

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE VOLUNTEER  
TOURISM EXPERIENCE

Thesis submitted by  
Alexandra COGHLAN  
B.Sc. St-Andrews University  
In August, 2005

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Tourism Program, School of Business at  
James Cook University

## **ELECTRONIC COPY**

I, the undersigned, the author of this work, declare that the electronic copy of this thesis provided to the James Cook University Library, is an accurate copy of the print thesis submitted, within the limits of the technology available.

---

Signature

---

Date

## STATEMENT OF ACCESS

I, the undersigned, author of this work, understand that James Cook University will make this thesis available for use within the University Library and, via the Australian Digital Theses network, for use elsewhere.

I understand that, as an unpublished work, a thesis has significant protection under the Copyright Act and; I do not wish to place any further restriction on access to this work.

---

Signature

Date

Alexandra Coghlan

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

---

Signature

Date

Alexandra Coghlan

## DECLARATION ON ETHICS

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted within the guidelines for research ethics outlined in the *National Statement on Ethics Conduct in Research Involving Human* (1999), the *Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (1997), the *James Cook University Policy on Experimentation Ethics. Standard Practices and Guidelines* (2001), and the *James Cook University Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (2001). The proposed research methodology received clearance from the James Cook University Experimentation Ethics Review Committee (approval number H1634 & H1719).

---

Signature

Date

Alexandra Coghlan

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## MY SUPERVISORS

*Philip Pearce and Laurie Murphy for their Guidance throughout my Thesis*



## MY FAMILY

*For their support throughout the whole process, it wouldn't have been possible without them*



## MY CLOSE FRIENDS

*Gabe, Hollie, Magnus & Will  
Who put up with all the tears and tantrums and kept me smiling*



## THE STAFF FROM THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

*Who can make anything happen  
Anne and Robyn, a huge thanks.*



## THE VOLUNTEER TOURISM ORGANISATIONS

*Who were interested in and supportive of my work and made this research possible*



## THE VOLUNTEERS WHO TOOK PART IN THE STUDY

*Some of you made this research really special...*



## SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

*For funding research trips around the world.*



*And a special thanks to Allison Rossetto, who showed me the way many times...*

## ABSTRACT

A new form of tourism, volunteer tourism, has been put forward as a solution to an apparent decreasing public understanding of environmental debates and financial commitment towards resolving conservation concerns. This tourism sector makes use of holiday-makers who volunteer to fund and work on conservation projects around the world and aims to provide to provide sustainable alternative travel that can assist in community development, scientific research or ecological restoration. Unlike ecotourism where profit drives the operator, many volunteer tourism companies are non-profit organisations, whose aim is to allow travellers to work alongside researchers on environmentally or socially beneficial projects. Such volunteer work provides a means for direct interaction between environmental scientists and the general public and is a potentially powerful tool for creating an increasingly global environmental ethic.

Previous studies of volunteer tourism suggest that participants share similar characteristics to (extreme) ecotourists, i.e. tourists who desire a high level of interaction with the environment, to be environmentally responsible and to be challenged, but unlike ecotourists, volunteer tourists are believed to be motivated by a sense of altruism. Researchers describe the volunteer tourism experience as a form of serious leisure, with a focus on learning and contributing to a worthwhile cause. Other motivations that have been associated with volunteer tourism, volunteering and tourism include escape, relaxation, relationship enhancement, self-development, building a personal power base, advancing a personal agenda, developing a career that leads to status or other rewards, interest in the subject matter, and an interest in helping the researcher. How ubiquitous these motivations are and how they shape the volunteer tourism experience is not yet understood.

This research investigated the volunteer tourists' expectations and experiences in order to enhance volunteer tourism's potential as a conservation tool. It sought to identify key variables and factors which shape this sector; and to prepare the way for subsequent large scale empirical studies. It applied new data collection tools (a daily diary) to a new field of tourism research (the volunteer tourism experience) The research aims were (i) to identify differences between organisational images that might lead to different volunteer tourist experiences (Study One), (ii) to

determine the socio-demographic and motivational profiles of volunteer tourists (Study Two), (iii) to examine volunteer tourists' experiences and to identify patterns of experience and the elements that lead to a satisfying experience (Study Three), and finally (iv) to understand the experience from the expedition staff's point of view (Study Four).

