

A photograph of a dry, sandy landscape with a winding path. In the distance, a person is visible, possibly walking or working. The scene is captured in a warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. The overall tone is natural and serene.

Tips & Tricks

for planning an
ecotourism trip

Creating a shared vocabulary



ECOTOURISM

“Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.”

-The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), 1990

GREENWASHING

“Promoting ecotourism while effectively doing the opposite ... giving the appearance of ecotourism without the substance of sustainability.”

-International Business & Economics Research Journal, June 2010

PRINCIPLES OF ECOTOURISM

- Minimize impact.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate.

-TIES website (www.ecotourism.org)

PROS

- Environmental conservation
- Money to finance conservation
- Appreciation of cultural integrity
- Education
 - Travelers
 - Host communities
- Economic boost for local economy and communities

CONS

- More tourists \Rightarrow more traffic
- Lack of economic benefits
 - Leakage
- Negative impact on environment
 - Animals
 - Plants
 - Native vs. Invasive species
- Pollution from travel

But how can we tell if a company is truly using sustainable practices?

ASK QUESTIONS!

Is it ecotourism...

...or greenwashing?

- Does it have any kind of “ecotourism” certification?
 - Are they listed on the TIES website?
- What sustainable practices do they engage in?
- What are their policies concerning restricting visitor numbers, recycling, energy, etc.?
- What do they do to protect native plants and animals?
- Do they practice the “leave no trace” policies?
- How do they contribute to the management of invasive species and diseases?
- What are they doing to fight poverty in local communities?
- Do they hire local employees?
 - Are tour operations locally owned?
- Do they offer educational opportunities and resources, such as interpretive guides?
 - How do they inform visitors about the area’s wildlife, culture, and history?
- Does it provide financial support for conservation efforts?
- Do they economically benefit the local communities?
- Who evaluates or audits the performance results?



Who can help me?

At WWU...

- International Programs and Exchanges
 - 360-650-3298
 - www.wwu.edu/ipe
- Recreation Program
 - 360-650-3782
- Office of Sustainability
 - 360-650-2491
 - www.wwu.edu/sustain
- Associated Students Environmental Center
 - 360-650-6129
 - as.wwu.edu/earth

Other Resources...

- Rainforest Alliance
 - www.rainforest-alliance.org
- The International Ecotourism Society
 - www.ecotourism.org
- Ecotourism Australia
 - www.ecotourism.org/au
- Crooked Trails
 - www.crookedtrails.org
- Evergreen Escapes
 - www.evergreenescapes.org
- UNEP Green Passport
 - www.unep.fr/greenpassport

