global Environment Facility

The GEF provides grants and concessional funding to recipient countries for projects and programs that protect the global environment and promote sustainable economic growth. The Facility supports activities that benefit the global environment in four focal areas: climate change; biological diversity; international waters; and stratospheric ozone. Activities concerning land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, as they relate to the four focal areas, are also eligible for funding. GEF projects and programs are managed through three implementing agencies: the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank. Countries may be eligible for GEF funds in one of two ways: (1) if they are eligible for financial assistance through the financial mechanism of either the Climate Change Convention or the Convention on Biological Diversity; or (2) if they are eligible to borrow from the World Bank or receive technical assistance grants from UNDP through a Country Programme. A country must be a party to the Climate Change Convention or

the Convention of Biological Diversity to receive funds from the GEF in the relevant focal area. GEF projects must be country driven, incorporate consultation with local communities and, where appropriate, involve nongovernmental organizations in project implementation. <<http://www.gefweb.org/>>.

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives

The ICLEI is an association of local governments dedicated to the prevention and solution of local, regional, and global environmental problems through local action. Over 300 cities, towns, counties, and their associations from around the world are Members of the Council. ICLEI is sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Union of Local Authorities, and the Center for Innovative Diplomacy. ICLEI's mission is to build and support a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global environmental conditions through the cumulative impact of local actions. <<http://www.iclei.org/about.htm>> .

Inter-American Development Bank

The Inter-American Development Bank is a regional multilateral development institution helping to accelerate economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The IDB's principal functions are to utilize its own capital, funds raised by it in financial markets, and other available resources, for financing the development of the borrowing member countries; to supplement private investment when private capital is not available on reasonable terms and conditions; and to provide technical assistance for the preparation, financing, and implementation of development plans and projects. The Canadian Technical Cooperation Program Fund, established by CIDA in 1994, has been successful in providing assistance on a wide range of fields of expertise, such as agriculture, energy, infrastructure, transportation, tourism, education and water. <http://www.iadb.org/exr/english/index_english.htm> .

International Development Research Centre

The International Development Research Centre is a public corporation created by the Canadian government to help communities in the developing world find solutions to social, economic, and environmental problems through research. The Centre has a flexible corporate structure that allows multidisciplinary, multicultural teams to focus the Centre's energies on key development problems. IDRC connects people, institutions, and ideas to ensure that the results of the research it supports and the knowledge that research generates, are shared equitably among all its partners, North and South. Sustainable improvements in human well-being depend on knowledge, its production, distribution, ownership, and wise application. To define the issues that are priority, IDRC has chosen six development themes—(1) Food Security, (2) Equity in Natural Resource Use, (3) Biodiversity Conservation, (4) Sustainable Employment, (5) Strategies and Policies for Healthy Societies, (6) Information and Communication. <<http://www.idrc.org/>>

International Union for the Conservation of Nature/The World Conservation Union

The World Conservation Union brings together states, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations in a partnership that includes over 800 members from 132 countries. The mission of the IUCN is to influence, encourage, and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the diversity of nature and to ensure that the use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. The IUCN is investing considerable time in examining and clarifying the relationship between tourism and protected areas. IUCN conference workshops, publications, and consultancy programmes are helping to facilitate research on the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of tourists on protected areas in an attempt to develop local, regional, and national tourism strategies (Ceballos-Lascurain 1996). <<http://www.iucn.org/>>.

Organization for American States

On June 28, 1996, in order to strengthen the tourism group of the Organization of American States, and their activities in the tourism sector, the Secretary General of the OAS created the Inter-Sectoral Unit for Tourism. This unit is responsible for matters directly related to Tourism and its development in the Hemisphere. The functions of the Inter-Sectoral Unit for Tourism are to: (1) Provide support to the Inter-American Travel Congress forum for formulating hemispheric tourism policy; (2) Provide support in the area of Sustainable and Integral Tourism Development; (3) Provide support to other sectors of the General Secretariat engaged in activities related to sustainable and integral tourism development; (4) Provide support to hemispheric and subregional conferences, workshops and seminars; (5) To formulate, evaluate, and undertake execution of selective technical cooperation projects and promote public/private sector cooperation; (6) To facilitate the exchange of information related to sustainable and integral tourism development in the region; (7) Conduct research and analysis of tourism issues; (8) and Promote cooperation with international, regional and subregional tourism organizations. <<http://www.oas.org/EN/PROG/TOURISM/home.htm>>.

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

The United Nations Biodiversity Secretariat performs the functions assigned by the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Convention's three objectives are (1) the conservation of biological diversity, (2) the sustainable use of its components and (3) the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Convention promotes a renewed partnership among countries. Its provisions on scientific and technical cooperation, access to genetic resources, and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies form the foundations of this partnership. The mission of the Convention Secretariat includes (1) arranging and servicing meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP), the decision-making arm of the Convention; (2) assuming duties assigned by potential protocols; (3) preparing reports; (4) coordinating with other international relevant bodies as assigned by the COP. Closely linked to the Secretariat are the The Subsidiary Body on Science, Technical and Technological Advice (SBTTA) and the Clearing House Mechanism. The SBTTA is a decision-making body that provides advice concerning the implementation of the Convention to the COP. It is also a multidisciplinary body comprising government representatives competent in all the relevant

fields of expertise. The Clearing-House Mechanism promotes technical and scientific co-operation and facilitates access to and the exchange of information at all levels among Parties to the Convention on such topics as sustainable tourism. <<http://www.biodiv.org/>> .