Study One looked at a sample of volunteer tourism organisations (n=29) to identify their projected and perceived organisational images. The former were investigated by assessing promotional photographs, mission statements and volunteer tourist testimonies, and the latter were analysed using a multiple sorting procedure performed by 30 postgraduate students. Based on the results, a general typology was developed resulting in four groups – “research conservation” expeditions, “holiday conservation” expeditions, “adventure holiday” expeditions and “community holiday” expeditions. The four groups could be distinguished based on their mission statements, photographs, testimonies, and sorting criteria.

Study Two investigated the expectations, motivations and socio-demographic profiles of volunteer tourists. Volunteers from six organisations (n=77) were studied using a diary-based method. This relatively small sample size was due to the nature of volunteer tourism (infrequent trips with small groups in very remote locations). Distinct socio-demographic and motivational profiles were found: four organisations appeared to attract a younger market with a lower level of prior conservation involvement, less travel experience and who were motivated by personal development and experiential and recreational goals, while two organisations catered to an older market, who have a higher level of conservation involvement and travel experience and who were more motivated to learn and help the researcher.

Study Three investigated volunteer tourist experiences based on the findings from the previous two studies. The positive and negative elements of their volunteer tourism experiences were investigated, along with on-site satisfaction and moods. The results indicated that whilst most of the volunteer tourists' motivations and expectations were fulfilled, their moods, satisfaction levels and overall assessment of the expedition were dependent on the presence of four elements: the opportunity for skill/knowledge development, having fun, experiencing new things, and contributing to a worthwhile project. Furthermore, certain experience patterns could be identified from the volunteer tourists' diaries; some volunteers were confident



and highly involved in the expedition, some were slightly more anxious and did not become so involved in all aspects of the expedition, whilst others were primarily concerned with their own achievements, and lastly some show lower levels of involvement in the project.

The final study investigated the staff's expectations of the volunteers. Staff were asked to describe their qualifications for the job and the role they expected the volunteers to fulfil, to rate the items from Study Two that might have motivated their volunteers to join the expedition and to assess the volunteers' performance. In most cases, staff placed a greater emphasis on the volunteering and research aspects of the expedition, often to the detriment of fun and social elements. They felt their science and research experience qualified them for the job, that volunteers should be hard working and perform to the best of their ability.

Overall, the research revealed that whilst volunteer tourists have poorly defined expectations of their expedition, they are generally satisfied as long as the four elements mentioned above are present during the expedition. The need for fun and new and different experiences contradict previous notions of volunteer tourism as a form of serious leisure involving altruistic motivations. Moreover, staff could be made more aware of the different roles they are to fulfil during the expedition.

Methodological and conceptual contributions of this research include the development of an experience data collection tool and an integrative approach to studying volunteer tourism. The role of altruism as a motivating force was challenged, whilst the importance of having fun, contributing to a worthwhile project, learning and experiencing new and different things was highlighted. Opportunities for future research into the role of personality, staff attitudes and volunteer rewards, as well as the organisation's evaluation of volunteer tourism as a form of recreation experience were presented. Furthermore, some of the variables that define this sector and may be useful employed in an Equity model of volunteer tourism were identified and may be used to refine the current state of knowledge regarding volunteer tourism as an exchange of services and benefits between two parties. Finally, recommendations are made to help enhance volunteer tourism's potential as a conservation tool.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

STATEMENT OF ACCESS	ii
DECLARATION	iii
DECLARATION ON ETHICS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xvii
A PERSONAL NOTE	xviii

### **CHAPTER ONE: Linking Tourism, Volunteering and Nature Conservation**

1.1. OVERVIEW OF THESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	1
1.2. INVOLVING THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN SCIENCE	3
1.2.1. <i>The state of the environment today</i>	3
1.2.2. <i>A concerned public</i>	5
1.2.3. <i>A lack of scientific understanding</i>	6
1.2.4. <i>The need for environmental education</i>	6
1.2.5. <i>Decreasing financial commitment to conservation</i>	8
1.3. VOLUNTEERS: LINKING CONSERVATION & THE PUBLIC	9
1.3.1 <i>The use of volunteers in science</i>	9
1.3.2 <i>The advantages of using volunteers in science</i>	10
1.3.3 <i>Some pitfalls of using volunteers in science</i>	12
1.4. TOURISM AND CONSERVATION	14
1.4.1 <i>Historical background</i>	14
1.4.2. <i>Ecotourism: definitions and dilemmas</i>	16
1.5. VOLUNTEER TOURISM: LINKING THE PUBLIC, SCIENCE & CONSERVATION	21
1.5.1. <i>Background</i>	21
1.5.2. <i>The volunteer tourist</i>	23
1.5.3. <i>Issues in volunteer tourism</i>	25
1.6. OVERALL RESEARCH DIRECTIONS	28

