Developing ecotourism in First World, resource-dependent areas

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Abstract

Ecotourism, an economic diversification tool most commonly applied in the Third World as a means to protect ecosystems, preserve local cultures, and spur economic development, has recently been applied in First World resource-dependent areas. While ecotourism has traditionally focused on Third World ‘undisturbed’ protected lands, it has also been developed in their First World equivalents (i.e., old-growth forests) as well as in First World sites of past resource extraction and in places where current agricultural practices maintain cherished cultural landscapes. Forest County, Pennsylvania, a timber-dependent area, sought to diversify its economy by developing ecotourism based on its unique Allegheny hardwood forests, which are produced by timber harvesting. This ecotourism would encourage amenity-based, locally-driven economic development and maintain timber harvesting. While government and foundation supported ecotourism development efforts in areas dependent on resource extraction have incorporated some of ecotourism’s ideals, these operations have had mixed success. Such isolated areas, which have traditionally drawn visitors independently engaging in traditional outdoor recreation activities, have not been able to draw enough customers willing to pay for natural and cultural history tours. If ecotourism is to be successful, such areas may need further government support and destination branding to increase name recognition in order to counter the global orientation of the nature tour industry. For true community development, local collaborative efforts including resource and environmental interests are also required in which primary production is connected to processing and consumers through value-added and service sector activities such as tourism.

Keywords: Ecotourism; Resource dependency;Destination marketing; First World; Rural development

1. Introduction

Ecotourism conjures up images of yuppies donning pith helmets and traveling to Antarctica to pose with penguins. The reality is that over 40% of the U.S. population participates in some form of ecotourism. It is the fastest growing segment in the travel industry. The challenge to rural Pennsylvanians is how to tap this market while maintaining their quality of life and preserving the environment (Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 1995, p. 5).

In its publication, Pennsylvania ecotourism: Untapped potential, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania reported that ecotourism could be an economic development tool for the state’s rural areas given Pennsylvania’s many unique ecosystems and cultural attractions. Individuals involved in economic development in Northwestern Pennsylvania’s Forest County, which had two federally-designated Wild and Scenic Rivers and Allegheny National Forest (ANF) lands making up 42% of its land base, were intrigued by ecotourism’s possibilities for the struggling economy. Following the 1980 and 1992 closing of its two large manufacturing facilities, the county consistently had the highest unemployment rate in the Commonwealth, an average household income far below the state average, and an aging, declining population due to the outmigration of youth. While Forest
County received $13.9 million in ANF revenues from 1987 to 1997, derived mainly from timber sales on ANF lands within the county (USDA Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest, 1998), primary production generated limited real community development as it was not linked to processing or consumers. Its valuable second- and third-growth hardwoods were often exported raw out of state or overseas. It was believed that ecotourism could supplement traditional hunting and fishing recreation associated with post-World War II seasonal home development for residents of western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio’s industrial centers such as Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Youngstown, Ohio (Forest County Assessment Office, 1978). Although the county had limited old-growth, the county had extensive, successional Allegheny hardwood forests, a cultural landscape produced by clear-cutting at the turn of the 20th century and a valuable timber resource requiring harvesting to regenerate its shade-intolerant species. Focusing on the Allegheny hardwoods would also allow Forest County to counteract the Allegheny Defense Project (ADP), a so-called ‘radical’ group of ‘outsider’ environmentalists, which advocated the cessation of timber harvesting on the ANF, and replacing timber with a tourism-based economy. Ecotours, which focused on the unique, Allegheny hardwood forest type produced by human uses, could both bring in tourism revenue and support multiple-use management, including timber harvesting.

This paper will investigate the development of ecotourism in areas dependent on resource extraction like Forest County. It will first examine the literature on ecotourism, which derives mainly from Third World experiences in seemingly “pristine” settings with diverse and charismatic flora and fauna. Then this paper will look at alternative settings for ecotourism in the First World such as sites of former and current productivist uses. Following a brief history of forest and landholding changes in northwestern Pennsylvania which resulted in the Allegheny hardwoods and increased public forest ownership, it will focus on the case of ecotourism development in Forest County, Pennsylvania. Then this paper will assess the experience with ecotourism developed in such First World areas dependent on resource extraction. Finally, the paper will end with discussion and conclusions on why ecotourism may not be able to supplant productivist activities in these areas. Local collaborative efforts there may further ecotourism and tourism to better supplement, not replace, primary production.

2. Ecotourism: In definition and practice

Ecotourism has been portrayed as a form of sustainable development, primarily in Third World “pristine settings” as a means of using natural resources to support economic activity without compromising economic growth, the environmental carrying capacity, or social equity. Specifically, ecotourism has been promoted for Third World areas with comparative advantages in abundant natural, scenic and cultural resources as a consumptive alternative to productivist resource extraction and agriculture. Hector Ceballos-Lascurain coined the term in 1983 as “…traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any existing cultural manifestations” (Ziffer, 1989) While Ziffer associated ecotourism with visitation to relatively undeveloped areas to appreciate natural and cultural history, she also incorporated conservation and local economic benefits derived through a managed approach where the host country and region work to establish and maintain sites with the participation of local residents (Ziffer, 1989).

While varying definitions of ecotourism have been developed that range from any tourism based on nature to a non-invasive, non-consumptive, sustainable, educational and low-impact form of tourism that may be difficult to achieve (Orams, 1995), broadly ecotourism consists of the following components: conservation benefits, the nature-based experience/activity, the setting, and economic and social benefits. Ecotourism should benefit conservation through improved management of visited natural areas/ecosystems (Furze et al., 1995) and strengthen tourist and local appreciation and dedication to conservation issues both in general and to the specific needs of the locale (Ziffer, 1989). The ecotourism activity should have a strong focus on learning through interpretation of local ecology and cultural heritage (Furze et al., 1995). Educational programming on the site’s ecological functions and biodiversity as well as its cultural heritage distinguishes ecotourism from other forms of nature-based tourism (Diamantis, 1999). Second, to aid in the educational/interpretive process, the ecotourism activity should be guided (Romund and Miller, 1996) and provide high cognitive (informational) and effective (emotional) dimensions to the experience (Nelson, 1994). Lastly, it should provide a first-hand, participatory experience (Wight, 1993) that does not degrade the resource. The ecotourism activity should be small-scale and hands-on. Working with small groups of ecotourists (10–15 as a norm per tour) (Romund and Miller, 1996) facilitates both the educational process and may mitigate tourists’ environmental impact.

