Carbon Mitigation and Offsetting by United States (U.S.) Ecotourism Operators

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

This project examines the adoption of carbon mitigation and offsetting measures by U.S. tourism operators that are members of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), Hawaii Ecotourism Association (HEA), and the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association (AWRTA). It reviews carbon reduction methods adopted by U.S. ecotourism operators along with environmental and business motives for carbon mitigation and offsetting.

Climate change and carbon emissions from travel are key issues for the global travel industry. A new report on *Climate Change and Tourism Policy in OECD Countries* produced by OECD and UNEP in 2011 states that the tourism industry and governments need to do more to reduce carbon emissions. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has outlined goals for the tourism industry to reduce carbon emissions by 25% of its 2005 levels by 2020 and by 50% by 2035.

OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the project are:

- to measure the level of awareness of U.S. ecotourism operators about climate change and tourism and their perceived need for action
- to review carbon mitigation and offsetting measures implemented by those operators, and
- to identify their motives for implementing carbon reduction measures

RESEARCH

This research will include:

- a website review of U.S. tourism agencies and tourism industry associations for carbon mitigation and offsetting programs recommended by them
- a website review of U.S. ecotourism operators for carbon mitigation measures and carbon offsetting practices adopted by them
- a survey of U.S. ecotourism operators profiling their attitudes to climate change, carbon mitigation and offsetting practices, and key motives for implementing climate change actions

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PROJECT TEAM

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FURTHER INFORMATION

This project builds on previous research and working papers by the project team in relation to carbon mitigation by Queensland (Australia) tourism enterprises. For further information on that project go to www.usq.edu.au/acsbd/projects/tourism.

Other working papers on climate change and tourism are available at:
www.usq.edu.au/acsbd/publications/workingpapers.

Photo courtesy of Tourism Queensland

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