### **CHAPTER TWO: Understanding Volunteer Tourist Behaviour**

2.1. INTRODUCTION	33
2.2. INTERPERSONAL EXCHANGE THEORIES	34
2.3. VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOUR	37

2.3.1. <i>Identifying and recruiting volunteers</i>	37
2.3.2. <i>Volunteer motivation and satisfaction</i>	38
2.3.3. <i>Volunteer organisations</i>	41
2.4. TOURIST BEHAVIOUR	43
2.4.1. <i>A “person” approach</i>	44
2.4.2. <i>A “reasons” approach</i>	46
2.4.3. <i>A “place” approach</i>	47
2.4.4. <i>Destination selection</i>	48
2.4.5. <i>Researching destination images</i>	49
2.4.6. <i>Tourist emotion</i>	50
2.4.7. <i>Tourist satisfaction</i>	56
2.5. RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND THESIS STRUCTURE	58

### **CHAPTER THREE: Expectations created by volunteer tourism organisations**

3.1. INTRODUCTION	63
3.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	65
3.3. MATERIALS AND METHODS	67
3.3.1. <i>Organisational Sampling</i>	67
3.3.2. <i>Analysis of Projected Images</i>	68
3.3.3. <i>Analysis of Perceived Images</i>	70
3.4. RESULTS	72
3.4.1. <i>Organisational Sampling</i>	72
3.4.2. <i>Analysis of Projected Images</i>	73
3.4.3. <i>Analysis of Perceived images</i>	97
3.5. DISCUSSION	105
3.5.1. <i>General Comments</i>	105
3.5.2. <i>A typology of Volunteer Tourism Organisations</i>	107

### **CHAPTER FOUR: The motivations and expectations of volunteer tourists**

4.1. INTRODUCTION	114
4.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	117
4.3. MATERIALS AND METHODS	119
4.3.1. <i>Sample</i>	119
4.3.2. <i>Data collection materials</i>	120
4.4. RESULTS	125
SECTION A	
4.4.1. <i>The socio-demographic profile of volunteer tourists</i>	125
4.4.2. <i>The motivations of volunteer tourists</i>	126
4.4.3. <i>The expectations of volunteer tourists</i>	132
SECTION B	
4.4.4. <i>Comparing the organisations’ image with respondent motivations</i>	146

4.4.5. <i>Comparing the organisations' image with respondent expectations</i>	151
SECTION C	
4.4.6. <i>Towards a framework for understanding volunteer tourism experiences</i>	153
4.5. DISCUSSION	155
4.5.1. <i>The highly segmented nature of volunteer tourism</i>	155
4.5.2. <i>Comparison with other motivational studies</i>	157
4.5.3. <i>The relative roles of volunteering and travel motivations</i>	159
4.5.4. <i>The contradictions within the results</i>	161
4.5.5. <i>The role of the push/pull theory in volunteer tourism</i>	162
4.5.6. <i>Mismatches in volunteer motivations and organisational image</i>	163
4.5.7. <i>Predictions for volunteer tourism experiences</i>	164
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: Volunteer Tourists' On-Site Experiences</b>	
5.1. INTRODUCTION	166
5.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	169
5.3. MATERIALS AND METHODS	171
5.3.1. <i>Respondents</i>	171
5.3.2. <i>Data collection materials</i>	171
5.4. RESULTS	179
PART ONE	
5.4.1. <i>The volunteers' best and worst experiences</i>	179
5.4.2. <i>The volunteers' on-site emotions</i>	183
5.4.3. <i>The volunteers' satisfaction levels</i>	185
5.4.4. <i>The volunteers' evaluation of the activities</i>	186
5.4.5. <i>The volunteers' evaluation of other expedition characteristics</i>	190
5.4.6. <i>The volunteers' comments and recommendation about the expedition</i>	192
PART TWO	
5.4.7. <i>The confident group</i>	195
5.4.8. <i>The anxious group</i>	215
5.4.9. <i>The personal achievement group</i>	230
5.4.10. <i>The others</i>	237
5.5. DISCUSSION	245
5.5.1. <i>Summary and discussion of results</i>	245
5.5.2. <i>Advances in the study of on-site tourist experiences</i>	249
5.5.3. <i>Understand volunteer tourists' experiences</i>	252
5.5.4. <i>Management implications of the results</i>	258
<b>CHAPTER SIX: Expedition staff's expectations &amp; experiences</b>	
6.1. INTRODUCTION	261
6.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	266
6.3. MATERIALS AND METHODS	267
6.3.1. <i>Respondents</i>	267
6.3.2. <i>Data collection materials</i>	267

