**Problem Tourist attractions capping visitor numbers: Case study of Manyeleti Nature Reserve, Mariepskop Nature Reserve, Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve and Injaka Dam**

**Industry:** Attractions (Tourism Sector)

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENT**

As part of revitalisation of tourist attractions, determining the number of visitors that should be welcomed per day (capping visitor numbers) is one of the key mergers to put in place. The assumption is that once the attraction revitalisation process is complete, through marketing the attraction could attract more tourist due to its unique offerings. This success will be financially improved when the site manager/s are able to directly charge visitors. Public-owned attractions such as Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve. will be expected to implement user-pay strategies which will require appropriate regulatory framework and the ability to physically restrict access only to those willing to pay for the experience such as barriers to entry (Morgan & Lok, 1999:1-2).

**Possible benefits of capping visitor numbers for an attraction:**

* Ensure nature conservation and preservation
* Manage overcrowding
* Increase visitor experience
* Assist with visitor data collection (statistics)
* Projection of revenue per day
* Staffing per activity (justify for increase is required)
* Present an informed justification to increase the entry fee and determine the entry fee different categories (International, National & local)
* To support an argument to acquire/procure certain infrastructure /facilities of certain standards (meeting the standards as stipulated by the South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE) and South African Grading Council and other concerned bodies.
* Influence decision on the type of system / technology to be adopted for the site.
* Provide a perspective on the attraction marketing strategy, new product/service development and existing product/service enhancement including community involvement.

 Drawing from prior presented literature, there is a number of tourist attractions in the country ( for example in Mpumalanga Province) that are deserted in a way. Those tourist attractions have the potential to realise their sustainable development while practicing responsible tourism in their daily operation activities and generate a healthy revenue. Tourism development in South Africa is guided by the key principles of Responsible Tourism stipulated in the 1996 White Paper.

* South Africa was the first country to include Responsible Tourism in its national tourism policy, the 1996 White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa.
* Goodwin (2007) noted that Responsible Tourism is about “making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit.” Responsible Tourism requires that operators, hoteliers, governments, local people and tourists take responsibility, take action to make tourism more sustainable.

A study by Spalding and Parrett in 2019 ( Figure 1) illustrates the use of a mangrove tourist attraction that has not received much attention although it provides a high-value, low impact use of important ecosystems. It is noted that the location of mangroves has developed this tourist attraction. In comparison some areas of mangroves have been lost in recent decades due to aquaculture, agriculture and urban expansion. It is likely that mangrove tourism attracts tens to hundreds of millions of visitors annually and is a multi-billion dollar industry (Spalding *et al*., 2019: 1).



Figure : Mangrove recreation activities

 Source: Spalding et al., 2019

Responsible tourism implies:

* “*Tourism industry responsibility to the environment, through the promotion of balanced and sustainable tourism, and a focus on environmentally based tourism activities;*
* *Responsibility of government and business to involve the local communities that are in close proximity to tourism infrastructure and attractions, through the development of meaningful economic linkages;*
* *Responsibility of tourists, business and government to respect, invest and develop local cultures, and protect them from over-commercialization and over-exploitation;*
* *The responsibility of local communities to become actively involved in the tourism industry, to practice sustainable development, and to ensure the safety and security of visitors;*
* *The responsibility of both employers and employees in the tourism industry, both to each other and the customer (responsible trade union and employment practices); and*
* *Responsible government as well as responsibility on the part of tourists to observe the norms and practices of South Africa”*.

The United Nation World Tourism Organisation define Sustainable Development as the type of "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities".

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

**Sustainable tourism should:**

* “*Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.*
* *Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.*
* *Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation*”.

**TOURIST ATTRACTIONS OVERVIEW: CASES FOR THIS MISG2024 PROBLEM**

**Manyeleti Nature Reserve**

Manyeleti – meaning ‘place of stars’ in the local language, Shangaan

* It is sharing fenceless borders with the Kruger National Park, Sabi Sands and the Timbavati Game Reserve.
* It is +-23 750 hectares.
* Co-managed by Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) and Manyeleti CPA (Integrated Management Plan).
* This site 100% land claimed by CPA.
* The attraction (protected site) has family-friendly accommodation facilities and activities:
* 34 self-catering, en-suite bungalows of which 19 are newly renovated
* 20 caravan camping areas with communal ablution facilities
* Two large sparkling pools and a small tuck-shop
* The 60-bed dormitory with cooking facilities (Mainly caters for guests who are attending the Environmental Education Programme offered by Manyeleti Nature Reserve).
* Renowned for Big 5 sightings
* Park road network is suitable for all vehicles
* Guided open vehicle game drives and guided bush walks available
* Picnic area
* Braai facilities, etc.

**Mariepskop Nature Reserve**

* It is located along Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, Acornhoek West.
* It is +- 13000 hectares.
* It is managed by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE).
* Co-management Agreement between MTPA and Blyde-04 CPA (Integrated Management Plan).
* It is 100% land claimed by Blyde -04 CPA.
* Facilities in the attraction:
* 7 waterfalls
* Viewpoints
* Picnic spots
* Hiking trails
* 2000 plant species
* 2 self-catering chalets
* Braai facilities

**Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve**

* It is located in Bushbuckridge opposite Injaka Dam.
* It is +- 7000 hectares.
* It is co- managed by MTPA and CPA (Integrated Management Plan).
* It is 100% land claimed by Sisonke CPA.
* Facilities and activities:
* Main office
* Staff accommodation
* Bush walks
* Birding
* Ridges
* Indigenous plants, and many more

**Injaka Dam**

* It is located in Bushbuckridge opposite Bushbuckridge Nature Reserve.
* Hectares (to be confirmed)
* It is managed by the Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation.
* It is not under land claim.
* It is regarded as a national key point. The buffer zone surrounding the dam is 100% claimed by Injaka Watervaal CPA.
* Memorandum of Agreement in place between DWS and BLM for the dam management. Resource Management Plan is in place.
* Facilities and activities:
* DWS offices
* Fishing
* Boating and many more

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**Extra reading:**

It is understood that UNESCO lists sites on the World Heritage Site list with an attempt to preserve these sites owing to their great cultural importance (Smith 2016). Regrettably, the listed sites that have gained universal value tend to attract more tourists, not forgetting that these sites are often fragile in nature and cannot handle the impact of increased tourism. In addition, the growth of tourism is sometimes very inconvenient for the host community. For instance, such status increases the pollution in the area, restricting access to the city centre and increasing traffic congestion. Therefore, sustainable cultural tourism management of the Site becomes important to ensure that it will be preserved for future generations, and it will remain accessible to the host community whilst enhancing the experience for visitors.

The clip presents the positive and negative impacts of tourism on Venice Island. In addition, the clip also presents strategies/techniques that Venice Island tourism management is planning to implement with a hope to achieve sustainable cultural tourism management of the Site.



Figure 1: Video \_Venice City to become the first city in the world to charge tourist entry fee.

Source: Reuters (2023).

Reuters. 2023. Venice prepares to charge tourists for entry [YouTube video]. Available at: <https://youtu.be/3DYHns8gav8> [Accessed: 17 December 2023].

Smith, M.K. 2016. *Issues in Cultural Tourism Studies*. 3rd edition. Oxon,UK: Routledge.

**Bali set to tackle overtourism and misbehaving visitors with a cap on arrivals:**

* <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/news/bali-tourists-quota-system>
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeRhOo-GXtQ>
* <https://eturbonews.com/enough-already-bali-to-start-capping-number-of-tourists/>