United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development

The United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) organizes multi-stakeholder dialogues dealing with the impact and contribution of tourism to sustainable development. Participants in these dialogues include members from related industries, unions, communities and local authorities. The purpose of the 1999 Tourism Segment at the CSD is to foster a dialogue between governments and representatives of various groups, and to identify policies that may strengthen the positive impacts of tourism on sustainable development objectives. The Segment is organized around the following themes: (1) industry initiatives for sustainable tourism; (2) influencing consumer behavior to promote sustainable tourism; (3) promoting broad-based sustainable development through tourism while safeguarding the integrity of local cultures and protecting the environment; and (4) the coastal impact of tourism. The CSD's work for 1999 also includes an intergovernmental discussion for policy recommendations on tourism including eco-tourism. <<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/>> .

United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

The main objective of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion. To fulfill its mandate, UNESCO performs five principal functions: (1) prospective studies (2) research, training, and teaching (3) standard-setting action (4) technical expertise (5) information exchange.

UNESCO is involved in many projects exploring the links between culture and tourism. In February 1999, UNESCO and the WTO signed a co-operation agreement to develop sustainable tourism that reconciles culture and tourism. The text envisions the implementation of development strategies and projects for tourism that respect the natural environment, cultural heritage and local populations and promote dialogue between cultures and peoples. UNESCO and the WTO will undertake joint activities to promote cultural itineraries and routes that underscore the benefits of natural reserves for inhabitants and visitors, train decision-makers in cultural tourism and implement ethical principles of tourism as spelt out in the various codes and charters adopted by the two organizations. A conference on culture and tourism scheduled for 1999 will take stock of the interaction between tourism and culture by exploring the ways to balance the benefits to both visitors and hosts through the promotion of cultural tourism. The scientific and technical aspects of cultural tourism, the management of cultural sites and tourist flows, education and training, and promotion and distribution are other areas of study. <<http://www.unesco.org/>>.

United Nations Environment Programme

To provide leadership and encourage partnerships in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and people to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UNEP provides an integrative and interactive mechanism through which a large number of separate efforts by intergovernmental, nongovernmental, national and regional bodies in the service of the environment are reinforced and interrelated. UNEP was established as the environmental conscience of the United Nations system, and has been creating a basis for comprehensive consideration and coordinated action within the UN on the problems of the human environment. One of the most important functions of UNEP is the promotion of environmental science and information. In the field of ecotourism, UNEP has been active in promoting sustainable tourism in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization, the hotel and tourist industry and decision-makers. UNEP has participated in the elaboration of a new International Charter for Sustainable Tourism and published the Environmental Action for Hotels which guides the hotel industry in improving their environmental management practices. Other projects related to ecotourism include: (1) protection of the marine environment from human activities, (2) global biodiversity assessment, (3) and wildlife conservation. <<http://www.unep.org/>> .

United States Agency for International Development

USAID is an independent federal government agency that offers foreign assistance and humanitarian aid to advance the political and economic interests of the United States. The keys to USAID's goals of broad-based growth and reduced poverty are expanded human capacity through education and training. This requires fostering a policy environment that promotes efficiency and economic opportunity for all members of society that is soundly organized and managed by good governance. USAID's programs promote (1) economic prosperity, (2) democracy and human rights, (3) human capacity, (4) population and health issues (5) environmentally sustainable growth (6) humanitarian assistance. <<http://www.usaid.gov/>> .

World Bank

The World Bank's purpose is to reduce poverty and improve living standards through sustainable growth and investment in people. The World Bank goes to great lengths to ensure that projects it funds do not harm the natural environment. All projects are screened to determine whether they pose environmental risks. Environmental assessments are undertaken on projects that may be harmful and the World Bank includes special measures in such projects to avoid environmental damage. The World Bank is the largest funder of environmental projects to address pollution and natural resource degradation. The World Bank is helping client governments assess their environmental problems and priorities through national environmental action plans and regional studies. The Global Environment Facility, a partnership of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank, is addressing global environmental priorities such as biodiversity loss, climate change, ozone depletion, and pollution of international waters. Other project areas include: promoting economic reform, strengthening government capacity, stimulating private sector growth, leveraging investments, and investing in people. <<http://www.worldbank.org/>>.

World Travel and Tourism Council

The World Travel & Tourism Council has taken a responsive role in the evolving global strategy in the area of sustainable tourism with the following initiatives: (1) Embracing sustainable development as a key plank of its Millennium Vision Policy Framework. (2) Partnering with the World Tourism Organization and the Earth Council to develop a detailed Agenda 21 for Travel & Tourism, establishing a basic policy framework for government and industry. (3) Creating the GREEN GLOBE environment improvement system for companies and destinations, incorporating an ISO related certification procedure. (4) Launching, with the support of the European Union, a central internet based information node - ECoNETT - to help spread good practice.

In order to develop a "common platform" for information exchange on sustainable development initiatives, the WTTC has formed The Alliance for Sustainable Tourism. The Alliance is a voluntary organization for tourist industry representatives that is based on the action plan of Agenda 21 for Travel & Tourism, which resulted from the 1992 Earth Summit, and requires that signatories (1) Recognize that the environment is at the core of Travel & Tourism. (2) Support Agenda 21 for Travel & Tourism and include its principles in their own efforts. (3) Use best efforts to reduce overlap and duplication of programmes and seek collaboration (4) Promote Travel & Tourism as a catalyst for local level sustainable development (5) Contribute information on a regular basis on action in this field to a central 'Alliance for Sustainable Tourism' Website to encourage good information and good practice, collaboration, and partnerships. <<http://www.wttc.org/>>.

