THE ROLE OF TOURISM IN THE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF SPECIAL PLACES

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INTRODUCTION

* Your first campout overnight, surrounded by sounds and blackness you had never before experienced.

* Your first impression of the Grand Canyon as you stood at the crest of that fathomless void.

* Your visit to cold and foggy Louisbourg where your eight-year-old told you more about history than you ever knew.

* Your memory of your honeymoon right here in the Banff Springs Hotel.

These are very special places for you. Thousands of other travelers can recall places that have been very special to them.

I remember vividly the special places of the West that I visited with my parents in 1929. As a postal clerk, my father had developed an insatiable desire to visit exotic places. However, his income restricted this urge to camping. So, in a brand new Model A Ford, we traveled from Michigan, throughout the western U.S., covered about 7,000 miles, wore out three sets of tires and one set of brakes, and took six weeks to do it. Even today, over sixty years later, I can recall the sights, smells, and sounds of the special places we visited on that trip.

Until I look at the calendar, it is hard for me to believe that I began to study tourism over forty years ago. (A year from
this June, if all goes well, my wife and I will be celebrating our fiftieth wedding anniversary.)

Over these years, I have witnessed dramatic improvements in travel. It is much more convenient, comfortable, and affordable for millions of people, worldwide. In the U.S. last year there were over 1.3 billion person-trips in our country. Our airlines carried over 430 million passengers. Travel, once considered too frivolous and capricious to take seriously, has emerged as the most stable element of the economy. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the only segment of the economy to grow was tourism. In spite of the great drop in the economy of Texas in recent years, travel expenditures have continued to grow, surpassing $17 billion a year. In Canada, tourism ranks high among all exports, ahead of newsprint, lumber, wheat, petroleum, and natural gas. Right here in Alberta, I am told that travel revenues in 1988 were over $2.6 billion, employing some 90,000 persons.

But, today there are many challenges facing the planning profession if it is to make an impact on protecting and even improving special places for tourism. As planners, we are charged with the responsibility of looking ahead and reaching toward a better world.

I would like to share with you today just two points--two issues that demand our attention if we are to be more effective in our collective role of planning. First, I would like to identify some very important half-truths that are misleading a great many people today. Second, if special places are that
critical to tourism development, and I certainly believe they are, how can we improve our techniques of discovering those areas that have the greatest tourism potential.

HALF-TRUTHS

As I work with communities, states, provinces, and nations in their desire to improve or enter into tourism, I find that because of its newness to them, they tend to oversimplify the complexities that we now know are involved in tourism development.

For the next few minutes, I would like to highlight just five half-truths—prevailing statements and beliefs about tourism that suggest that we have an educational job to do if we are truly concerned about the fate of special places as they relate to tourism.

First: the prevailing axiom of all tourism leaders today is that promotion is the sole factor that will create better tourism.

This is the prevailing belief of Chambers of Commerce, tourist bureaus, and tourism officials throughout the world. The evidence is revealed in what they do. The billions of dollars in tourism agency and private sector budgets is spent almost exclusively on promotion. Politicians support it; businesses have unquestioned faith in it.

No doubt, promotion helps. But, what about the special places to be promoted? What are they and what factors influence their success?

No, tourism development is not merely promotion. Planning
for tourism must include thorough understandings of travel markets and the supply-side components of transportation, attractions, service businesses, and information, as well as promotion.

Second, many writers and leaders of tourism speak about the "tourism industry."

Certainly, the business side of tourism appears much like an industry. Economists cite the economic impact including income, jobs, and investment—topics generally associated with an industry. But, there is much more to the functioning tourism system than the commercial business sector.

It is not the cause of tourism. Special places are. To say that tourism is an industry omits the vast land areas and destination places that bring tourists in the first place.

Actually, the developers of tourism places are pluralistic.

A very large sector is government. In rural areas, governments build reservoirs, highways, parks, nature reserves, wildlife refuges, and exercise strong control over land use. In urban areas, governments provide streets, lighting, fire control, police, and many amenities, such as parks, museums, historic sites, theaters, convention centers, and sports arenas.

Two very important groups make up the private sector.

Throughout the world, an increasingly important function is provided by the nonprofit sector. Most historic sites, festivals, and areas developed by nature conservancy groups, archeological societies, and recreation and civic organizations are used by tourists as well as local residents.

Of course, the commercial sector is important in providing
most of the lodging, food service, transportation, and products purchased by travelers.

No, tourism is not really and industry, but rather is an extremely diverse and complicated collection of investment and action by three important sectors.

Third: tourism is repeatedly described as a "smokeless industry."

Tourism development manuals and advisors emphasize that tourism development does not use resources. While it is true that tourism does not consume irreplaceable resources, such as in the case of mining, it is false to imply that it has nothing to do with resources.

