

Wildlife Guide Business Training

<http://naturetourism.tamu.edu>

Nature & Wildlife Tourism Program Impact

Relevance

- Nature Tourism is an increasingly important element of community & economic development, especially for rural Texas. Texas landowners, especially ranchers have been hit with changing economies & drought and nature tourism provides options for diversification of income.

Nature Tourism Program Description:

- Helping communities, landowners, businesses and travelers with nature based recreation & tourism skills, planning, development, management and marketing. We provide educational programs for the public, private business-both for profit and non-profit, landowners, and community leaders. Nature Tourism is a term used to



Making a Difference

encompass the broad range of natural resource based recreation and tourism activities.

Adventure – Agritourism – Fishing- Hunting

The Wildlife Guide Training Program

- In 2009 the Corpus Christi Convention and Visitor Bureau identified guide training and certification and a critical element of economic growth in tourism for the coastal bend communities. The CVB requested the assistance of the Texas AgriLife Extension Nature Tourism program to develop and deliver a specialized Wildlife Guide Training Program and Exam that could be used by the CVB to certify guides. They used the certification as a basis for including guides in a million dollar marketing campaign for nature tourism in Corpus Christi.

Response

- Extension utilized input from a volunteer group of professional guides, and review of international training and certification programs. This information was combined with knowledge gained from

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previous Extension work in development of nature tourism and guide training programs. A new specialized program for Wildlife Guides of the Texas Coastal Bend was developed to fit the needs of the Corpus Christi CVB so that they could certify & market guides. Content includes wildlife and plant identification, tourism, small business management and local history and wildlife habitat management. A combination of live workshops and online training are offered & delivered as a fee based program.

Results

- Approximately 100 individuals representing almost approximately 90 businesses have participated in the program with approximately 55 passing and obtaining certification to date. Guides have reported they have utilized knowledge gained from the training to providing added services by providing identification and information on a greater variety of wildlife, more meaningful communication with a wider variety of clientele and a better connection to tourism industry services.

Economic Impact

Fishing, Hunting and Viewing Wildlife, had a **\$15.8 Billion** dollar impact in Texas (Source USFWS 2006).

- *Travel & Tourism Spending:* (\$63.2 billion in 2011), increased by 10% from 2010 to 2011.
- *Jobs:* Travel-generated employment (545,300 jobs in 2011) increased 2.8% in Texas from 2010 to 2011.
- *Demand:* According to Source Strategies Inc., room demand in Texas increased by 9.0 percent from 2010 to 2011. Visitor air arrivals on domestic flights increased by 2.7 percent. This follows increases of 6.3% and 3.8%, respectively, for the (2009-10)

period. Source: http://www.deanrunyan.com/doc_library/TXImp.pdf

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