

## Book Review

**Buckley, R. (Ed). (2006). *Adventure Tourism***

**\*Francis Lobo**

*Adventure Tourism* is edited by Ralf Buckley, International Centre of Ecotourism Research (ICER), Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia. The book has contributions by: Carl Cater, ICER; Ian Goodwin, Montana State University (MSU); Rob Hales, ICER; Jerry Goodwin (MSU); Claudia Ollenburg, ICER; and Julie Schaefers, formerly with the US Forestry Service. The contributions from the authors stem not only from their qualifications but also from their expertise in: climbing and mountaineering; kayaking, squirt boating and climbing ice; whitewater kayaking; rural land use and tourism impacts; equestrian and farm tourism; and mountain biking respectively.

The book has 27 chapters. The first three are devoted to introducing the text to reader; a review of adventure recreation research; and explanations of the case study approach that is used in the following chapters. The text then breaks out into 23 categories where opportunities are available around the globe. These categories are: river journeys; whitewater kayaking; whitewater rafting; seakayaking; sailing; expedition cruises; diving; surfing; Helsinki and snowboard; cross-country skiing; ice-climbing; mountaineering; hiking and bushwalking; horse riding; mountain biking; off-road safaris; wildlife; aerial adventures; other sectors and issues; and adventure destinations. Chapters 24 to 26 deal with the world adventure capital of the world, dangerous places and places to play; cross-case analyses, such as safety procedures for helsinking and heliboarding; and product patterns taking into account 14 categories ranging from place to icon sites.

Ralf Buckley concedes that adventure has different meanings to people – some with fear, others with boredom. As the reviewer and participant in adventure recreation, I have experienced intense self-fulfilment. He deals with adventure tourism as a product with a “relatively well-defined and recognizable sector of the tourism industry”. Available as retail-level commercial products they are exciting and at the active end of the passive-active continuum in an outdoor environment. Thus, the aesthetic and escape experiences of just being present in such an environment become secondary albeit important to participants. Two aspects make adventure tour products – activity and location. Place as a dimension of the adventure experience forms the basis of a tour. Activities such as in water-based environments allow for diving and snorkelling and range of others. Likewise, negotiating through dense terrain such as the forests of the Amazon contain elements of adventure.

It is believed that adventure tourism is big business. There are an infinite number of activities that permeate the market and as well as fragment it. People get to know what adventure tours through word of mouth, special meetings, events, and simply by searching the net. Viewing the field with an open mind, potential participants are faced with mind-boggling choices. So the Editor and his contributing authors have sought to synthesise the extensive literature, categorise the activities, and then proceed to analyse the broad picture of tour offerings. Herein lies the rationale of the book – to remedy the gap: “...by providing analyses of over 100 real, retail-level, individual adventure tour products featuring a range of activities in various parts of the world” (p.xvii). The volume is compiled from diverse written and electronic documents, personal observations and experiences. Tour products are changing. The authors have therefore frozen the written word in time, with the proviso that the book provides a start for those seeking customized attention to their adventure needs. The volume scores highly on the synthesis and availability of the tour product.

Ralf Buckley defines adventure tourism as:

...guided commercial tours where the principal attraction is an outdoor activity that relies on features of natural terrain, generally requires specialized sporting of similar equipment, and is exciting for tours clients (p.1).

In qualifying the definition above, it is maintained that clients themselves may not operate the equipment as they may be passengers, for instance on a dogsled, white water raft or a tandem parachute harness.

The paucity of adventure research literature is acknowledged. The focus has been on accidents and safety and the field of adventure tourism has been dealt with texts on ecotourism, outdoor recreation and park management. Therefore guided commercial tours using specialised equipment for excitement affords tourism students a leading ledge for further research. A framework citing variables listed in the case studies generates issues for examination and evaluation. Take for instance the river journey along the Yangbi River operated by Earth Sciences Expeditions (ESE). The structure of the tour cites the following variables: place, operator, activity, equipment, accommodation, statistics, access, community, experience, environment, safety and marketing. This landscape view of the river journey provides rich research probes for the committed student. The book has an array of analyses of over 100 real, retail-level, individual adventure tour products of activity in various parts of the world. This material covers nearly 400 pages of text material involving at least 82 case studies. The extent of potential researchable area is massive.

I agree with the authors that this book that is intended for researchers, lecturers, and students engaged in the academic analysis of adventure tourism is an important asset and reference to each category mentioned above. As the reviewer, I have delayed in making comment for nearly one year. This is because I have been travelling to South Africa, Mauritius, China, Korea, the UK, Greece, Turkey and Iowa, US. I have read the book on my journeys and shown it to academics and lecturers of tourism. They have all endorsed the book and would have a copy in their personal and institutional libraries. I have also shown the book to many who have ceased paid employment, have the time and seek something exciting. Most of these people with abundant free time have welcomed the publication as a catalogue of choice for desired excitement.

In view of the positive remarks that the book has generated, I commend the writers of *Adventure Tourism* and in particular Ralf Buckley. It may well pass off as a seminal piece of work with future editions and updates in the offing.

\*Professor  
School of Marketing Tourism and Leisure  
Edith Cowan University  
Email: F.Lobo@ecu.edu.au