Tourism special places depend greatly upon cultural and natural resource assets. Theme parks, even with their great growth in popularity, are not replacing attractions based on cultural and natural resources. Visits to our national parks has increased by over one-third in the last decade. In 1988, there were approximately 94.3 million visits to cultural areas administered by the National Park Service, alone. Your own Canadian study showed a market of 20 million adults in the U.S. interested in visiting Canadian cultural places.

No, it is false to imply that tourism has nothing to do with resources.

Fourth: the concept of "rural tourism" is gaining strength.

The U.S. is now studying the need for federal policy on rural tourism development. While it is helpful to focus attention on outlying areas, this movement tends to perpetuate a
now obsolete dichotomy of urban-versus-rural.

This trend violates what we learned about tourism a long time ago—that it encompasses both rural and urban areas. Even though the economic impact of tourism is primarily in the cities, it depends greatly on attractions in both cities and rural areas.

No, instead of fostering greater division between rural and urban areas, we should be stimulating much greater cooperation and even collaboration among all stakeholders in both areas.

Fifth: there is a prevailing belief that tourism can be developed anywhere.

As the economic base of some communities has faltered or eroded away, economists and politicians tend to believe that tourism is their salvation. Too often, this raises false hopes.

This oversimplified approach ignores the many factors that must be investigated to discover tourism potential, just as one would search for oil resources. In the last half of my presentation I shall describe a technique we used recently to determine the potential for tourism in a part of South Carolina.

I believe there is much evidence to support the conclusion that no, tourism is not for every community and every rural area. It requires special conditions—special places and functions that are just not possible everywhere.

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Now let me turn to my second point—how can we, as planners, use new techniques to discover the places that tourism can be developed?
II. GUIDE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE RIGHT PLACES

Way back in the 1950s, I became intrigued by the fact that science and technology were providing a great many guidelines for agricultural production but not much for tourism development. We knew how certain lands were productive for crops or livestock but not for tourism.

And so, for many years, we have been experimenting with geographic analysis techniques that can help communities discover whether they have tourism potential.

(SLIDES)

1. The beginning point is to recognize what your own tourism researcher, Gordon Taylor, called the "market-plant match." This also could be called the "demand-supply match." The planning trick is to match the development of places with the images travelers hold toward these places.

2. On the SUPPLY side—our greatest opportunity for planning—there are five major components. The main lesson we have learned is how interdependent all components really are in spite of the thousands of independent establishments. Tourism really functions as a system.

3. But, the key to the functioning of the system is the number and quality of the attractions. They become attractions when their physical qualities and development provide the satisfactions sought by travelers, either business or pleasure.
4. After listening to the success and failure stories of business people, I came to the conclusion that a regional scale of analysis was needed. If we studied a region, based on our knowledge of travel markets, perhaps we could break it down into key tourism development parts. The main ones we discovered were the circulation corridor and destination complexes that included a community for services and surrounding attractions.

5. The theoretical foundation for analysis and planning included:

* Cities: greatest economic impact from tourism.
* Impact depends on attractions, in and around cities.
* Attraction ownership is pluralistic
* Future growth depends on new attractions
* Attractions depend on cultural and natural resources.
* Better tourism promotion possible following new attractions.

6. In about 1962, we were fortunate to apply this basic principle to a project for tourism and recreation development for the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

7. Together with the firm of Johnson, Johnson & Roy, Dr. Uel Blank and I analyzed the resources of the region—cultural as well as natural.

8. We set up local county committees and spent almost two years to come to conclusions. As a result, we identified these zones that appeared to have greatest potential.

9. For several years since, we have experimented further with this approach. I found it helpful to adapt a traditional planning process to the field of tourism. Step 3, "Synthesis and Conclusions" is most too often skipped by planners and yet may be the most important. After collecting
masses of information we are obligated to determine its meaning.

10. In 1987, I had the opportunity of applying a computerized version of this process of zone analysis to the state of Oklahoma. This shows the digitized map of the general distribution and comparative quality of water resources.

11. We added together a series of maps on the resources and maps of transportation and city locations. This is the resulting composite map.

12. Then, based on our study of documents and the composite computer map, we were able to identify primary, secondary, and tertiary zones. How do I answer the city or county official who finds himself outside these zones? Very simply. Apparently, he just does not have the physical factors needed as foundation for tourism development.

13. The next year, again working with Price Waterhouse, we developed a plan for the state of Washington. A part of this plan included analysis of both natural and cultural resource factors. This illustrates the resulting computer composite map for potential zones based on natural resources.

14. This illustrates the zone opportunities based on cultural resources.

15. Putting these two together, the people of the area have a new foundation for viewing their future of tourism development. Let me emphasize two important implications:

1) the dark areas indicate zones where the greatest number of the factors combine for the greatest
potential for new development—

(2) These also are areas where local people need to examine the resources for their capacity for further expansion—may already have reached their visitor capacity.

