11th CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT (STC-11)

Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, St. Michael, Barbados

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An update of some initiatives
Turks & Caicos Islands
since
10th Annual Sustainable Tourism Conference

Beaches Turks & Caicos Resort & Spa
Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands
April 28th – May 2nd, 2008
Putting TCI in Context...
1/3 of the country is within the Protected Areas System (P.A.S)
Our National Park Ordinance (1989) established four categories

- National Park: Ecosystem and biological conservation with recreation as a primary secondary goal.

- Nature Reserve: Ecosystem and biological conservation with recreation as a low-key secondary goal

- Sanctuary: For the protection of the natural ecology, or animal or plant, and the avoidance of disturbance of the area by people.

- Area of Historic Interest: For the purpose of protecting an area or object of historical interest.

How are we alleviating pressure in light of the increasing number of tourists?
Fostering of greater collaboration between and amongst stakeholders

Examples:
• Turks & Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association
  • increase joint marketing
• Provo Taxi Association, and the Grand Turk Taxi Association, in the area of Service Training
Communication of Lead Agencies for a Multi-Agency Approach

(Promotions & Product Development)
Tourist Board &
Turks & Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association

Turks and Caicos National Museum
(Preservation of national treasures)

National Trust

Management of National Parks & Protected Areas

Department of Environment and Coastal Resources
There are main 2 N.G.O’s…
TC National Trust and the TCI National Museum that attend to the national treasures of the TCI. With growth there is need for further strengthening of stakeholder support for financing, education and other activities.
What’s new since STC 10?

TCIG has agreed for 7 sites to be transferred to Turks & Caicos National Trust.

All areas of Historic Interest:
- Lighthouse, Grand Turk
- North & South Wells, Grand Turk
- Old Constabulary (Police Station), Grand Turk
- District Commissioner House, South Caicos
- Boiling Hole, South Caicos
- Government House, Salt Cay
• Recreational considerations, defining the interactions of various use parameters.
  – Ecological considerations, Natural process of human contact on the maritime, vegetation, soil, fauna, water, etc.
  • DECR collects this information via the FORM 5A
Climate Change is happening now and the tourism industry, is directly impacted, in particular the coastal areas.

Tourism has been identified by the local 5C’s Committee as the lead sector
Challenges Being Addressed

• Best management practices:
  – Energy conservation
  – Water conservation
  – Waste management
  – Marine animals and wildlife
• Education: crew, guests, community and tour operators

ETTIQUET CARDS/MAP & BOOK MARKS
Challenges being addressed

• USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY & INCENTIVES FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY USE.

Accommodations are becoming more ‘Greener’
• Over fishing – Purchase of seafood
  – E.g.
  • No lobster can appear on menu
  • Fisheries Officers have increased presence at landing docks
Challenges Being Addressed

• MOVEMENT OF SPECIES (INVASIVE SPECIES)

• LIQUID & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT (PROCUREMENT OF EFFICIENT EQUIPMENT & NEED FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES)
Tourism & Marine Environment

• Human activity has led to species intentionally or unintentionally moving into areas where they don’t naturally occur.
  – e.g. Lion Fish is a threat to TCI Reefs
    • Lion Fish Catching Competition
    • Lion Fish on local food menu
Collaborative efforts continue for the proper and efficient operation of marine areas and wetlands.

- e.g. National Parks and Environmental Advisory Committee (NPEAC) Turks and Caicos Islands
• Conscious of Environmental importance
• Initiated new methods to preserve and conserve national parks, heritage sites and others.
• Environmental Charter - Working document for a comprehensive plan that will ensure total protection of the TCI environment.
  – Agreement between TCIG and UK Government

The tourism sector has seen the tendering of various public attractions to locally based operations. Allowing them to operate more efficiently as a business.
Ensure the protection and restoration of key habitats, species and landscape features through legislation and appropriate management structures and mechanisms, including a protected areas policy, and attempt the control and eradication of invasive species.
• TCI continues to make use of the tax/levy mechanism. The Conservation Strategy was developed named the Conservation Fund and it consists of a controlling board (NPAC), financial plan and others.