World Tourism Organization

The World Tourism Organization (WTO), whose membership includes 138 countries and territories and more than 350 affiliate members representing local governments, tourism associations and private sector companies, has as its purpose the promotion and development of tourism. The WTO is also active in the development of low-impact sustainable tourism through seminars, investment forums and participation in global meetings, as well as a series of publications. The WTO participated in Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and was instrumental in having tourism included in Agenda 21 as one of the industries capable of providing economic incentives for the preservation of the environment. The WTO also participated in the United Nations' Earth Summit II in New York. Research and activities undertaken by the WTO include the development of indicators of sustainable tourism, an investigation into the sources for the financing of tourism development, and the establishment of guidelines for the development of sustainable tourism. <<http://www.world-tourism.org/>> .

APPENDIX 2: Governmental Organizations

Government Agencies in Canada

There are a number of Canadian governmental agencies at the federal level that directly or indirectly have the ability to influence ecotourism development policies in North America.

The Canadian Tourism Commission

In 1995, the CTC was formed in to promote Canada as a tourism destination to both domestic and international markets. The management board, with representatives from both government and industry, initiates promotional projects cost-shared between the government, the tourism industry, and private industry. The vision and mission statements of the CTC share key elements with the development of ecotourism; that it is nature-based, and concerns itself with conservation, culture, and community participation¹⁵.

Ecotourism initiatives are grouped with adventure travel for the purposes of marketing and product development¹⁶. A special subcommittee on ecotourism and adventure travel, composed of tour operators, outfitters, and destination marketing representatives, is examining ways to implement product development and marketing strategies for this sector over the next two years. Issues to be addressed include product development, marketing, accreditation, and certification. Funding is limited and most committee members volunteer their time.

Tourism development has a history of poor access to financing, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses which comprise a majority of businesses in the ecotourism industry. The Canadian Tourism Commission has produced a guide which includes information on federal and provincial programs, venture capital, partnerships, lines of credit, loan guarantees, and grants available to businesses (CTC 1998b).

Parks Canada

Parks Canada is responsible for Canada's National Parks and National Historic Sites and is one of the most extensive networks of national parks and national historic sites in the world, with 38 national parks and 132 national historic sites. Natural protected areas total nearly 300,000 square kilometers. Marine conservation areas cover an additional 5,000 square kilometers (Canadian Heritage 1997, 12-13). Parks Canada is now developing ecological integrity statements for its National Parks in response to growing visitor impacts at such popular destinations as Banff

¹⁵ The Vision Statement states that "Canada will be a premier four-season destination to connect nature and experience with diverse cultures and communities (CTC 1998, 3). The Mission Statement adds that Canada's tourism industry will deliver tourism experiences "while preserving and sharing Canada's clean, safe, and natural environments" (CTC 1998, 3).

¹⁶ Adventure travel is "an outdoor leisure activity that generally takes place in an unusual, exotic, remote, or wilderness setting, involves some form of unconventional means of transportation and tends to be associated with high or low levels of physical activity (CTC 1997, ?).

National Park. Human use and visitor infrastructure within the parks are critical considerations in formulating an overall ecosystem management strategy (Parks Canada 1997).

In late 1998, Parks Canada was re-established as a special agency reporting to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Although the new agency's mandate for tourism development is not explicit, it is examining visitor demand management and recognizes and supports tourism's role in marketing Canada to visitors, in helping to maintain a sound prosperous economy, and in fostering sustainable development that benefits local communities (Canadian Heritage 1994, 13). Parks Canada's policy statement reflects its legislated mandate and first priority is to maintain the ecological integrity of natural ecosystems.¹⁷

The agency, in cooperation with a commercial tour operator, has developed several learning vacation packages aimed specifically at the ecotourism and soft adventure travel sectors. One program—*Research Adventures: Putting Natural Curiosity to Work*—offers research adventures in several of Canada's western parks and includes such activities as surveying spring birds, monitoring winter wildlife, and collecting fish specimens. There are also off-site educational outreach programs that include kits for school students on field trips, a Discovery Channel TV series on the parks, and an educational CD-ROM for literacy and second language students. These programs help reach large, urban markets that Parks Canada believes it most needs to reach. Parks Canada also provides the secretariat for the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, with each province taking responsibility for management of designated rivers.

The Canadian Wildlife Service

The Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) is part of Environment Canada, and is responsible for the protection and management of migratory birds, nationally significant habitat, and endangered species. The CWS also has responsibility for other wildlife issues of national and international importance, including transboundary wildlife. The CWS ensures that nationally important areas are protected as National Wildlife Areas (NWA) or Migratory Bird Sanctuaries (MBS). In addition, the CWS promotes habitat-sensitive land-use practices (CWS 1998). The CWS has been active in researching the socioeconomic value of ecotourism using Canadian and international data to show the economic significance of ecotourism and its benefits to wildlife (Filion et al. 1992). The CWS has also identified the need for an official database recording the benefits of ecotourism.

The CWS is responsible for the 101 MBS in Canada, totaling 11.3 million hectares. The CWS also manages 45 NWAs, protecting approximately 287,000 hectares of habitat (CWS 1994). The public can visit most of the sites and some areas offer wildlife observation blinds. However, most NWAs and MBSs are unstaffed with limited or nonexistent on-site visitor services. The CWS discourages visitor use in some cases, and even prohibits access at certain times during breeding and molting periods (CWS 1997).

¹⁷ *The National Parks Act* states: "Maintenance of ecological integrity through the protection of natural resources shall be the first priority when considering park zoning and visitor use in a management plan [Canada 1988: Section 5(1.2)]."

The Canadian Forest Service

Canada has one of the largest continuous forested areas in the world. Canadian forests cover 417.6 million hectares and account for 10 percent of the world's total forestland; 23 percent is owned by federal and territorial governments, 71 percent by provincial governments, and six percent by private landowners. In 1995, some 7.6 percent of Canada's forests were protected by legislation, adding to those forests already protected by provincial policies. Canada's forests draw large numbers of visitors from home and abroad who enjoy wilderness activities ranging from hiking and wildlife photography, to hunting and camping. Bird-watching and mountain biking, are also becoming more and more popular (Filion et al. 1992, 6-7).