Guiding small groups of ecotourists can contribute to local economic and social benefits that are critical to the success of ecotourism ventures, as wildlife conservation set-asides through national park establishment and associated tourism in the Third World can negatively
impact host communities. Local communities have been restricted from former productivist uses such as farming, forestry, grazing, mining, and hunting in visited protected areas as well as surrounding buffer areas. Concurrently, local peoples often receive little or no benefit from the parks or tourism, which frequently flow outside the destination area to foreign investors. This exclusionary preservationist approach has resulted in poaching, resource degradation, and hostile actions toward the parks (i.e., arson, threatening guards) and tourists (Honey, 1999; Neumann, 1995; Place, 1995).

Given such problems and limited resources to police parks from surrounding communities, some wildlife conservation projects have built in local benefits and management of reserves through controlled harvesting/use of resources, receipt of some tourism revenues, and park employment (Grainger, 2003; Hamilton et al., 2000; Western, 1997).

Because the definition of ecotourism combines visitation, conservation, and the local participation that have been missing in many Third World conservation projects, it should generate local cultural, social, and economic benefits. Such local benefits are critical to ecotourism's long-term sustainability. The 'eco' in ecotourism can stand for economics, as tourism is essentially a commercial activity (Furze et al., 1995). Ecotourism has the potential to contribute to the economic well-being of a locality or region and diversify local economies by providing alternative employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Involvement in the development process allows a community to decide what type of growth it needs, assist in managing the impacts, and to have a sense of ownership in ecotourism which can include economic diversification through new forms of ecological enterprises, such as the farming of exotic plants and animals. Business and job creation based on local craft and specialty goods production outside visited areas often are more justifiable to local people than government subsidies for conservation which can be removed. Such activities can distribute benefits to the local community through employment.

Differential economic and social benefits to locals and visitors can be viewed through the lens of shallow and deep ecotourism. While utilizing some of the terminology of deep ecology, deep ecotourism holds an intrinsic value of small-scale, community participation as well as that of nature. Deep ecotourists attempt to understand the culture in a deeper sense without disturbing or undermining local people, who they recognize are a part of nature. Acott et al. (1998) propose that the Ladakh farm project, which places Westerners as volunteer help in homes as part of a larger project focusing on appropriate human activities, sustainable lifestyles, biodiversity and the ecological integrity of the landscape, is an example of deep ecotourism. In contrast, shallow ecotourism prioritizes profit and tourists' aesthetic pleasure, which might result in preservationist policies where locals are excluded from visited pristine natural areas. Deep ecotourism would be more sustainable than shallow ecotourism in the long-run.

Finally, ecotourism should be set in natural areas and/or places with special biological, ecological, or cultural interest (Furze et al., 1995). The ecotourism setting should encompass ecotourism's biocentric rather than homocentric philosophy of accepting Nature largely on its terms rather than significantly transforming the environment for humans' personal convenience (Nelson, 1994). Third World nature tourism and ecotourism settings have traditionally been legally 'protected areas' or relatively undisturbed natural areas where local people have been excluded from historically used lands. Such ecotourism is not necessarily environmentally or economically sustainable. As tourism can convey status via particular overseas (fashionable) destinations, level of service (accommodation, mode of travel, etc), and recreation activities (Britton, 1991), ecotourism operations that are supposed to be biocentric are actually expensive and exclusive. As an example, Cater (2004) notes that Nepal's Tiger Mountain Lodge which has won Conde Nast Traveler's Ecotourism Award 2000 and Highly Commended Status for the Conservation International Ecotourism Excellence Awards 2000, has a swimming pool from which one can view the Pokhara Valley below. Not only has the landscape been substantially transformed for human uses, but such highly capitalized ventures involve significant leakage from the ecotourism host communities.

Even in its more small-scale settings, ecotourism may not lead to the promised economic benefits. Unlike mass tourism which creates one out of 15 jobs worldwide, small-scale ecotourism projects may only create one in 10,000 jobs (Wheeler, 1994). Even in Costa Rica, conservation through ecotourism may not be sustainable. The Costa Rican national parks charge only $2 per head for admission and generate only half a million dollars income, which is insufficient to maintain the park system. Even the privately-run Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve, which draws more than 15,000 visitors a year at $8 per head, depends on donations from individuals and bodies such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (Burnie, 1994). As a result of potentially limited economic benefits, tourism may thus not provide the economic justification for preserving hundreds of square miles of rainforests, especially since tourists find walking around a few acres of forest adequate (Brooke, 1991).

First World ecotourism development may also not fit the ecotourism 'ideal'. Following the protected area stipulation, less than a quarter of the 22 nature-based tourism operators in British Columbia would be subsequently classified as ecotourism operators (Bottrill and Pearce, 1995). In places like Forest County, focusing on undisturbed natural areas could both constrain
ecotourism development and timber harvesting on public lands. But broadened definitions of ecotourism may allow for its extended application and benefits to local communities.

3. First World ecotourism settings: Incorporating former, present, and future human uses

As many idealistic definitions of ecotourism are generally inoperable (i.e., that it take place in the limited number of unmodified or pristine areas), more recent ecotourism development has focused on cultural ecotourism settings which are not so-called ‘pristine’ or ‘untouched’ places. First World ecotourism has allowed including marginalized, indigenous cultures and derived landscapes such as Australia’s Ayers Rock. For Aboriginal Australians, tourism has generated jobs, investment opportunities, supported small-scale, family-based operations, and provided outlets for selling arts and crafts (Altman and Finlayson, 1993).

Broadened reformulations of ecotourism also can allow for operations on sites of former and current productivist activities of the dominant culture. Boyd and Butler (1999) suggest that less exotic, temperate First World landscapes such as the remote, northern Canadian forests known for sport hunting and fishing, can offer new, different ecotourism destinations. Despite a long history of resource extraction, to urban Canadians the area is seemingly a vast wilderness of forests, rivers, and lakes. However, problems of seasonality and access exist given the limited infrastructure and large distance between features and attractions. Additionally, northern Ontario has relatively limited landscape variety and diversity compared to Third World tropical destinations. In addition to rural productivist sites, Higham and Luck (2002) detail how natural-based settings in New Zealand’s urban areas can be ecotourist venues. These former industrial lands historically used for quarrying, reservoir water control, fisheries and transportation industries have received high visitor satisfaction. The researchers found that such modified areas could be acceptable as ecotourist venues if they were well presented and managed, aesthetically pleasing and if they provided the opportunity to observe wildlife. They could also yield greater environmental benefits than ecotourism in ‘pristine’ areas as they could generate environmental benefits through reclamation, provide conservation education to a wider, generalist audience, and have less environmental impact given their accessibility and the existence of infrastructure in urban areas. Given their wider audience, they might also be more financially sustainable operations and thus generate greater economic benefits to host communities.

