Surf Resorts and Sustainable Tourism Development in the Pacific

Hey babe the beach looks amazing lets go sunbathe!!!

Be right with you honey just going for a quick surf.........
Surf Tourism

- Travel of at least 40 km and stay overnight with surfing as the primary purpose for travel. Buckley (2002a)
- Multi Billion Dollar Worldwide Industry
- Subset of adventure tourism
  - Element of risk
  - High levels of physical exertion
  - Need for specialized skills
Not to be confused with

Ecotourism

– Nature based element
– Educational or learning component
– Imperative of sustainability

(Weaver, 2001)

Consumptive Nature Based Tourism

– Offering tangible products extracted from the natural environment
Surf Tourists

• There are over 20 million surfers worldwide.
  – In Australia 10% of the population surf.
• A third of these are cash-rich, time-poor and hence potential clients. (Buckley, 2002a)

• Demographics/expectations
  • Reef Waves, No Crowds,
  • Even split between luxury
    – /price conscious travellers
  • Travel in Groups
    (Fluker, 2002)
Surf Resorts in the South Pacific

- Situated in remote pristine natural environments
- Extremely sensitive ecosystems.
- Virgin local communities, limited contact with tourists.
- Extremely marketable:
  - Reefs, uncrowded surf, exclusive and new......
Challenges to Surf Tourism

Environmental Impacts

• Increased resource consumption eg. Water
• Increased waste production eg. sewage
• Pollution of drinking water supplies
  – Extremely important in coral islands
• Eutrophication of near shore reefs
  – Destroy local fisheries
• Reef trampling
• Disruption to local wildlife and fauna
Challenges to Surf Tourism

Social Impacts

• Limited access to resources
  – Tavarua, Fiji: Reef rights
  – Samoan villages: Restrict access
• Commodification of culture
• Demonstration effect
• Division and conflict of local community eg ownership of resorts
• Increased crowding/crime
  – Tension and angst towards tourists
Challenges to Surf Tourism

Economic impacts

• Increased living costs
• Revenue leakages from overseas investment
• Seasonal low paid work
• Unequal distribution of revenue
• Dependence on the tourism industry
Equitable, environmentally sound and economically sustainable development.

This concept explicitly includes the equitable distribution of the outcomes of economic activities (both positive and negative) within and between generations.
STD in the South Pacific

- South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP).
- South Pacific Forum and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).
- South Pacific Tourism (SPTO)
  – Sustainable Tourism Strategies
- Several national tourism organisations in the region have public commitment to the principles of STD.
STD in the South Pacific

There are tools available (SPTO Tool Kit) however like in many developing regions in the world there are challenges of limited access and education.
The major obstacle for STD in the South Pacific

Mass tourism
- Increases foreign exchange
- Boosts tax revenues

Alternative tourism
- Diversifies exports
- Expands limited employment opportunities

There needs to be improved sustainable strategies in place, with a balance of both mass tourism and alternative tourism.
Why study Surf Tourism and STD in the South Pacific??

1. Adventure tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the largest industry in the world. Surf tourism in the South Pacific is booming.
2. Surf tourism generally occurs in unspoilt natural areas therefore increased scope for adverse environmental, social and economic impacts.

• Direct link between Surf Tourism and STD.
3. Evaluating current tourism development is vital to manage the increasing pressure from surf/adventure tourism.

Need for sound scientific research.

– Current research lacks detailed insight, focused on marketing and isolated/restricted to small areas.

• Need to implement sustainable tourism development strategies before it’s too late.

– Protection of tourism...
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