Part of the mission of The Canadian Forest Service is to promote the sustainable development of Canada's forests. The agency works in partnership with the various provincial departments of natural resources through the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM). This partnership pursues various initiatives, including the development of criteria and indicators, to measure progress toward sustainable forest management; the CCFM will also define, measure and report on the values that are important to Canadians (Filion et al. 1992, 1). Increasingly, forests are seen as integrated ecosystems with a wide range of features that are valued by the public. Forests provide multiple benefits including tourism, wildlife, recreational use, wilderness experiences and natural scenery (Filion et al. 1992, 78).

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Canada's continental shelf covers 3,700,000 square kilometers and is the second largest in the world, with a remarkable diversity of species. New Marine Protected Areas, as set out in the new *Oceans Act* (1997), will be created. Areas of interest will be evaluated based on ecological, technical and socioeconomic assessments. A wide range of stakeholders, including coastal communities, Aboriginal groups, and environmental organizations, may participate in identifying areas of interest. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has not taken initiatives in non-consumptive uses of the marine environment such as ecotourism, although it does recognize the opportunities for tourism that Canada's oceans provide. It does have expertise (such as whale and marine mammal specialists, marine biologists and oceanographers) to help develop ecotourism initiatives.

Commission of Environment and Sustainable Development

In 1997, the Canadian government created a Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to hold the federal government accountable for "greening" its policies and operations. In order to comply with the requirements of the *Auditor General Act*, in December 1997, 29 federal government departments and agencies tabled their sustainable development strategies in Parliament (Dougherty et al. 1998). Even though tourism was not specifically addressed in these strategies, elements that are critical for the success of ecotourism were raised. For instance Parks Canada emphasized the importance of protecting, preserving, presenting, and interpreting Canada's natural and cultural heritage. Other Departments, such as Fisheries and Oceans, and Natural Resources, addressed resource and habitat protection and use.

Other Canadian Government Agencies Related to Tourism

*The federal government also funds regional development agencies to stimulate economic development. Agencies such as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and others, consider tourism projects for development assistance, though often with caution. Funding is available for a range of activities from tourism business feasibility studies, to capital loans. For specific projects, these agencies may work in partnership with employment development initiatives offered through the federal department of Human Resources Development.

*Aboriginal Business Canada, a program within Industry Canada, has programs for economic development in Aboriginal communities that include tourism development. Aboriginal Business Canada will help fund feasibility studies and help finance equipment and infrastructure based on the preparation of a viable business plan.

Government Agencies in Mexico

Mexico is the only North American country with a ministry responsible for tourism at the federal level. That ministry is the *Secretaría de Turismo* (Sectur) aided by its funding agency the *Fondo Nacional para el Fomento del Turismo* (Fonatur). In addition, each state has its own “*Secretaría*” for tourism, which maintains close links with Sectur, particularly with regard to federal funding for state level programs and activities.

The institution responsible for the environment, natural resources, and national parks at the federal level is the Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries (*Secretaría de Medio Ambiente Recursos Naturales y Pesca*)—*Semarnap*, which is assisted technically by the National Institute of Ecology (*Instituto Nacional de Ecología*)—*INE*.

Secretaría de Turismo

(The Ministry of Tourism)

Due to the traditional importance of tourism in the national economy, the tourism sector has a place in the Presidential Cabinet at the federal level. However, of the 18 ministries, Sectur received the second lowest budget allocation in 1998, at 1.1 billion pesos (around US\$105 million).¹⁸ It is expected that the budget for 1999 will be cut by an additional 17 percent.¹⁹

Until recently, Sectur had operated offices in each Mexican state. As a result of a trend towards decentralization, all tourism offices now depend on state governments. The *Federal Law of Tourism* (1993) deregulated and decentralized many functions and activities that had previously been the sole responsibility of Sectur, and since 1993, Sectur has played a predominantly promotional and coordinating role. Nevertheless, an important proportion of the annual tourism budgets for state governments continues to be provided in federal funds by Sectur. There are

¹⁸ By comparison, the Ministry of Education (*Secretaría de Educacion*) received the highest budget allocation at 64.2 billion pesos (around US\$6.2 billion).

¹⁹ Personal Communication, Director General DPT, Sectur. (Estimate from Sectur, September 1998).

generally no official tourism offices at the municipal level of government, although local mayors may receive federal and/or state funds to facilitate tourism development. In 1994, Sectur developed a National Ecotourism Strategy (*Estrategia Nacional de Ecoturismo*).

Within its Alternative Tourism Directorate (*Dirección de Turismo Alternativo*) Sectur currently has a Directorate General for the Development of Tourism Products (*Dirección General de Desarrollo de Producto Turístico*)—DPT that is responsible for promoting “alternative tourism,” including ecotourism. As part of this initiative, Sectur recently developed a brochure entitled *Turismo Alternativo* in cooperation with private, specialized tour operators. This brochure describes a series of options for carrying out adventure, nature-oriented and cultural tourism activities.

A critical function for Sectur is the promotion and marketing of tourism in Mexico at both the national and international levels. Indeed, most of its budget is applied to these activities. However, the promotional schemes have changed little since the fifties. There have been some efforts to promote cultural aspects of tourism, such as the *Ciudades Coloniales* program, which has been quite successful. This program is designed to promote the most important colonial cities in Mexico as cultural tourism destinations at both the national and international levels. Significant funds have been applied to restore many historical monuments and buildings in these cities. The national and international promotional campaign has been done in an attractive and imaginative way.

In general, ecotourism market studies and promotional strategies are virtually nonexistent. In addition, coordination between Sectur and Semarnap has produced only modest results so far, including joint promotional brochures and occasional joint meetings on issues related to ecotourism. Thus, ecotourism development and promotion has had little assistance from the public sector.