6.4. RESULTS	269
6.4.1. <i>General profile</i>	269
6.4.2. <i>Organisation-specific profiles</i>	280
6.5. DISCUSSION	304
6.5.1. <i>The profile and role of the expedition staff</i>	304
6.5.2. <i>Staff perceptions of volunteer roles and characteristics</i>	306
6.5.3. <i>Assessment of the volunteers' performance</i>	307
6.5.4. <i>Volunteer expectations and staff expectations</i>	310
6.5.5. <i>Expedition improvements</i>	311
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: Thesis Implications And Conclusions</b>	
7.1. KEY FINDINGS	315
7.1.1. <i>Summary of key findings</i>	315
7.1.2. <i>Management recommendations</i>	318
7.2. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EXISTING KNOWLEDGE	323
7.2.1. <i>Advances in volunteer tourism studies</i>	323
7.2.2. <i>Advances in tourism studies</i>	325
7.2.3. <i>Advances in volunteer behaviour studies</i>	327
7.3. VOLUNTEER TOURISM AND EQUITY THEORY	328
7.4. STUDY LIMITATIONS	330
7.4.1. <i>Sample size</i>	331
7.4.2. <i>Methodological considerations</i>	332
7.4.3. <i>The exploratory nature of the research</i>	333
7.5. FUTURE RESEARCH	334
7.5.1. <i>Management issues</i>	334
7.5.2. <i>Interpersonal variations in volunteer tourism experiences</i>	335
7.5.3. <i>Other impacts of volunteer tourism expeditions</i>	336
7.5.4. <i>Organisations' perspectives</i>	337
7.6. CONCLUSIONS	337
<b>REFERENCES</b>	339

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1. Developing a personal environmental ethic: guidelines.....	8
Table 2.1. Characteristics of Earthwatch expeditions taken from Hartman (1997): .....	42
Table 2.2. the Consumption Emotions Set taken from Richins (1997).....	56
Table 3.1. Conservation Volunteer Tourism Organisation Sample.....	73
Table 3.2. The Number Of Destination Countries For Each Organisation That Send Volunteers Abroad. ....	75
Table 3.3. The Variation between Organisations in Expedition Price and Length, and Number of Projects and Destinations Offered. ....	78
Table 3.4. the age groups and target market of each organisation .....	79
Table 3.5. Expeditions themes and examples of expeditions for each organisation. ....	81
Table 3.6. The Training Format And Opportunity To Conduct Independent Projects For Each Organisation.....	84
Table 3.7. The Presence Of Researcher Or Expedition Leader Profiles And A List Of Expedition Outcomes For Each Organisation.....	85
Table 3.8. The Theme Of Each Organisation's Mission Statement.....	87
Table 3.9. The Definitions And Some Examples Of Four Of The Five Most Common Themes In The Testimonies Of Past Volunteers.....	89
Table 3.10. The Most Commonly Used Photo Categories For Each Organisation .....	92
Table 3.10. The Most Commonly Used Photo Categories For Each Organisation .....	93
Table 3.11. Groupings Of Organisations Based On The Major Categories Of Photographs Used In Their Promotional Material And Their Mission Statements. ....	94
Table 3.12. Differences Between Organisations In Their Use Of Promotional Photographs. ....	95
Table 3.13. Number Of Tourism And Biology Students With Previous Experience Of Or Who Were Interested And Aware Of Volunteer Tourism .....	98
Table 3.14. Awareness, Interest And Conservation Scores For Tourism And Biology Students .....	98
Table 3.15. Sorting Effort Of Biology And Tourism Students.....	99
Table 3.16. Nature And Frequency Of Criteria Used To Group Organisations. ....	100
Table 3.17. A general typology of volunteer tourism organisations that offer conservation research expeditions .....	111
Table 4.1. Summary information regarding the different organisations sampled. ....	119
Table 4.2. The factors, items and references used in the motivational survey.....	122
Table 4.3. The different themes to be investigated according to study one. ....	124
Table 4.4a: Respondents' profile: Gender, age and nationality.....	125
Table 4.4b: Respondents' profile: travel experience, VT experience & conservation involvement. ....	126
Table 4.5: The mean score and SD for each motivational item.....	128
Table 4.6. Comparison of respondent ratings for each theme between Study One and Study Two.....	150
Table 4.7. Comparison of the grouping themes from Study One and the volunteers' expectations .....	152
Table 4.8.: A summary of the principal motivations for volunteers from each organisation .....	157
Table 4.9.: Predictions for volunteer tourism experience.....	166