In other areas of the First World, ecotourism development has been proposed for cherished landscapes that require current and on-going productivist activities by the majority/non-indigenous culture. Such ecotourism landscapes may fit what Ayala (1996) calls “place products”. In contrast to vacation products, which offer the “theme of a sunshine break, a generic tropical paradise, and sightseeing”, place products have clear “ecological, cultural, and geographical identities” whose “quality derive from the destinations’ heritage resources and the experience of those resources” (Ayala, 1996, p. 51). Ayala argues that Germany’s Rhoen Biosphere Reserve, a historical agricultural area characterized by interspersed small settlements, rolling hills, woodlands, pastures, meadows, fruit orchards, and hedgerows that have given it ecological stability and diversity, should be considered such an ecotourism place product. While not ‘pristine,’ the Rhoen represents an old central European cultural landscape whose biodiversity (wild species and agricultural strains) depends on traditional low-intensity land-uses such as pasture and meadow management. The open landscape requires on-going production and is threatened by the decline of agriculture, increased fallow land, and afforestation (UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme, 2002). While not pristine, like other UN Biosphere Reserves, the Rhoen integrates biodiversity conservation, socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable development, and open, evolving and adaptive management between the local community and society as a whole that seems to fit the idealized conception of ecotourism (UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme, n.d.). Importantly for ecotourism development, this adaptive human management has produced a unique place product with a clear ecological, cultural, and geographical identity which makes the Rhoen a distinctive, aesthetic pleasing place to visit. Ecotourism may provide the economic benefits necessary to maintain the cherished agrarian landscape.

Elsewhere in Europe, IUCN (the World Conservation Union) designated protected landscapes also have been managed for conservation and recreation (Zupancic-Vicar, 1997). In the Eifel-Hohes Venn region of Belgium and Germany, tourism has been based on the following landscapes which were shaped by centuries of human use and which conserve both nature and regional identity: (1) the Eifelvorland (fields, farms built from limestone, hedges and limestone quarries); (2) the Hohe Venn (moorland, beech hedges); (3) the Hocheifel (narrow, deep valleys, elongated forested hilltops, hedges); (4) the Rueifel (meandering, deeply carving rivers, storage lakes used by old wool factories, timber-framed buildings in the town of Monschau); and (5) the Kalkfeifel (intensive agriculture, Roman remains, cloth weaving, the town of Bad Munstereifel) (Kreisel, 2004, pp. 175–176). Tour operators developed environmental-friendly tour packages which included farm-to-farm hikes, meals, overnight stays, which increase tourist spending, manage tourist interaction with hosts...
and nature, and minimize their environmental impacts (Nature oriented tourism offers, n.d.). In managing such protected landscapes, the question has been raised on how to do this without fossilizing societies and their land uses (Phillips, 1997). One would not want to perpetuate underdevelopment and unequal status as the Anglo romanticization of American Indian and Hispanic cultures did in selling Taos for art and tourism in the early 20th century (Rodriguez, 1989).

While the aforementioned New Zealand and European cases looked respectively at areas of past extraction that have been reclaimed, and at areas of on-going agricultural activity tied to the local culture, First World ecotourism may also take place in areas such as northern Ontario and northwestern Pennsylvania’s Forest County (Fig. 1) that are the products of historic, current, (and future) industrial extraction linked to the local, non-indigenous culture. In the next section, I will detail how northwestern Pennsylvania’s forests and property relations were shaped by human extraction. Then I will outline the parameters for economic and ecotourism development in resource-dependent Forest County, which include on-going resource extraction, as well specific thematic tours that have been developed around the shade-intolerant Allegheny hardwoods. Given that this forest type requires continued overstory removal for reproduction, ecotourism development associated with the Allegheny hardwoods was proposed as part of a broader strategy to secure continued access to the forest’s resources.

4. Production and property relations in the Allegheny hardwood forest

America’s forests have long been shaped by human land uses. Prior to European settlement, Native Americans used fire to manipulate tree species (Denevan, 1992). Especially in the northeastern US, Euro-Americans have intentionally or unintentionally shaped forests through patterns of clearing, reforestation, afforestation and agricultural, residential/recreational, and industrial development (Irland, 1999; Whitney, 1990; Williams, 1989). The Allegheny hardwood forest type, which was created by human action, is unique to the northern tier of Pennsylvania (including Forest County and the ANF region), parts of New York, and down the Allegheny Front into Maryland and northern West Virginia. Like the wider ranging Northern hardwood type, the Allegheny hardwood type has sugar maples, red maples and beech, but it distinctively contains at least 25% black cherry by basal area (Horsley, 2003). This forest type differs greatly from the ‘original’ or pre-European settlement forest. The pre-European forest found in

![Fig. 1. Allegheny National Forest region.](image-url)
Forest County and the ANF region was dominated by shade-tolerant hemlock and beech. The now-abundant, commercially valuable shade-intolerant black cherry made up only 0.09% of the original forest prior to 1820 (Marquis, 1975). Oak types, which are associated with Native American settlements and use of fire (Ruffner et al., 1997), made up 5.7% of the pre-European settlement forest. Finally, white pine, whose wood initiated the area’s land acquisition and timber harvesting, made up 3% of the pre-European forest cover (Marquis, 1975).

The Allegheny hardwoods were produced by successive harvesting phases in Forest County and the ANF region. The initial harvesting phase (1800–1830) consisted of early pioneer clearings and the selective harvesting and processing of white pine by water-powered, family-operated sawmills. The water transportation harvesting phase (1830–1890) was marked by harvesting white pine from this resource hinterland to feed building construction in downstream Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and New Orleans (Wilhelm, 1953). Following cutting of most of the old-growth white pine stands, oil drilling, which required large quantities of lumber for rig construction, and the leather industry, which utilized tannins in hemlock bark to cure cattle and buffalo hides, furthered timber harvesting (Casler, 1973). In the third timber harvesting phase, the capital-intensive, steam-powered, “logging railroad” era (1890–1920), both facilitated and required year-round clearcutting of the remaining pine, hemlock, and hardwoods (Marquis, 1975). The heavily capitalized, large-scale big band sawmills, tanneries, and wood chemical plants that produced charcoal, acetic acid, wood alcohol and other wood distillation products necessitated the financing of logging railroads into the remote, heavily forested uplands. To feed the sawmills, tanneries, and wood chemical plants at this large scale of operations, the virgin and partially cut forests of the Allegheny Plateau were almost completely clearcut in what Marquis (1975) called “the highest degree of forest utilization that the world has ever seen in any commercial lumbering area”.