In February 1998, the government announced the closure of its 14 existing foreign offices and terminated the assignment of their staff to carry out duties related to tourism promotion in the corresponding embassies.

(<<http://mexico-travel.com>>).

Secretaría de Medio Ambiente Recursos Naturales y Pesca (The Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries)

The institution responsible for the environment and natural resources at the federal level is the Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries (Semarnap). Semarnap was created in December 1994. According to Semarnap, the total protected area under the National System of Natural Protected Areas—Sinap (*Sistema Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas*)—is 10.7 million hectares—just over 5 percent of the national land area. This figure is low compared to Canada (10 percent) and the United States (13.4 percent).

The objective of Sinap is to integrate conservation and development strategies in a sustainable way. One concern is that in some of Mexico’s officially protected areas there is little effective

management and protection. Nevertheless, this system of natural areas includes ecotourism destinations. If ecotourism were effectively promoted and developed, these protected areas could potentially become self-financing.

Other Mexican Government Initiatives Related to Tourism

*The National Development Plan 1995-2000 (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1995-2000*) states that, “[I]n the case of Protected Natural Areas, coordinated programs will be applied to diversify funding sources and mechanisms, to incorporate ecological tourism services...” (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1995-2000*, 266). It goes on further to indicate that,

... as relates to regional development, generation of employment and foreign exchange, the tourism activity is the fastest and most viable development option for some regions of the country, so that the strategy to be followed will foster a joint promotional initiative (between the government and the private sector), in order to attract a greater number of visitors of higher income levels over the whole year, with special emphasis on sustainability and valuing of ecological and cultural resources, which up until now have been marginally taken advantage of within the tourism sector (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1995-2000*, 170).

Transportation and Infrastructure

Despite considerable interest in Sectur’s office of DPT in ecotourism, a critical barrier for the development of ecotourism in Mexico is the lack of adequate physical infrastructure and facilities, including roads and lodgings. In early 1998, an agreement was reached between Sectur and the Secretariat of Communication and Transport (*Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes*) to build additional roads, bridges, and ports to support tourism development. However, due to the economic situation in Mexico and to budget cuts, those plans may not be undertaken. Further, as a result of prospective budget cuts, the development and promotion of ecotourism is largely in the hands of the private sector and nongovernmental organizations. (<<http://www.semarnap.gob.mx>>)

Government Agencies in the United States

In the United States there is no central authority at the federal level responsible for tourism policy. A public/private partnership called the US National Tourism Office (USNTO) is being developed, but is not yet fully operational. The USNTO board was appointed in January 1997, with officers chosen from the traditional mass tourism sectors. The Board is in the process of identifying funding sources for the USNTO. The US Department of Commerce will handle the federal role. In this public/private partnership, the US Department of Commerce will represent the public interest and provide part of the funding. Despite the lack of a central tourism authority, there are at least four key federal agencies involved in tourism generally though not specifically stated.

The United States comprises nearly 2.3 billion acres of land. Of this, approximately 650 million acres—28 percent—is owned by the Federal Government. Four agencies administer 96 percent of this federal land for conservation, preservation, and/or development of natural resources (Cody 1995, 1). The four agencies with responsibilities related to ecotourism fall within two federal departments: the Department of Agriculture (the Forest Service) and the Department of the Interior (Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service). The US Environmental Protection Agency, through its administration of national environmental statutes related to all environmental media, plays a key role in permitting all forms of tourism.

There is however, no official policy promulgated on ecotourism at the federal level. A number of broad policies on sustainable development and natural resources management do have implications for tourism policy. There are numerous US government agencies with various levels of responsibility over natural areas, management of protected areas, management of tourism, and maintenance of statistics. There is little or no coordination among these agencies, and there appears to be a separation between outdoor activities and wildlife watching activities.

The Forest Service

The Forest Service, within the Department of Agriculture, was founded to ensure the availability of timber resources for the railroads and for the expansion of the United States. However, it is also responsible for preserving forest resources for environmental reasons. Forest Service lands have become important remaining habitat for endangered species and some of the best places for ecotourism suggesting movement away from exploitation towards stewardship.

The Bureau of Land Management

The BLM is located within the Department of the Interior. According to its 1997 Annual Report, it is beginning research on nonconsumptive recreation use of its lands. It is already “working to enhance the public’s understanding of resource conservation and protection through interpretation, environmental education, permit stipulations, and environmental stewardship efforts. Visitors are asked to use and enjoy the public lands while minimizing environmental impacts by practicing the Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly principles (BLM 1997). Multiple use plans are drawn up by the BLM agencies to resolve multiple-use conflicts on federal land such as tourism, mining and harvesting.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service

The USFWS, within the Department of the Interior, is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats in the United States. It controls 93 million acres, which includes 514 national wildlife refuges, 78 ecological services field stations, 65 national fish hatcheries, 50 wildlife coordination areas, and 38 wetland management districts, which include waterfowl production areas (USFWS 1998, 1). These sites are important potential ecotourist attractions. The agency, handles permits, licenses, environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and other impact statements. It reviews general plans and land use amendments, as well as certifications of consistency with coastal zone management, programs to protect wetland habitats, and the *Endangered Species Act*.

The National Park Service

The first national park in the world, Yellowstone National Park, was created in the United States in 1872. In 1998, the National Park Service has the dual mission to provide and promote public use and recreation, while at the same time preserving and protecting the land in its charge (Cody 1995, 15). This dual mission parallels the goal of ecotourism to find a balance between tourism use and protection.

