PROGRAM OUTLINE

HOW RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED FOR BETTER DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT IN U.S. AND CANADA

Concurrent Session 1B

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--Dr. Clare A. Gunn, Recreation and Parks Department, Texas A&M University

RESEARCH FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
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--Dr. James M. Rovelstad, James Rovelstad and Associates
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Moderator: Dr. Clare A. Gunn, Professor
Recreation and Parks Department, Texas A&M University

Today, we have the opportunity of addressing a topic that is not very popular with the travel industry, is not given much financial support, receives little political support, and is generally treated lightly in our educational institutions. That topic is "research of the tourism product." We have been so preoccupied with promotion that we tend to forget what we are promoting.

In this regard, I believe we can honestly say that tourism today is about where medicine was 2000 years ago. It was way back then that Hippocrates first stated the proposition that disease was related to natural causes and not to religious-like beliefs or magical powers. I am afraid that in tourism, we still believe in the magical powers of promotion and treat marketing as a religion. That is evidenced by the places we put our money. In spite of the need for a federal perspective on research and education, we spend virtually all of our national funding on promotion. In spite of state needs for research and education, nearly all of the state budgets for tourism is spent on promotion. And, in the private sector, very little is spent on research of the tourism product.

I make these comments not to belittle the need and the effectiveness of promotion but to emphasize the lack of equal interest and money support for study of the tourism product.
And so, we are pleased to have this opportunity to bring to you today some evidence of product research that is taking place. In product research for tourism we are referring to the developmental side—what areas have the greatest potential and how can research help for the development of all those things that lure people from their homes and also provide satisfaction when they travel. Compared to manufactured products, ours are far more complicated and therefore demand even greater study. Our tourism products are tightly rooted to specific places. For manufacturing, the place of the plant has no significance to buyers. Geographical location and all the characteristics of places are important to us when we distribute consumers to the products of tourism.

When we view tourism products this way, we begin to realize the importance of the whole concept of destinations. And, few topics are less understood than are tourism destinations. We tend to believe they are readymade rather than created and packaged. We tend to think they have precise boundaries, not recognizing that destinations change with changes in markets and preference for places. We tend to assume that the product will take care of itself, not understanding that a complicated array of hundreds of agencies and institutions, often with conflicting goals, direct the management of tourism products. We still have little research of destinations that can be used by developers and by the marketers of tourism.

This lack of emphasis on tourism product research has been noticeable in our own TTRA meetings. As a result of observing this apparent lack of emphasis and knowing that we would be meeting in a very important tourism destination this year, several of us suggested to Kit Narodick, our program chairman, that emphasis be given product research in this meeting. We are pleased that he accepted our suggestion. For our discussion of destination research today, we have selected some very knowledgeable people.
But, before I introduce the panel, I would like to set the stage by describing very briefly some regional research approaches that we at Texas A&M believe have promise. For several years now we have been experimenting on improving our land analysis techniques for identifying areas with tourism development potential. We believe that certain land areas have much greater potential than others. By mixing secondary data on resources and on markets, we believe we can identify those zones in which tourism development investment has the best foundation. Let me explain.

(SLIDES)

(1) For a portion of central Texas encompassing 19 counties, we collected information on a number of factors that contribute to successful tourism. These factors have grown out of many years of study of locations that can best support tourism.

(2) We then placed this information on computer maps. The reason for engaging the computer is to allow both weighting of the several factors, because they are not equal in influence, and also to provide for adding them up to see where the greatest strengths occur.

(3) For example, by adding up the factors for focused destination development, such as for convention centers, resorts, vacation homes, we obtained a map showing areas of greatest support for future tourism development.

(4) Using that information as a foundation, we then conceptualized these four zones as being the locations where investors and developers, both public and private, should look to future development opportunities in this region.
(5) From this research, we then could draw conclusions that identified several types of development that now appear to have potential here: more meeting and conference facilities, more entertainment related to the local scene, expanded water-based recreation, such as resorts, and better linkage between meetings and other attractions. These recommendations are being made to the local areas.