The Allegheny hardwoods, which were adapted to the open conditions, regenerated after the massive clearcuts of the logging railroad era. This type increased in abundance from 11.6% to 64% of the forest. The formerly dominant shade-tolerant, and presently commercially undesirable, hemlock and beech now make up approximately 16% of the second-growth forest, down from 63% of the pre-settlement forest (1995 overstory data in Table 1) (USDA Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest, 1995). Complete clearcuts which occurred adjacent to the logging railroads now yield the mature, exceptionally high quality black cherry on the ANF. Western Pennsylvania produces some of the highest quality black cherry as it grows straighter and more valuable than in other parts of its range where lack of competition from other fast-growing species led to its greater forking (Horsley, 2003). The ANF now holds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Scientific name</th>
<th>1793–1819a</th>
<th>1973a</th>
<th>1995b Overstory</th>
<th>1995b Understory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ash</td>
<td>Fraxinus spp.</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspen</td>
<td>Populus spp.</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American beech</td>
<td>Fagus grandifolia Ehrh.</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birch</td>
<td>Betula spp.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black cherry</td>
<td>Prunus serotina Ehrh.</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chestnut</td>
<td>Castanea dentata (Marsh.) Borkh.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern hemlock</td>
<td>Tsuga canadensis (L.) Carr</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hickory</td>
<td>Carya spp.</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linn</td>
<td>Tilia americana L.</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red maple</td>
<td>Acer rubrum L.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and Scarlet oak</td>
<td>Quercus velutina Lam. and Q. coccinea Muenchh.</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chestnut oak</td>
<td>Quercus primus L.</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red oak</td>
<td>Quercus rubra L.</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White oak</td>
<td>Quercus alba L.</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poplar</td>
<td>Liriodendron tulipfera L.</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar maple</td>
<td>Acer saccharum Marsh.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White pine</td>
<td>Pinus strobus L.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of stems: 1244

Table 1: Allegheny National Forest composition

3. Notation means that the species, while indicated in the survey, represents less than 1% of the total number of stems. In the 1995 analysis of timber harvest capability, composition data was only given for the more commonly found species. For species where no composition data was given, this does not indicate the species was not present. Rather, its presence in the sample of 6000 plots may be negligible.
80% of the world’s black cherry sawtimber and veneer. Its commercial values which are now peaking produced the highest revenues of any national forest in 1997. Timber harvesting generated 99% of ANF gross receipts (Logging losses, 1998).

Following industrial forest clearing, the predominant private cutover lands in the Allegheny River watershed became part of the national forest system. Under the Weeks Act of 1911, which authorized the Forest Service to purchase, reforest, and manage watersheds of navigable waters like the Allegheny River in order to address concerns about national timber famines, local timber provision and employment, and downstream flooding (Douglass, 1990; Sarvis, 1993), the Forest Service acquired cut-over land in the Allegheny watershed for a few dollars an acre to form the ANF (Frank, 1998). The ANF provided custodial management to reforest the land and sell the timber produced to small, local operators1 (400,000 acre preserve in Allegheny National Forest, 1923).

To produce and reproduce the valuable Allegheny hardwood forest, the ANF utilized even-aged management techniques such as clearcutting, final shelterwood cutting, intermediate harvesting, seed cutting, and thinning. Even-aged management which opened up the canopy best satisfied the reproduction and growth requirements of the high-value, shade-intolerant, short-lived Allegheny hardwood species, especially as regeneration under uneven-aged management through selective cutting often failed given above carrying capacity deer populations (USDA Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest, 1986). These management techniques halted the transition to a maturing forest increasingly dominated by shade-tolerant species like hemlock.

5. Timber harvesting and ecotourism in forest county

While such timber harvesting provided funding for schools and roads, it did not fully address problems with unemployment and poverty in Forest County. Following the Center for Rural Pennsylvania’s 1995 publication of Pennsylvania ecotourism: Untapped potential, Forest County sought support for ecotourism development from the USDA Forest Service’s Economic Recovery (ER) program. The ER program, which was authorized by the National Forest-Dependent Rural Communities Diversification Act of 1990 (1990 Farm Bill, Title 23, Subtitle G, Chapter 2) supported economic diversification and entrepreneurship based on localized resources. Non-metropolitan local governments or counties that were (1) within 100 miles of a national forest, (2) had low populations (<10,000 for local governments or <22,500 for counties), and (3) had at least 15% of their payroll and proprietor income derived from forestry, wood products, and forest-related industries—would be eligible for 80:20 matching ER funds (USDA Forest Service, Economic Action Program, 1995). Nationwide, the ER program supported heritage tourism, special forest products harvesting (i.e., gourmet mushrooms, seed cones), handcrafted furniture production, etc. (USDA Forest Service, 1996). Forest County was eligible for ER funds as it had national forest lands, a low population, and 51% of its payroll and proprietor income derived from forest industries. The Forest County Action Team (FCAT), a group of local citizens who organizes to access ER funds, felt ecotourism had the potential to diversify the county’s economy.

For ecotourism development, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania held up Ozark Ecotours of Newton County, Arkansas as the model for areas without tourism infrastructure. With financial support from the USDA Forest Service, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, and the US Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration, the non-profit Newton County Resource Council (NCRC) developed Ozark Ecotours, a job creation program/nature tour company to help Newton County residents put together small-scale ecotours based on the natural resources and cultural (pioneer, Native American, outlaw) heritage of the Ozarks’ Buffalo River region. In addition to the $40 cost of the day tours, customers spent an average of $80+ per day/per person for gifts, gas, food, and lodging (Knox, 1997), thus benefiting the wider community. Ozark Ecotours embodied ecotourism’s ideals, as its maximum of 12 visitors per tour group learned about the area’s natural and cultural resources and became “part of an ecological ethic which promotes an increased sense of stewardship and conservation instead of short term profits reaped through depletion and pollution of the environment” (Newton County Resource Council, n.d.). Ecotourism would supplement timber and traditional recreational activities such as river floats in order to address the isolated county’s endemic poverty.

For ecotourism development, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania also emphasized two resources the state had comparative advantages relative to other eastern states: old-growth forests and migratory forest songbirds. Except for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and portions of New England and New York, Pennsylvania contained both the largest total land area (over 10,000 acres) and largest single contiguous tracts of unlogged, virgin old-growth forest in the entire eastern US. The report found that old-growth in particular held the potential to accommodate an ecotourism industry, as such forests were of tremendous aesthetic importance to individuals and were rated highly by the public for scenic viewing.

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1 While local, these operations are now capital-intensive operations.
hiking, and camping. The old-growth forest also provided habitat for migratory songbird species that were similarly a unique attraction. Unlike in the US West, extractive industries such as timber did not appear to have an adverse effect on old-growth areas of the Commonwealth given state park (and national monument) restrictions on harvesting remaining stands (Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 1995). This eastern old-growth also had limited commercial timber value.