Box A 2.1 US Government Agencies and their Responsibilities				
Agency:	Forest Service	Bureau of Land Management	Fish and Wildlife Service	National Park Service
Department:	US Department of Agriculture	US Department of the Interior	US Department of the Interior	US Department of the Interior
Mission:	Recreation, timber harvesting, livestock grazing, fish and wildlife habitat, and wilderness	Recreation, timber harvesting, livestock grazing, fish and wildlife habitat, and wilderness	Conservation and protection of fish and wildlife	Preserving, protecting and interpreting the natural, cultural, and historic lands and resources of the nation
Land:	191 million acres (about one-half forested areas)	266 million acres (mostly range lands). Recreation is concentrated in 521 areas, or about 10% of BLM lands.	87.5 million acres	78 million acres
Year Established:	1905	1946 (from the combination of the General Land Office, 1812, and the Grazing Service, 1934)		1916
Relevant promulgated policy:	13 national recreation areas within the National Forest System	Recreation and wilderness management are part of BLM's multiple use mandate. Most BLM lands are open to the public. BLM manages 99 sites as research natural areas, and eight as national conservation areas.	The USFWS's National Wildlife Refuge System is dedicated to the conservation of animals and plants. Other uses including hunting, fishing, recreation, timber harvest, and grazing are allowed only if they are compatible with the purpose of the refuge.	The NPS has 368 units; only 56 are National Parks. The others are national monuments, national recreation areas, national seashores, national lakeshores, national historic sites, and national battlefields. One must look to the authorizing legislation for each unit to determine its policy regarding recreation.

Source: Cody 1995.

Other Agencies

There are also three special management systems on federal lands that are cooperatively managed. These three special management systems are multiagency in scope, and thus do not fall under the jurisdiction of one office. Nevertheless, all four major agencies with responsibilities related to ecotourism have an office related to each of these management systems, or a staffer tasked with coordination for them.

- The National Wilderness Preservation System

The National Wilderness Preservation System is charged with maintaining pristine qualities, which it does through strict management and use limitations.

- The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System has developed three categories of rivers under protection, and focuses on public use and enjoyment of aesthetic, scenic, historic, archaeological and scientific features of the areas. Other uses will not be limited unless they substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment.

- The National Trails System

The National Trails System provides additional outdoor recreation opportunities and establishes four categories of trails. The National Trail System must comport with multiple use plans (Cody 1995, 17).

- The US Environmental Protection Agency

EPA administers the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, the *Resource Conservation and Recovery Act*, and the *Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act*. The EPA has little direct jurisdiction over natural areas management or tourism, although it plays a role in prevention of pollution, prevention of urban sprawl, and is concerned about the carbon sinks provided by forests.

- The US Coast Guard administers the *Fisheries Conservation and Management Act*.

Tourism policy formulation is often delegated to the states, or to tribal governments. The literature indicates a lack of federal action, and a similar lack of significant state action has resulted in a myriad of uncoordinated and inconsistent local and private approaches.

Attempting to determine US federal policy on ecotourism or on nature-based tourism is a complex exercise. There are many categories of protected areas and the policy setting and decision-making regarding recreation of any kind on federally controlled natural areas, is made on a site-by-site basis. Thus, to generalize about US policy would require the examination of thousands of individual pieces of legislation related to each and every park or wilderness area created by the federal government. In addition, the legislative path is often through state-oriented interest items, attached to unrelated omnibus bills. This can take the form of riders, or language folded into appropriations bills. Thus, finding information is difficult and time consuming, and beyond the scope of this study. In addition, the 104th and 105th Congresses have introduced a

number of bills that change policy regarding protected areas and recreation, by altering the balance between use and protection.

The Wilderness Act and the Oceans Act. The set aside of land for wilderness is a prerequisite for ecotourism. The *Wilderness Act* was passed in 1964, and by 1985 there were 455 wilderness areas designated, which contained 89,000,000 acres of land. According to one commentator, “[t]he 1964 *Wilderness Act* made ‘an outstanding opportunity of solitude’ an officially sanctioned federal goal” (Adler and Glick 1994, 48). Opportunities for marine-based ecotourism may benefit from the *Oceans Act*, which has provided funding for the creation of marine refuges.

Transportation and Infrastructure. According to the US National Park Service, “[a] basic premise of sustainable park and tourism development is that facilities must, to the fullest extent possible, function within the ecosystem and its processes rather than separately (USNPS n.d.)” In the United States, Federal Highway Administration funds are available to communities hoping to develop corridor-management plans for promoting their roadside natural and cultural resources (Whiteman 1996, 98). Relevant funding for maintenance and construction of trails can be found under the Department of Transportation’s *Intermodal Surface Transportation Act*, and the *National Recreation Trails Fund Act*.

International Ecotourism Development. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is active in funding ecotourism development, but not within the United States, because its mandate is focused on international work (Pleumarom 1994). In addition, the United States and other developed countries have sought to encourage tourism generally, and some ecotourism, through the multilateral development banks and the United Nation’s Global Environmental Facility (GEF). To date, many of these tourism development initiatives have had negative consequences for the interests of local communities, leading to the loss of land, the loss of traditional ways of life (such as fishing and agriculture) and the breakdown of communities and their culture.

APPENDIX 3: Nongovernmental Organizations

Amigos de Sian Ka'an

Since 1988, Amigos de Sian Ka'an has worked in cooperation with Secretariat for Social Development (Sedesol), sharing the responsibility of managing the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve in Quintana Roo, Mexico. Amigos developed and managed an ambitious ecotourism program to finance its conservation efforts and generate funds to manage the reserve. Amigos works closely with local communities in developing economic programs that protect significant terrestrial and marine resources from harm, while also providing sustainable alternatives for local residents who depend on forest resources and fishing to survive. With this goal in mind, Amigos has developed a number of community projects focused on the selective harvesting of forest wildlife and natural plants, including: an experimental marketing program for chicle (chewing gum), an ornamental plant nursery, and a subsistence hunting program (<<http://www.coa.edu/HEJourney/yucatan/SianKaan/directory.html>>).

