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The commodification of mountaineering

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Abstract

This article argues that mountaineers, with their long-term relationships with specific regions and peoples, complex motivations structuring their presence and activities, and lengthy history as a distinct cultural community, represent what ecotourism is striving for. They are a group of socially aware, self-reflective travelers who are proactive in the growth and restructuring of the mountain experience. Mountaineering literature is used to describe the changes in the sport and in the mountains, and to illustrate some of the ways in which cultural values, social meaning, and physical reality change when the human/nature relationship is commodified. Assessing consequences of a commodified alpine experience raises further questions as to the efficacy of ecotourism development models, and achievability of "sustainable" tourism.

Résumé

Le merchandisage de l'alpinisme. Les alpinistes ressentent bien les buts de l'écotourisme, vu leurs rapports avec certains peuples et régions, leurs motivations pour structurer leurs activités et leur histoire comme communauté culturelle.

pour structurer leurs activités et leur histoire comme communauté culturelle à part. Ce sont des voyageurs qui sont au courant des problèmes sociaux, qui ont pris conscience d'eux-mêmes et qui participent activement à la restructuration de l'alpinisme. Leur documentation décrit les changements dans le sport et les montagnes ainsi que les changements dans les valeurs culturelles, la signification sociale et la réaliste concrète qui ont lieu quand on change le rapport gens/nature en une marchandise. On pose des questions au sujet des modèles de développement de l'écotourisme et la possibilité de réaliser un tourisme «soutenable».



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Keywords

mountaineering; ecotourism; alpine ecotourism; sustainable tourism

Mots-clés

alpinisme; écotourisme; écotourisme alpin; tourisme soutenable

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