Table 5.1. Other factors that may have affected volunteer tourists' experiences .....	177
Table 5.2. The volunteers' satisfaction scores, overall and for each organisation. ....	186
Table 5.3.: The volunteers' evaluation of expedition activities.....	188
Table 5.4.: How much time the volunteers would like to spend on each activity.....	189
Table 5.5. The volunteers' assessment of other expedition characteristics. ....	190
Table 5.6. Mary's Satisfaction scores. ....	197
Table 5.7. Fulfilling Mary's motivations and expectations.....	197
Table 5.8. Fulfilling Mary's motivations and expectations.....	198
Table 5.9. Jo's satisfaction scores .....	202
Table 5.10. Fulfilling Jo's motivations and expectations.....	202
Table 5.11. Simone's satisfaction scores.....	205
Table 5.12. Fulfilling Simone's motivations and expectations .....	205
Table 5.13. Felicity's satisfaction scores.....	208
Table 5.14. Fulfilling Felicity's motivations and expectations .....	208
Table 5.15. Jenny's satisfaction scores .....	210
Table 5.17. Nancy's satisfaction scores .....	214
Table 5.18. Fulfilling Nancy's motivations and expectations .....	214
Table 5.19. Lucy's satisfaction scores .....	218
Table 5.20. Fulfilling Lucy's motivations and expectations .....	218
Table 5.21. Fulfilling Lucy's motivations and expectations.....	219
Table 5.22. Bridget's satisfaction scores .....	223
Table 5.23. Fulfilling Bridget's motivations and expectations .....	223
Table 5.24. Fulfilling Kate's expectations and motivations.....	225
Table 5.24. Kate's satisfaction levels.....	226
Table 5.25. Fulfilling Kate's motivations and expectations .....	226
Table 5.26. Sandra's satisfaction levels.....	229
Table 5.27. Fulfilling Sandra's motivations and expectations .....	229
Table 5.28. Francis' satisfaction levels .....	232
Table 5.29. Fulfilling Francis' motivations and expectations.....	232
Table 5.30. Fulfilling Francis' motivations and expectations.....	233
Table 5.31. James' satisfaction levels .....	236
Table 5.32. Fulfilling James' motivations and expectations .....	236
Table 5.32. Jess' satisfaction levels.....	239
Table 5.33. Fulfilling Jess' motivations and expectations.....	239
Table 5.35. John's satisfaction scores .....	244
Table 5.36. Fulfilling John's motivations and expectations .....	244
Table 6.1: The number of years that expedition staff had been performing their job. ....	269
Table 6.2. The volunteers' role in the organisation according to the staff. ....	272

Table 6.3. Volunteer performance scores as assessed by staff. ....	275
Table 6.4. Staff estimation of volunteer motivations .....	277
Table 6.5. Differences between staff and volunteers scoring of motivational items. ....	278
Table 6.6. A summary of the results for each organisation.....	303
Table 7.1. An overview of how Equity theory may be applied to volunteer tourism. ....	330



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1.: Dimensions of an Ecotourist (taken from Acott, La Trobe, & Howard, 1998).....	24
Figure 2.1. The circumplex model taken from Russell (1980). .....	54
Figure 2.2. Multi-dimension scaling of Consumption Emotion Set.. .....	55
Figure 3.1. a & b: The Headquarters Of Conservation Volunteer Tourism Organisations And The Destinations Of Their Expeditions.....	75
Figure 3.2. Number of expeditions offered by organisations. Most organizations offered 1-5 expeditions	76
Figure 3.3. The overall frequency of the 12 volunteer testimony themes .....	88
Figure 3.4. Multi-Dimensional Scaling Of Organisations Based On Their Volunteer Testimonies. ....	90
Figure 3.5. The number of photographs in each of the 14 categories .....	91
Figure 3.6. Multi-Dimensional Scaling of Organisations Based upon types of photographs .....	96
Figure 3.7. Hierarchical cluster analysis of organisations.....	103
Figure 4.1a to 4.1c. Motivational item scores overall and for each organisation.....	131
Figure 4.2a to 4.2c: The motivational ratings given by volunteers which showed significant differences between the six organisations .....	147
Figure 5.1. The smiley face scale used by volunteers to assess their daily activities. ....	174
Figure 5.2. The emotions wheel, based upon the circumplex model of affect, used to collect data on volunteer tourists' daily emotions. ....	175
Figure 5.3. The volunteers' on-site emotions (for the entire sample).. .....	184
Figure 5.4. The volunteers' on-site emotions (from Organisation F) .....	184
Figure 5.5a. Differences between organisations in the volunteers' assessment of their free time ....	191
Figure 5.5b Differences between organisations in the volunteers' assessment of the work .....	191
Figure 5.5c. Differences between organisations in the volunteers' assessment of the training .....	191
Figure 5.6. Extracts form Mary's diary .....	196
Figure 5.7.:Mary's Mood scores .....	197
Figure 5.8. Extracts from Jo's diary.....	201
Figure 5.9. Jo's mood scores .....	202
Figure 5.10. Extracts from Simone's diary .....	204
Figure 5.11. Simone's mood scores.....	205
Figure 5.12. Extracts from Felicity's diary .....	207
Figure 5.13. Felicity's mood scores.....	208
Figure 5.14. Extracts from Jenny's diary.....	210
Figure 5.15. Jenny's mood scores .....	210
Figure 5.16. Extracts from Nancy's diary .....	213
Figure 5.17. Nancy's mood scores.....	214