In touting the potential for old-growth ecotourism, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania highlighted places that were similar to the so-called pristine, untouched visited areas where ecotourism had been developed in the Third World rather than the aforementioned urban recreation sites in New Zealand and the European cultural landscapes. While touting ecotourism for rural Pennsylvania, the report posed a challenge for Forest County, as it had very limited old-growth tracts, but did have extensive, second-growth hardwoods and historic small towns associated with the logging era.

Ecotourism as conceived by the FCAT was meant to be compatible with traditional productivist activities and to be an additional component in a diversified economy. The FCAT’s proposal for ER funding for a Forest County ecotourism feasibility study noted this, stating: An economically stable Forest County is the goal of this project and of all the efforts of the Forest County Action Team. A preservation of the eco-logic treasures of the county is as important as well as a balance of natural resource extraction activities... A balanced, diversified economic picture within Forest County will assure the survival of the unique citizens of the county. That balanced and diversified economy will have to include tourism, it always has. Ecotourism may be an important portion of the whole tourism picture of the county (Forest County Action Team, 1994).

The compatibility of tourism with the economically important timber industry was further reinforced by the FCAT Chairman, who stated: Our main objective on the Forest County Action Team is the exploration of alternative ways to diversifying the local economy. There is a direct link and interdependence between the raw materials harvested from the Allegheny National Forest, the local timber industry and the economy of Forest County. As environmental pressures mount, the harvest of timber off National Forest lands becomes more tenuous. To sustain the local economy, diversification of that timber-dependent economy must occur. One way to diversify the economy is to introduce value-added processing of raw timber materials, current conditions are on primary processing only. Another way to diversify the local economy is to diversify in other areas of resource utilization, such as with the enhancement of the tourism industry (Carlson, 1997a).

Enhancement of the tourism industry involved investigating markets such as ecotourism that went beyond traditional hunting and fishing activities.

ER support for assessing the feasibility of ecotourism was sought because the county had comparative advantages in ecotourism resources. It had two federally-designated Wild and Scenic Rivers and extensive, publicly-owned forests. In contrast, the county had no interstate highway connection and limited infrastructure, two conditions which made industrial recruitment unlikely. The ecotourism feasibility study, for which the author of this paper was the consultant, would provide information on the activities, resources, demographics, and marketing of Forest County ecotourism. The next section will focus on ecotourism activities based around the culturally-produced Allegheny hardwoods.

6. Ecotours in the Allegheny hardwoods of forest county

Given the lack of old-growth, the ecotours of Forest County centered on its greatest culturally-derived resource, the Allegheny hardwoods and related historic settlements. This forested cultural landscape could be considered a “unique place product” for ecotourism development. The Allegheny hardwoods had a clear ecological, cultural, and geographical identity linked to timber harvesting which fortuitously resulted in a commercially valuable forest.

Prior to the ecotourism feasibility study, preliminary ecotour packages had been drawn up in response to inquiries on ecotourism possibilities to sell the unique place product tied to local culture. A proposed business, Forest Adventures Ecotours, Ltd. would offer tours that provide a window of life in our area, yesterday and today. The perspective and view being provided by those persons familiar with our area, persons who live here by choice because of their love for the hills in the Allegheny hardwood forests of

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2 While the county had limited old-growth tracts, there were well-known sites in neighboring Warren (Hearts’ Content in the ANF), Jefferson (Cook Forest State Park), and McKean (Tionesta Scenic Area in the ANF) counties.

3 Arguably this lack of infrastructure could also hamper tourism visitation and development.
Pennsylvania. Forests, rivers, and streams, timber, coal, and oil shaped our history. Prehistoric and historic perspectives are offered in the packages to give the visitor a unique experience on a unique people and land (Forest Adventures Ecotours, Ltd., n.d.).

The offered packages specifically centered on the Allegheny hardwood resource. One package, “The Allegheny Hardwood Forests of Pennsylvania. Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow”, provided an introduction to the unique Allegheny hardwood ecology, explaining the link to past human extraction and compatibility with current and future timbering:

A brief look at the forest history will allow the visitor to understand the what and why of the current forests in a temporal context. Objective of the lecture is to provide basic information on the forest trees, animals, and wildflowers within the framework and perspective of the local forests being providers of raw materials as well as recreational playgrounds (Forest Adventures Ecotours, Ltd., n.d.).

Likewise, another proposed tour to the Hickory Wilderness area in the ANF examined Allegheny hardwood forest ecology and dynamics in an Eastern wilderness' mountain streams, upland forested wetlands, reverting fields and deep forests (Forest Adventures Ecotours, Ltd., n.d.). While this tour visited an Eastern wilderness area with few roads relative to the rest of the forest, it consisted of forests that regenerated following industrial clearcutting around a century ago, rather than the untrammeled areas lyrically described in the Wilderness Act.

A more encompassing tour, developed with input from ANF archaeologists for the Forest County ecotourism feasibility study, focused on the area’s vegetative history, in which the Allegheny hardwoods featured prominently. The vegetative history told an interesting story of how the ecosystem changed with man’s use of the land. This tour could inform individuals that the current hardwood forest is the product of past human uses, rather than the ‘forest primeval’. Such a thematic tour could start with a short slide show of the changes in the Allegheny forests over time (slides of the old-growth pine/hemlock; changes due to successive selective harvests of white pine and hemlock; clearcutting; and then the current hardwood-dominated forest). The tour could then visit remnants of old-growth at Cook Forest State Park and/or Hearts Content, followed by visits to areas of the forest to show (1) areas that were clearcut that are now dominated by valuable hardwood species; (2) areas that were selectively cut and now contain a mix of hemlock, beech, pine, black cherry and maple; and (3) circa 1930s CCC pine plantations. In addition to touring pre- and post-industrial logging areas, a tour could also point out the effect of Native Americans (prehistoric silviculturalists) and of settler agriculture. One could show how species distribution was correlated with that of prehistoric sites as Native Americans used fire to manipulate the landscape for oak, which requires disturbances, and for hickory (for nuts and food for hunted animals like deer). This tour could also visit remnants of historical resource extraction settlements (i.e., ‘ghost towns’) and abandoned farms with agricultural tree species. Telling the vegetation history informed the present on-going production and reproduction of the Allegheny hardwoods. As mature hardwoods were harvested, the resulting open conditions favored reproduction of black cherry, the Allegheny hardwoods’ most commercially valuable species. Black cherry now makes up 47% of the understory (Table 1).

