

Adventure Tourism Industry

Jerry Mallett,

President of the Adventure Travel Society, which is headquartered in Colorado, introduced the concept of adventure travel and the Society.

His key points were:

- * The Adventure Travel Society is an association with 500 member organizations, 25 percent of which are international organizations. Members are tour operators, destinations, equipment suppliers, tourism boards and ministries of tourism. Approximately, seventy-five members work in both adventure and cultural tourism. (There is no equivalent association in Europe, however there are joint venture partners.)
- * Adventure travel encompasses hiking, mountain climbing, mountain biking, kayaking, canoeing, caving, sailing, hunting, fishing, etc. It is travel that is participatory and exciting and most often involves nature. Although wildlife and nature play important roles, adventure travel is not synonymous with ecotourism as a factor of risk and challenge is typically involved.
- * The popularity of adventure travel began to grow soon after World War II because of the surplus military equipment such as jeeps, tents, rafts, etc. that could be converted for civilian use. In addition, GIs who had been stationed around the globe returned home with a new interest in exotic travel.
- * Adventure travel often relies on the use of public lands such as national forests and parks. Despite this symbiosis, government agencies frequently present major obstacles for tour operators. For example, it takes four to five years to obtain a license to operate group rafting tours on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. It is necessary to facilitate better working relationships between the National Park Service and tour operators. It is imperative that they work together to protect the resource and to aid in community economic vitality.
- * Adventure tourism is not a mono-culture because the players are involved in so many different kinds of activities (ranging from trekking to flying fighter jets) and places around the globe. Thousands small and mid-sized companies comprise this segment of the tourism market.
- * The average adventure traveler is a 47 to 49-year-old single woman.
- * Adventure travelers are less influenced by political risk than other tourists and understand that a certain level of risk maybe inherent in the areas they visit.

Following Mallett's comments, discussion ensued. These points were made:

- * Because of the distant locations and strenuous or risky activities often involved in adventure travel, Geographic Expeditions, which offers both cultural and adventure tours, includes the cost of evacuation insurance in the fees it charges consumers.
- * Taquile Island in Lake Titicaca in Peru was identified as a place where tourism started out as community based with the islanders providing the tour guides, transportation and accommodations. Recently, however, outsiders have begun to capture the local community's business. One questioner asked how to avoid such a dilemma. McNulty said the way tourism is organized determines whether jobs and revenue stay in a community. Others commented that Taquile reflected free-market economics and the situation should not be tampered with.