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Peer reviewed

Review: Ecotourism and Certification: Setting Standards in Practice

By Martha Honey (Ed.)

Reviewed by [Robert D. Hook](#)
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Martha Honey (Ed.). *Ecotourism and Certification: Setting Standards in Practice*. Washington DC: Island Press, 2002. 407 pp. ISBN 1-55963-882-6 (cloth); 1-55963-951-2 (paperback). US\$45.00 cloth; US\$27.50 paperback. Alkaline paper.

Tourism and ecotourism are growing rapidly, compounding the stress on the environment as increasing numbers of people want to get out and enjoy the natural wonders of the earth. The problem becomes one of protecting the environment so that the tourism can be sustained. Over the past 12 years since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (called the Earth Summit) met in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, more than 100 worldwide certification programs have been started with the goal of developing guidelines for creating environmentally sustainable tourism programs. *Ecotourism and Certification* grew out of the Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Certification workshop held at Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, New York, in November 2000.

Martha Honey is the program director of Ecotourism and Sustainable Development at the Institute for Policy Studies based in Washington D.C. She persuaded 21 authors from nine countries to write the chapters in this book. All of these people had participated in the Mohonk workshop. The purpose of the book is to "help practitioners and academics understand the historical connections between ecotourism and certification, to clarify the distinctions between other forms of setting standards ... and to better interpret and analyze the current divisions and trends within the tourism certification movement industry" (pp. 24-25).

The book is divided into two sections. The first provides an overview and conceptual framework for the second. It discusses two certification methodologies: process versus performance; and the three types of current certification: conventional, sustainable, and ecotourism. The concepts and components of conformity assessment systems are explored in the second section, which is composed of eight case studies written by experts in their respective fields. These case studies are filled with information about different certification systems developed or being developed in nine countries on four continents. They highlight various interpretations of sustainable tourism and present a historical perspective and the potential challenges to ecotourism in each country. Many of these certification

systems are used internationally or are being adapted for use in other countries. Several of the certification schemes in Central America, Europe, and Australia are being adapted for use in countries such as Kenya and South Africa. These include: Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) in Costa Rica, Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP) in Australia, PAN Parks and Blue Flag in Europe (p. 259).

Endnotes are included in each chapter. The Mohonk Agreement is included as an appendix. A glossary of terms and a list of acronyms are included for those unfamiliar with the language of ecotourism. The list of contributors includes a brief biography of each. An extensive index adds to the value of this book.

Ecotourism and Certification is an important addition to the ecotourism literature. Practitioners, academics, those who work in the tourism business and anyone who has an interest in protecting the environment should read this book. It will be useful as a resource or a supplemental text in a course on tourism at the upper division and graduate levels. Academic and large public libraries with an interest in tourism should consider purchasing this book for their collections.

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