It was hoped that Allegheny hardwoods ecotourism could generate some of ecotourism’s vaunted benefits. For tourists who were not familiar with ecosystems in this area, the FCAT hoped ecotours could lead to greater appreciation of the Allegheny hardwood forest (i.e., how it was produced by past human uses and how its future is being shaped by human and other animal uses). Increased awareness of the Allegheny hardwoods' uniqueness could shape visitors’ perceptions on its management (i.e., timber harvesting as a key management tool). Locally some residents felt ecotourism could be the vehicle to raise appreciation of the forest by locals who did not recognize the area’s valuable ecotourism resources. If ecotourism provided employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, the local constituency for conservation and forest management could be strengthened.

These economic benefits were most desired in Forest County. The FCAT director hoped ecotourism would spur local entrepreneurial activities and job creation. While an ecotourism business (either new or a linkage of current tourism providers) would, like traditional outdoor recreation development, primarily benefit the business owners, the FCAT director hoped ecotourism could potentially help reverse the exodus of young, intelligent kids. Ideally ecotourism could provide a few of the ‘best and brightest’ with a way to stay (Carlson, 1997b).

In addition to ecotourism ideally generating economic benefits, its proponents hoped it would also help maintain the local culture based on working in the woods and continued multiple-use management and access to the forests. During the period when the Forest County ecotourism feasibility study was being conducted, the ADP filed the first lawsuit against the forest and successfully halted the Mortality II timber harvest and reforestation project (English, 1997). Following this first successful lawsuit, the FCAT chairman wearing his
hat as Forest County Conservation and Planning District director\(^4\) wrote of a nightmare outcome involving the destruction of the unique Allegheny hardwoods forest type and the human communities dependent on its production and reproduction should the ADP prevail in permanently halting timber harvests:

Let’s say the preservationists win and create the wilderness they envision, through non-management of these forests. Our citizen would see vast areas where the forest has no trees, just ferns and brush. Why? Well, many of the oak had died off through repeated cycles of drought and insect predation. The black cherry and maple fared a little better and now dominate most of the remaining intact forest tracts. Deer are almost extinct locally; they left when the food source died. The contiguous and unbroken forest canopy has not allowed any regeneration of tree seedlings. The deer that stayed are thin and diseased, too weak to move for food.

One astounding thing the citizen would notice would be how few people remain living in Forest County; most of those who remain did not have roots in the County but work for the Federal and State government as caretakers of the vast governmental holdings. By 2097, less than 10% of the County remains in private holdings.

Something that the citizens in 1997 didn’t know a lot about - the Wildlands Project\(^5\) - has turned Forest County into a wilderness corridor where human entry is prohibited. No longer are people allowed to visit the Tionesta Creek Valley for fear of disturbing the so-called “recovering species of wildlife”. Of course, a species census reveals that fewer species of wildlife now make Forest County their home than 100 years prior in 1997. A 90-year old history of Forest County states that a radical group of preservationists had gained influence with a federal judge through lies, misinformation, and by misdirection. The group had struck in the so-called night while the local citizens and the timber industry were asleep (Carlson, 1997c, p. 6).

Ecotourism associated with the culturally-produced hardwoods could help stave off the nightmare scenario and contribute to local planning activities designed to maintain access to the multiple-use forest. As Allegheny hardwoods ecotourism could sell the county’s assets, its quality of life and forests produced by the county’s timber heritage as well as help diversify the county’s economy, the Forest County ecotourism feasibility study was recommended as an addendum to the Forest County Comprehensive Plan (Forest County Conservation District and Planning Department, 1997). Thus the development of Allegheny hardwood ecotourism was linked to economic diversification as well as to the struggle over access to public lands and resources. Advancing ecotourism under these aims would be a political, as much as an economic exercise.

While the resource extraction in Forest County is industrialized and highly-capitalized and its seemingly worthless cutover land was sold, not seized by the central government, the struggle to maintain customary land use and access to the now valuable timber resources resembles those in the Third World. Pastoral groups in Tanzania have similarly utilized the language of sustainable development to challenge the linkage of nature protection with economic development and prohibiting locals from managing and profiting from wildlife (Neumann, 1995). Allegheny hardwoods ecotourism challenges exclusion from resources by focusing on preserving land rights and local customs and culture tied to human-produced nature, rather than on preserving so-called pristine nature. Maintaining access to and control over resources, emphasizing livelihoods based on traditional land uses, and stressing the importance of local histories and culture tied to resource use are common to First and Third World political ecology struggles (McCarthy, 2002).

\(^{\text{4}}\) The Forest County Conservation and Planning District director was also involved with the Allegheny Forest Alliance, a self-described “non-profit coalition of school districts, townships, recreation groups, businesses and others”. Its mission included “supporting and promoting sustainable forestry, environmental stewardship and multiple-use management of the Allegheny National Forest and other public forest lands on the Allegheny Plateau in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.” (Allegheny Forest Alliance, 2004)

\(^{\text{5}}\) According to the Forest County Conservation and Planning District director, the Wildlands Project aimed to turn 50% of the US into wilderness.
year, or nearly eight times the number of people who participated in its 1995 season. Most customers who were passing through from Branson, Missouri, which was 75 miles away, wanted lower-priced half-day tours. While limited transportation (i.e., winding, narrow two-lane state highways, no convenient regional airports) to the isolated area helped keep the area ‘natural’ and the regional culture intact, this underdevelopment also hampered its success at increasing visitors from nearby major metropolitan areas and their affluent suburbs (Romund and Miller, 1996). Finally Ozark Ecotours’ limited resources for marketing restricted the number of potential visitors. Thus, it largely relied on positive press reports and word-of-mouth promotion by its “small but faithful group of returns” (Knox, 1997). While grants covered the initial shortfalls, NCRC has since discontinued the tours.