Coastal Ecosystems Research Foundation

The Coastal Ecosystems Research Foundation is a non-profit organization whose aim is to fund ecological research through eco-tourism. Research is presently focused on the whales and dolphins of British Columbia's Central Coast. The general public is invited to participate in the research directly as 'paying volunteers'. The program funds the research completely and provides a first hand experience for the public (<<http://www.gorp.com/cerf/>>).

Conservation International

CI's mission is to conserve the Earth's living natural heritage, global biodiversity, and demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature. Conservation International's mission for ecotourism development is to act as a liaison between local communities and the tourism industry in order to develop and support economically sustainable ecotourism enterprises that contribute to conservation and serve as models for other ecotourism initiatives. CI also develops and disseminate tools for ecotourism that influence the broader tourism industry towards greater ecological sustainability. CI believes that ecotourism can serve as an effective conservation tool and a successful community development model. In order to realize this potential, CI's Ecotourism Program has developed an approach to ecotourism development using the following four categories of involvement (1) National/regional strategies; (2) Capacity building (3) Product development (4) International and national marketing. The Ecotourism Program will often focus its work within one or multiple categories to address the various levels of capacity for ecotourism in CI sites. Since its inception in 1987, Conservation International (CI) has been committed to assisting Mexico maintain natural ecosystems and preserve environmental quality and cultural diversity. CI established two ecosystem data centers in Mexico; the Institute of Natural History in Chiapas, and a national biotic resources information center at the National University's Center for Ecology. Today, CI focuses on two priority ecosystems: the Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez) and the Lacandona Forest (<<http://www.conservation.org/>>).

Ecosolar

Ecosolar is a grassroots NGO that focuses on socio-economic issues and stewardship in local communities. It has offices in Oaxaca and Mexico City. The focus of Ecosolar's work in this area is working with indigenous communities in Oaxaca to help them develop their communities sustainably in a way that will also attract ecotourists. Ecosolar is dedicated to changing the attitude of local peoples to promote ecologically sound, responsible communities. In addition, Ecosolar has worked in product development with Anita Roddick from the Body Shop in showing the locals how to take natural products and convert them into beauty products (<<http://www.laneta.apc.org/mazunte/mazu10.htm>>).

Environmental Defense Fund

EDF is an US organization, paying special attention to US environmental problems and to United State's role in both causing and solving global environmental problems. EDF is dedicated to protecting the environmental rights of all people, including future generations. Among these rights are clean air, clean water, healthy, nourishing food, and a flourishing ecosystem. EDF is guided by scientific evaluation of environmental problems and works to create solutions with lasting political, economic, and social support because they are bipartisan, efficient, and fair. EDF concentrates their efforts in the future on four goals. They are: (1) Stabilizing the Earth's climate by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. (2) Safeguarding the world's oceans from pollution and overfishing. (3) Protecting human health from exposure to toxic chemicals and pollution. (4) Defending and restoring biodiversity, with particular concentration on rivers and watersheds. EDF accepts proposals for research projects related to topics of substantive interest to the organization. In the field of ecotourism, EDF has focused on the impacts of ecotourists in Antarctica and the potential of ecotourism as part of an integrated restoration strategy for the Colorado River Delta (<<http://www.edf.org/>>).

International Institute for Sustainable Development

IISD was established in 1990 with continuing financial support from Environment Canada, CIDA and the Province of Manitoba. It also receives revenue from foundations and other private sector sources. The institute is registered as a charitable organization in Canada and a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation in the United States. The mission of IISD is to promote sustainable development in decision-making internationally and within Canada. This is achieved by contributing new knowledge and concepts, analyze policies, identify and disseminate information about best practices, demonstrate how to measure progress, and build partnerships to amplify these messages. Through Internet communications, working groups and project activities we create networks designed to move sustainable development from concept to practice. Action must address the differing views and needs of both developing and industrialized nations. IISD bridges these concerns in its program areas of (1) trade and sustainable development (2) measurement and indicators (3) Great Plains (4) knowledge communications (5) solutions for business. The IISD also contains an Information Centre that is a clearinghouse for sustainable development policy research and analysis. Recent ecotourism projects have focused on Costa Rica, the Philippines, and Zambia with emphasis on the importance of global product chains (<<http://iisd1.iisd.ca/>>).

National Audubon Society

The mission of the National Audubon Society is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Founded in 1905, the National Audubon Society is named for John James Audubon (1785-1851), famed ornithologist, explorer, and wildlife artist. Audubon's high priority campaigns and key legislative programs include (1) Preserving wetlands (2) Lobbying to reauthorize the Endangered Species Act (3) Promoting a responsible U.S. population policy (4) Preserving America's endangered forests (5) Protecting and promoting growth of America's National Wildlife Refuges (6) Conserving marine wildlife through Living Oceans program (7) Restoration of water flows to enhance wildlife of the Platte River system (8) Protecting corridors for migratory birds through the Partners in Flight program. The Society is now in a period of focusing their efforts on the conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, expanding educational programs to nurture appreciation of nature, and investing heavily in Audubon's distinctive grassroots network. In terms of ecotourism, Audubon is developing a new program "Audubon destinations: tourism and travel as a conservation tool" and is broadcasting a radio show, *Audubon on the Radio* focusing on environment and conservation issues that include topics related to ecotourism (<<http://www.audubon.com/>>).