16. This overlay of the state's tourism marketing regions raises some pertinent questions. They certainly don't agree suggesting that the state realign its regions or, at least, that regions cooperate wherever zones overlap.

17. Just this last fall, we applied this approach to Upcountry South Carolina, an area of six counties with an area of 3,489 sq. mi., in the northwest corner of South Carolina.

18. The factors studied were in two groups. "Program" factors included:

- markets
- socio-economic issues
- information
- planning agencies
- promotion

These do not lend themselves to mapping.

19. Then, our physical analysis included studying two sets of factors, which are capable of being generalized on maps.

For natural resource development
- water, waterlife
- vegetation, wildlife
- topography
- existing natural resource development
- transportation
- cities

For cultural resource development
- archeological sites
- historical background
- economic development
- existing cultural resource development
- transportation
- cities

20. Let me just skip briefly through some illustrations of these physical factors for the region. The region has an abundance of water resources, including challenging
rivers...
21. And over 100,000 acres of lake surface of many reservoirs.
22. Over half of the region is forested...
23. Providing scenic beauty at all times of the year as well as habitat for a variety of wildlife, both game and nongame.
24. The dominant natural feature of the region is the Appalachian range, providing mountain peaks over 3,000 feet and interesting rolling terrain.
25. Many streams cross topographic change, creating over 40 beautiful waterfalls.
26. Already, considerable development of these assets has taken place.
27. There are 9 state parks, 2 national parks, many campsites, and a few resorts within the region.
28. We discovered the area was rich in prehistory, except that most of the ancient Cherokee villages are now under water.
29. Particularly interesting were the many sites important to history, including those of the Revolutionary War, Civil War, Indian skirmishes and forts, and with early settlement came grist mills... 
30. And historic stagecoach trails and inns.
31. This region has the strongest economy of all South Carolina and depends on great industrial diversity, from agriculture, forestry, and tourism...
32. to many new business, scientific and educational institutions, especially along the I-85 corridor that runs through the center of the region.
33. Some cultural development for tourism has already been made.
Historic buildings have not only been restored but have been given new economic use.

34. We found some interpretation of culture, such as at Kings Mountain National Battlefield visitor center. But, much more is possible.

35. The region is blessed with an extensive network of highways, providing access to even the most remote locations.

36. Recent expansion of the Greenville-Spartanburg airport now gives the region good air access by several scheduled airlines.

37. There are three major cities over 100,000 population and the balance of about 20 cities from 2000 to 25000 is well distributed throughout the region.

38. From this research, we concluded that:
   * Much development has already taken place.
   * Many cultural and natural resources remain untapped.
   * Resource assets are readily accessible.
   * Opportunities: more and better attractions.

39. Along with our study of these factors, we employed computer mapping in order to determine where these factors were strongest in the aggregate. Hand maps, such as this for water resources, were prepared for all physical factors. Red indicates the best; green the next best; and blue indicates small reservoirs and rivers.

40. This is the composite computer map resulting from adding maps of all the natural resource factors to those of transportation and cities.

41. Similarly, when all cultural resource maps, together with transportation and cities, are added together, this is the
resulting composite map.

42. Based on the composite maps and the research information, we generalized these zones for potential tourism based on natural resources.

For example, in Zone A, dominated by forests and large reservoirs, we suggest that several developments have potential:

* Major forest interpretive center
* Chattooga hiking trail
* Wildland environmental training center
* Timber festival

43. Similarly, based on the cultural resource composite map, these zones were generalized.

As an example, for Zone B we suggest the following:

* New textile interpretive exhibit center
* New convention center
* New fitness resort
* Living history park
* Moonshine-clogging festival

44. If the two zone maps are overlaid, this map is the result. Clearly, this suggests many short and long touring circuits.

45. Our final conclusions were:

* Region has opportunity to compete, if developed.
* Better design and planning are needed.
* Greater cooperation between zones is needed.
* Stronger linkage between rural and urban; between region and outside.
* Small scale growth best for future.
* Market research, training, education, public cooperation, stronger regional leadership, and greater protection of resources are needed.

46. I'd like to close by emphasizing what I said in the beginning. Special places for tourism have two dimensions— their intrinsic physical qualities and the images held by the people who visit them.
CONCLUSIONS

What should we conclude from this discussion of tourism planning and special places?

1. We, as planners, have an educational job to do. Most communities are illiterate regarding tourism as a system and the very critical role of special places in the system.

2. We, as planners, have an opportunity, and an obligation, to play a catalytic role of integrating the many separate parts of tourism for better success of all.

3. We, as urban and rural planners, have an obligation to include tourism implications in all our planning efforts.

4. We, as planners, can increase our tourism planning effectiveness by utilizing the latest techniques for assessing potential.

5. And, finally, we, as planners, must take a much stronger stand toward better conservation and sustainable development so that visitor satisfactions are increased at the same time natural and cultural resources are protected.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