• The Conservation Fund receives 1% of the 11% accommodation tax; it is collected through the government treasury and managed effectively.

• Generally the allocation is usually:
  – 70% used for protected areas
  – 20% community development - projects
  – 10% contingency
Stakeholders Speak Out!
Preserving our National Treasures

• There will always be disagreements between the government and the private sector between what is sustainable

• Challenge is striking the balance
We have updated our Product Inventory Listing for the better identification of National Treasures: scientific studies, archaeological surveys, management plans, monitoring programmes and archival research that has been done.

Continued support for Education on National Treasures: school programmes, teacher workshops, development of educational material, museum day, museum children’s club, enhancement of sites with infrastructure and information.
Hurricane Impact

- Tropical Storm Hanna & Hurricane Ike (August & September, 2008)
  - No lost of Life
  - $213.6 Million in Damages
  - 85% of housing stock damage
Challenges to Supporting Product

• Rebuilding of infrastructure, designated shelters, Schools, public buildings, etc.
• Temporary displacement of labour
• Protection of vulnerable Groups that service the tourism industry.
Ongoing Recovery

• 30 Day return to Cruise Tourism
  – On 8 October, 2008 ships returned to Grand Turk
  – Assistance from cruise industry

• Reconstruction of hotels
  – 100% Operational; Dive Resorts & Guest Houses (Grand Turk)

• No direct hit on Provo where the Bulk of Accommodation Stock is located.
  – Evacuation was ordered after consultation with TCHTA (inclusion of Major Airlines and Turks and Caicos Airports Authourity)

  • Allowed for a timely flow in reducing the rush to the airport significantly
• **Before:** First National Tourism Baseline  
  – The Regional Disaster Risk Management For Sustainable Tourism in the Caribbean  
    • Funded by IDB, CDERA and UWI

• **During:**  
  – Evacuation call was done within the open window period

• **After:**  
  – Tourist Board appointed to the Recovery Task Force (RTF)
Best Practice

- Complacency is now being replaced with heightened Awareness

- Establishment of MOU’s with agencies in respect of expanding disaster preparedness

- Improved communication with Disaster Agencies – Local Department of Disaster Management Emergencies (DDME)
A draft MOU has been developed between the Tourist Board and the National Trust.

– Focus:

Establish a defined Point of Contact with the Tourist Board and the Turks and Caicos National Trust for the management and promotion of sites and associated places of national interest.

Preservation of the natural, cultural and built environment
TIDES - Enhance the TCI visitor’s experience by raising the level of customer service to complement Turks and Caicos’ position as a premier luxury holiday and investment destination.

3 local facilitators received training from the Freeman Group in Dallas, Texas, U.S.A. (inclusive of Service Standards).

Facilitators have a comprehensive standards base approach to service quality improvement by addressing both the behaviours and skills that affect service delivery.
Facilitators

• Training Programme:
  1 Day, 8 hour Workshop
  – To date individuals trained:
    • over 125 Public Servants
    • Over 100 Public Service Drivers
    • Over 120 Hospitality Operators

Additionally, the Training Department has also produced 2 booklets as resource materials for participants. *Know Your Turks and Caicos* booklet which provides accurate information about the TCI and a *Handbook for the Public Service Drivers*. 
BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM PARTICIPATING EMPLOYEES

- Increase in value and thus their earning and career potential because good service is always rewarded.
- Able to communicate effectively with customers
- Able to deal with customers in a professional way
- Possess the various skills needed to handle customers complaints
- Improvements in employees’ attitudes
TCI Tourist Board sees the tourism product as more than Providenciales & Grand Turk
  - Rather over 40 islands
- Increase in promotions of islands diversity.
- Stimulation of intra-island travel
Thank you