Figure 5.18. Extracts from Lucy's diary.....	217
Figure 5.19. Lucy's mood scores .....	218
Figure 5.20. Extracts from Bridget's diary .....	222
Figure 5.21. Bridget's mood scores .....	223
Figure 5.25. Kate's mood scores .....	225
Figure 5.22. Extracts from Kate's diary .....	225
Figure 5.23. Kate's mood scores .....	226
Figure 5.24. Extracts from Sandra's diary.....	228
Figure 5.25. Sandra's mood scores .....	229
Figure 5.26. Extracts from Francis' diary .....	231
Figure 5.27. Francis' mood scores.....	232
Figure 5.28. Extracts from James' diary.....	235
Figure 5.29. James' mood scores.....	236
Figure 5.30. Extracts from Jess' diary.....	238
Figure 5.31. Jess' mood scores .....	239
Figure 5.32. Extracts from John's diary .....	243
Figure 5.32. John's mood scores.....	244
Figure 5.33. A possible map for volunteer tourist satisfaction..	257
Figure 6.1.: Expedition staff self-reported qualifications for their job. ....	270
Figure 6.3. The characteristics of a good volunteer according to expedition staff.....	273
Figure 6.4. Self-reported staff qualifications for Organisation B. ....	284
Figure 6.5. The staff profile of respondents from Organisation D.....	291
Figure 6.6. The staff profile of respondents from Organisation D.....	296

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: The volunteer survey.....	353
Appendix B: The volunteer diary.....	359
Appendix C: The leader survey.....	366

## A PERSONAL NOTE

The thesis is not the first, nor will be it be the last, to be written as a result of a deeply personal concern for the future of our natural environment and the safeguarding of our life support systems.

This concern comes from a growing feeling among natural scientists that humankind has lost its place in nature and disrupted the balance that has come about from 3.5 billion years of co-evolution between the 10 million or species that exist on this earth. Some of the greatest scientists of our time, many of them Nobel Prize winners, came together to produce a document that began:

Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk the future we wish for human society and the plant and animal kingdoms, and may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know. Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision our present course will bring about.

On a personal level, I believe, as stated by Rupert Holzapfel in his thesis that “everyday I experience and contribute, on a human timescale, to the exhaustion of non-renewable fossil fuels and mineral deposits, the overuse of natural resources and the pollution of the natural environment”.

Many among us would agree with this statement and are chagrined by it. It is those of us who have been privileged enough to experience the natural world, who have sought it out, or who live with it daily who feel this most keenly. However, this group is a minority in Western society where most of the population live in cities and have little access to the natural world.

This thesis argues that experiential tourism and travelling can change the way we think about the world and interact with nature. The emphasis throughout the thesis will be on EXPERIENCE, for, as Saint-Exupery states “You can only understand the world according to what you have experienced”. Volunteer tourism provides tourists with an opportunity to experience the natural world in a new and intense way, highlighting the need for conservation and the ability of each person to make a difference. Now, we must ensure that this experience is a positive one and that each and every tourist comes away with a new sense of our stewardship of life on Earth.

---

*The natural world is the maternal of our being as earthlings and life-giving nourishment of our physical, emotional, aesthetic, moral and religious existence. The natural world is the larger community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human. To damage this community is to diminish our own existence.*

- Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*