(6) Likewise, for touring circuit types of development, the summary map by computer revealed similar areas with the strongest foundations.

(7) These we could then translate into suggested future touring circuits. If and when new attractions capitalized on the resource strengths, demonstrated by this method, these tours could be made available.

(8) From this, we concluded that several types of touring circuit opportunities were available in this area: tours of historic buildings and sites; tours of industries, plants, and agriculture; and scenic tours, especially in Spring.

(end slides)

There is no reason that this type of research and analysis could not be applied to larger areas, such as states and provinces, or even an entire country. It is not very complicated, is relatively inexpensive and yet can produce a great amount of information useful to legislators, developers and existing tourism operations.

I cite this as only one effort that concentrates on the product side rather than the promotional side of tourism.

For today we have selected an unusually well qualified group to address the topic of HOW RESEARCH IS BEING CARRIED OUT FOR BETTER DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT. Because we are meeting in Canada, and because Canada has done a great amount of work in this field, we have seasoned our panel very heavily with resource persons from Canada.
RICHARD A. MUXOLL

* Training and experience in marketing and resource development qualify him well for discussing the topic of our panel

* Has been responsible for systems and site park planning in Manitoba

* Was visitor services planner for the province of Ontario

* Has also had experience at the municipal park planning and research level for the City of Edmonton

* More recently became senior consultant with the Woods Gordon firm, moving into tourism market research and planning studies

* Holds memberships in the leading parks, recreation and planning professional organizations

* Has degrees from University of Waterloo, University of Manitoba, and Michigan State University.

RONALD D. TETASCIORE

* Collaborated with Richard Nuxoll on the Coleman Project

* Holds degree in architecture from Arizona State University

* In 1978, became a principal and co-founder of EDA Collaborative, Inc. with offices in Toronto and Edmonton

* Holds the position of landscape architect, urban designer and principal in charge of the Edmonton Office

* Has been involved in many projects involving site analysis, planning and design of recreation and tourism facilities

* Research includes visual impact studies for parks, marinas, and tourism developments.
JAMES M. ROVELSTAD

*Has had both business and academic experience

*Recent years has been in academic life at several universities--West Virginia University, The New School for Social Research and the University of Wisconsin at Parkside

*While basic degree was in mechanical engineering, other degrees and recent specialization has been in marketing; Ph.D., University of Michigan

*Has been active in TTRA and currently is chairman of the William Keeling Dissertation Award

*Has carried out many consulting projects relating to tourism development and marketing

*In 1981, became the founder and Senior Partner, Rovelstad and Associates

*Now, Director, Office of Travel, Leisure and Transportation Studies, University of Wisconsin--Parkside.
BERNARD F. CAMPBELL

*Background gives him an understanding of both the destination and marketing sides of tourism.

*Has been with Canadian Government Office of Tourism since 1964.

*Has served in several promotional offices for CGOT in the United States: Boston, Cincinnati, New York

*Located in Ottawa since 1972:
   Involved in Market Development, USA, product improvement program, and served as Director, Industry Evaluation and Improvement.

*Now, Director, Tourism Development CGOT

*Originally from Nova Scotia; graduate of St. Francis Xavier University

*Recently has been heavily involved in developing new policies and strategies at the national level for better tourism development
SCOTT MEIS

* Is especially well qualified to speak to the topic of destination research;
* Has three degrees in sociology
* Has formerly been with the University of British Columbia and operated a private research consulting firm
* More recently, held several positions in the Socio-Economic Division of Parks Canada; is now Manager of Socio-Economic Information
* Has much depth and understanding of the resource side of parks which, in turn, are major tourist attractions
* Interested in the people-land relationships of such destinations: sociology of leisure; effectiveness of interpretation; environmental design research methods.