The experience of the model Ozark Ecotours, which was struggling to break even during the time of the Forest County ecotourism study, affected ecotourism development in the county. There was concern about the economic sustainability of ecotourism given the Ozark experience and because a survey of potential Forest County ecotourists showed a limited willingness to pay for half-day and day tours. Over 60% of survey respondents were not willing to pay more than $50 per person for the latter. Additionally, a large percentage of survey respondents owned camps and were not interested in tour packages including accommodations and meals which were key to generating additionally revenue (Che, 1997). Demographic questions in the survey reinforced state statistics showing that visitors to Pennsylvania’s Northern tier, which Forest County was part of, tended to be older, less affluent overnight leisure who came for hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, and camping who stayed in non-paid accommodations (i.e., with family or at camps) (D.K. Shifflet. & Associates, 1996). Given the limited willingness to pay, one individual involved with the Forest County Action Team, considered recruiting and training residents of Abraxas, a residential, therapeutic, and educational community that considered recruiting and training residents of Abraxas, a residential, therapeutic, and educational community that served as an alternative to incarceration for youthful offenders, as potential ecotour guides in order to reduce labor costs. This idea was nixed since use of this ‘free’ labor not originally from the area who would both not offer specialized local knowledge and could appear threatening to the upper middle-class, education-focused ecotourists. It would also not generate guiding jobs needed to prevent local youth from leaving the area (Che, 2000). While the area has long attracted hunters, fishermen, and campers, existing Forest County tourism providers felt that residents of an urban ring of cities surrounding the ANF, including Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Akron, Buffalo, and Toronto, were interested in birdwatching, hiking, wildflowers, and wildlife. Yet none of those providers added ecotours to existing outfitter (canoe rentals) or retail (bicycling, equipment) operations as this would require hiring additional staff. In the end, only a few cultural and natural history tours focusing on the second-growth forests were offered, but they did not stimulate repeat or additional visitors. Perhaps as certain Forest Service employees who had worked in more rugged, isolated areas in which they thought guides were needed, felt the ANF’s accessibility, smallness (1/2 million acres); intensive use for timber, oil, gas, recreation; and its “ordinariness where one could view the same animals in most Pennsylvania state parks” negated the need for guiding and tours (Che, 1997). While the ANF provided a rural getaway for regional urban and suburban visitors, its Allegheny hardwood forests were less distinctive for tourism than for timber and were not so ‘wild’ as to require a guide.

While the externally-funded Newton and Forest County ecotourism development involved landscapes where human impact has been evident, a more traditional ecotourism based on old-growth to diversify timber-based economies of the Pacific Northwest also has not been entirely successful. The Siskiyou National Forest acted in partnership with southwestern Oregon’s Curry County to develop sustainable, nature-based tourism in order to diversify an economy based on lumber, commercial and sport fishing, drive through tourism, and retirement income. With $381,000 from the state of Oregon and the federal government, this nature tourism project involved sustainability planning, product development, business training, and marketing. The latter funding resulted from the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative, which assisted communities affected by the halt in old-growth timber harvests following the listing of the spotted owl as a threatened species. With its consultant, local entrepreneurs developed package tourism products such as half-day mountain bike, river kayak, lighthouse, and offshore/marine tours; stream restoration work projects; and photographer/artist workshops. Most of these tours were priced around US$70 per person, including lunch (Forbes, 1998). As in the case of Newton and Forest counties, customers did not materialize for the guided tours since visitors felt they could do activities such as hikes, scenic lookouts, and recreation rentals on their own without guided interpretation. Additionally the expenses for businesses, which ended up folding after several years, also turned out higher than expected. People did not come to the area for a specific purpose but were passing through on Highway 101 as part of a visit to the region which included the redwoods, Rogue River, and the southwest Oregon Coast. In the end, the area was not able to convert from a drive through tourism destination where people did things on their own and in actuality spent very little, to a place where $70 ecotours were sold (Derbyshire, 2004).
Other experiments in Pacific Northwest old-growth forest ecotourism have had similarly mixed success. In the early 1990s at the height of the spotted owl/timber wars, three tour companies offered 5–15-day guided ecotourism trips to the ancient forests which explained the science and diversity of the old-growth ecosystem. One company, Nature Expeditions International, had incorporated an eight-day or a 15-day field seminar program led by a forest expert with an advanced degree in natural science (Foehr, 1993), but it was discontinued due to limited demand. According to Dan Egan (1994), tourism director of the Convention and Visitor Association of Lane County, Oregon, the limited demand and economic benefits resulted from the forests being an unclearly defined tourist product. Unlike the sequoia which were the largest trees in the world, old-growth forests were a difficult ecosystem to sell, especially to those visitors who could not distinguish between old and second growth. Lane County's actual experience with old-growth tourism differed from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania’s perspective on the marketability of old-growth.

Day trips which visit old-growth are still offered, but they impart few economic benefits to timber-dependent communities. Eco Tours of Oregon's Northern Oregon Coast Tour includes an optional Ancient Forest Walk option in which one can learn about Pacific Northwest forest ecology (Eco Tours of Oregon Day Tours, n.d.). However Portland, not the logging communities around the national forests, benefit from Eco Tours’ $47.50 per person day trips, since tourists are picked up at city hotels and provided with lunches that are taken into the forest. Success for the tour operator, if not the communities whose high-value extraction declined, shows the weak link of First World ecotourism to economic development. All of the aforementioned examples of First World ecotourism indicate that it might be wishful thinking to believe that ecotourism could be the consumptive solution to economic restructuring in distressed, isolated, resource-dependent communities.

8. Conclusions and implications

As tourism production and consumption is capitalistic and tourism is part of territorial competition and economic restructuring (Britton, 1991), without continual government subsidies, ecotourism operations will only survive where profitable. Ecotourism destinations are not necessarily the isolated, resource-dependent areas where economic diversification programs have been implemented. While popular for traditional outdoor recreation activities, the place products/cultural landscapes of the Ozarks’ Buffalo River region and northwestern Pennsylvania and the old-growth of the Pacific Northwest will not necessarily attract visitors for specialty tours unless they had unique identities to differentiate themselves from competing destinations (Morgan and Pritchard, 2002). While Pacific Northwest old-growth and Allegheny hardwoods yield internationally-recognized wood for the timber industry, these forests are not differentiated tourism products. Differentiated, branded tourism destinations are less price elastic, have stable visitor flows, and increased economic rents (Britton, 1991). Capturing resource rents is critical to regional development in resource-dependent areas (Guntton, 2003). Unlike previously isolated areas such as Patagonia and Madagascar which have an element of prestige associated with being at the vanguard of tourist visitation until newer areas open up, visiting isolated, forest-dependent areas of Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Oregon does not impart status. Ecotourism thus may be a technocratic solution for underdevelopment that never addresses the structural inequalities that foster economic dependency and instability and consequently threaten ecosystems (when it comes to flows of capital, tourists, etc.).

The structure of the nature tour industry also constrains such resource-dependent places from attracting paying visitors. The industry is highly concentrated, with the five and 35 largest operations respectively accounting for 40% and 90% of the total market. Many for-profit outbound nature tour operators work primarily with international destinations, with Central American ones being among the most popular. As a result, ecotourist flows differ from those of general tourism, where visits to North America, Europe, Mexico, and the Caribbean constitute much higher percentages of the total (Higgins, 1996). Smaller tour operators which focused on North American destinations indicated that the area’s name recognition or mystique was the top consideration when deciding whether to add new destinations as one operator noted, “an area may be gorgeous, but if people have not heard of it, they will not sign up for a tour” (Che, 1997). Unfortunately, the aforementioned places where First World ecotourism was developed do not have widespread name recognition. As such they, like most US ecotourism destinations, will be mainly serviced by local outfitters and lodges (Romund and Miller, 1996), which have varying levels of marketing and promotion.