PRONATURA

PRONATURA is the largest NGO in Mexico with 10 offices throughout the country. PRONATURA's focus is on conservation, and ecotourism is a very important part of its activities. PRONATURA engages in ecotourism related activities in two ways. It implements training programs for local communities instructing them of ways to integrate ecotourism into their activities. It also conducts training in administration, nature, and trains bilingual (english/spanish) guides. PRONATURA also conducts exclusive ecotours as a major part of its fundraising activities.

Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment

QLF is a Canadian/US foundation whose mission is to support the rural communities and environment of eastern Canada and New England. The Atlantic Center for the Environment conducts QLF's environmental programs and engages in international exchanges around the world. QLF programs are community-based and focus on sustainable communities, river and land stewardship, fish and wildlife conservation, and scholarship. Ecotourism programs fall under QLF's sustainable communities program and emphasize providing financial and technical assistance to rural communities through workshops, education and leadership training programs, short-term internships, and contracts. QLF is working with local partners in developing strategic ecotourism management plans, promotion and marketing materials on natural and cultural heritage, and traditional skills networks. International ecotourism efforts include exchanges focused in the Middle East, Canada, and the United States and research projects in northern Europe. Land stewardship projects are focused in Canada, Mexico, and the United States in North America (<<http://www.qlf.org/index.html>>). In addition, QLF has initiated an awards program that helps to inform the public about good environmental practice. QLF annually

accepts nominations for its Caring for the Earth Award. The Caring for the Earth Award is endorsed by the IUCN-World Conservation Union and is presented to an individual living and working in the region who demonstrates leadership, whether through volunteer service or paid professional work, in advancing any of the nine principles of sustainable living as described by the World Conservation Union. The principles are as follows: (1) respect and care for the community of life; (2) improve the quality of human life; (3) conserve the Earth's vitality and diversity; (4) minimize the depletion of non-renewable resources; (5) keep within the Earth's carrying capacity; (6) change personal attitudes and practices; (7) enable communities to care for their own environments; (8) provide a national framework for integrating development and conservation; (9) forge a global alliance.

Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is a nonprofit, member-supported public interest organization based in the United States that promotes conservation of the natural environment by influencing public policy decisions: legislative, administrative, legal, and electoral. The mission of the Sierra Club is (1) to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; (2) to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; (3) to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and (4) to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives. The Sierra Club has developed a set of principles for government agencies, planners and environmental groups promoting or supporting ecotourism. Guidelines for the ecotraveler are also an important element of their education program (<<http://www.sierraclub.org/>>).

The Ecotourism Society

The Ecotourism Society was founded in 1990 to bring together outdoor travel entrepreneurs, researchers, and conservationists to help make ecotourism a tool for conservation and sustainable development. TES activities and program areas include projects and research on ecotourism and local communities, marine ecotourism, international standards for ecolodge development, ecotour operator guidelines, and impacts of uncontrolled tourism growth. TES also provides information for the ecotraveler, for business professionals in the field, as well as education and training programs. TES projects span the globe with concentrated work in Latin America and the Caribbean (<<http://www.ecotourism.org/index.html>>).

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy operates the largest private system of nature sanctuaries in the world—more than 1,500 preserves in the United States alone. All of these safeguard imperiled species of plants and animals. The mission of Nature Conservancy is to preserve plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. The Conservancy also has launched programs in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The Pacific program is identifying and protecting threatened areas in Indonesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. In Latin America, the Conservancy has joined forces with more than 45 organizations covering 22 countries to provide community development, professional training and funding for legally protected areas. The Conservancy has pioneered

debt-for-nature swaps in Latin America. The Conservancy's ecotourism projects include an investigation of the role of community participation in the development of ecotourism in Ecuador from social, political, and conservation perspectives and the role of ecotourism in preserving threatened marine ecosystems in the Dominican Republic. Two projects in the United States identify ecotourism as an important industry to protect birds and their habitats for in the Delaware Bayshores and Arizona (<<http://www.tnc.org/>>).

Wetlands International

Wetlands International is the world's leading non-profit organization concerned with the conservation of wetlands and wetland species. It comprises a global network of governmental and nongovernmental experts working on wetlands. Activities are undertaken in more than 120 countries worldwide. Wetlands International was created in 1995 by the integration of the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau, the Asian Wetland Bureau, and Wetlands for the Americas. The Americas is the newest of the three regional arms of Wetlands International. Based in Ottawa, Canada with program and project offices in Argentina, Mexico, Peru and the United States, Wetlands International-Americas carries out wetland conservation activities which include coordinating national and regional wetland assessments, monitoring wildlife populations, publishing training and awareness materials, organizing community based conservation projects, and working with bilateral and multilateral partners to shape policy promoting the sustainable use of wetlands. Wetlands International - Americas is legally registered as a charitable organization under Canadian law and is governed by a Council comprised of representatives from the Americas. Ecotourism efforts in Canada, Mexico, and the United States include a continent wide project that links communities and migratory birds. WWF Canada also provides small grants to organizations as part of its national Endangered Spaces program (<<http://www.wetlands.ca/wia/>>).

World Wildlife Fund

WWF-World Wide Fund For Nature is the world's largest independent conservation organization. World Wildlife Fund is dedicated to saving life on Earth, through the conservation of nature and ecological processes. Conserving biological diversity is essential for ensuring a liveable future for humans and all species. WWF's mission is to conserve nature by using the best available scientific knowledge to preserve the diversity and abundance of life on Earth. Conservation programs emphasize conserving endangered spaces, safeguarding endangered species, and addressing global threats to the planet's web of life. A number of WWF's high profile ecotourism projects include work in Africa with the great apes, cooperative efforts in Mexico with the Monarch Butterfly, and the Arctic tourism programme in Canada's North. To enhance members' understanding of natural systems and conservation challenges, WWF also offers trips led by naturalists and WWF staff to areas of the world rich in wildlife that highlight the organization's goals (<<http://www.panda.org/>>).

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