Birding may be one subset of First World ecotourism that draws visitors to particular places (i.e., those along migration routes and/or with habitats for rare species). Southeastern Arizona is famed for its habitats for more types of birds than anywhere else in the US. As it offers the opportunity for birders to add multiple species to their life lists, visiting can help them raise their status within the birding world. Bird-watching also brings higher revenues per visitor than other forms of rural tourism because birding is popular with older, affluent people. Since the optimal time for bird-watching is in...
the early morning and late afternoon hours, this activity necessitates paying for accommodations near birding sites (Leones et al., 1998). While Northwestern Pennsylvania and the ANF are not specifically sold to birders, tours could focus on riverine, upland forest, open woodland and old-growth areas. A tour in one of the ANF’s old-growth areas could offer a wide diversity of rare woodland warblers such as the Swainson’s thrush, black-bellied warbler, and the yellow-bellied flycatcher that would be attractive to bird enthusiasts. To brand the area for birding, the tour could be sold on seeing a combination of birds that occur separately only in a few other places (the Adirondacks, Smokies) than the old-growth Tionesta Scenic Area (Che, 1997). Depending on what species and habitats are offered, birding tourism may be an alternative tourism strategy for resource-dependent areas.

Beyond birding, big game hunting, and sport fishing, many North Americans may not be willing to pay much for nature-based tourism in First World settings. First World ecotourists are primarily urban nationals who independently visit national and state parks, recreation areas, forests and wilderness areas as opposed to foreigners on multinational corporation (MNC)-run package tours. First World ecotourists may only be willing to pay for package tours to see only Third World ‘exotic’ nature. As such, small-scale ecotourism operations in First World resource-dependent areas, which find it difficult to increase visitation of paying visitors or tour prices, may not financially survive. Ecotourism in these areas may in fact be secondary to traditional outdoor recreation activities such as hunting and fishing. Small operators may need to offer ecotourism and non-ecotourism activities to ecogeneralists (Wight, 1996) to achieve profitability. In Manitoba, ecotourism operators, which are mostly small-scale businesses located in isolated forested areas, offer a wide variety of activities such as wildlife viewing of species like black bear, wolf, deer, moose, waterfowl, birds of prey and shore birds, as well as photography, fishing, canoeing, boating, camping, hunting, hiking, and cross-country skiing. The diverse offerings may be necessary as the ecotourism offerings in Manitoba, other than in Churchill which has name/product recognition for its polar bears, may be indistinct from adjacent Canadian and American destinations (Weaver et al., 1996). Like Manitoba, Newton County, Arkansas; Forest County, Pennsylvania; and Curry and Lane Counties, Oregon, may be indistinct from other tourism destinations. Given the limited willingness to pay for First World ecotourism, ecotourism may in fact be more successful in areas accessible to major metropolitan center populations, such as in Portland, Oregon and urban New Zealand. Only these urban operations may be able to get enough customers at the relatively low half-day and day tour prices to survive financially. But as a result of its pattern in the First World, capital flows from ecotourism would more frequently go to nearby urban areas rather than to the resource-dependent areas which seek ecotourism as a way to bolster their economies.

Ecotourism developed in these First World peripheral areas may need additional external support beyond the initial tour development and business marketing advice. Hiller (1994) noted that in the United States ecotourism destinations must survive largely on their own strategies, whereas in some countries of Africa and Latin America, ecotourism is part of the national strategy for natural resource management. Likewise, cultural landscapes such as Hohes Venn receive continued European Union funding. To overcome the dominance of the tourism establishment over US tourism policy making, small ecotourism businesses need to cultivate local, regional, and state officials in order for ecotourism to be truly included on state tourism and environment agendas.

As ecotourism seems unlikely to replace productivist activities as the basis for First World resource-dependent areas’ economies, collaborative community development is required to further economic diversification. Local, collaborative citizens groups including environmental, resource, and other interests, can better connect primary production to processing and consumers through value-added and service sector activities including tourism (Burch, 2003). They can help work out differences and work towards environmentally sound futures. For instance in Catron County, New Mexico, such a group is helping to helping to build a sustainable economy based on forest restoration (Burns, 2003). In Forest County’s case, collaborative efforts are needed since both consumptive and productive forest uses are important. Tourism generated $24.26 million in traveler expenditures, $4.74 million in payroll expenditures, $3.2 million in state and local tax revenues, and 280 jobs in 1996 (Gingrich, 1997), but timber harvesting on the ANF generated 99% of the ANF’s payments for schools and roads (Logging losses, 1998).

In the ANF region, collaborative efforts have been underway to increase the amount of wilderness for both existence and recreational values and to guarantee future timber harvesting. Last year, a working group including both local representatives of environmental organizations such as the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness and representatives of resource industry organizations such as the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas producers, Allegheny Hardwoods Utilization Group, and Pennsylvania Forest Producers, was organized in order to end the litigious conflict in the woods. This group, which enabled each side to hear the other’s perspective, would work towards designating additional wilderness in the ANF as desired by the environmentalists, if in turn would sign off on multiple use on national forests and cease litigation against timber sales. The resolution would bolster...
“legitimate management” and be especially significant as the national Sierra Club has advocated a zero-cut platform on the national forests. If an urban judge personally unfamiliar about forest management saw that the Wilderness Society and Sierra Club signed off on this resolution, the judge might not automatically see timber harvesting as negative. The judge might be more likely to question the ADP’s trying to halt timber sales. The resolution was almost finalized when the East Side Timber Sale came up. While a representative of the Erie chapter of the Sierra Club kept the state Sierra Club informed about the working group’s activities, the latter’s President signed on as a co-appellant on the ADP’s May 2004 East Side Timber sale appeal. Although this action by the state Sierra Club ended the months-long collaborative process and goodwill that had been built up, one of the other environmental representatives is now trying to get the process back on track (Wiles, 2004). Such collaboration is needed to further community development based on both productivist and consumptive activities in this forest-dependent area. Even if ideological greens who generally oppose resource extraction and who are the most committed to environmental protection tend to be least in favor of paying for access to nature (i.e., park fees) (Blamey and Braithwaite, 1997), a collaborative effort including greens and other environmentalists and resource industry representatives is needed to increase the community economic benefits from tourism and value-added wood processing. Both production and consumption are necessary to maximize the resource rents required for economic development in Forest County and other resource-dependent areas.

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