

Given that the topic here is *Civic Tourism*, we've tried to provide this forum with a genuinely civic design. Here are a few things that distinguish this meeting from many conferences, all of which we hope will further our work together:

Conversations

Place-making within a tourism context is not easy. More than a few tough issues frame this approach to tourism development – carrying capacity, authenticity, exploitation, and interpretation, just to name a few. These are difficult issues that deserve serious investigation.

Therefore, except for a few presentations, most sessions are two-person conversations with the audience. Each presenter will provide a *brief* overview of his/her program or research. The goal is to raise the issues that underpin place-based tourism as quickly as possible, so you have ample time to engage in a thorough discussion.

Public Research

In that sense, our get-together is really several days of research, rather than advertisements for a given approach or project. We believe most of us are attending because we *know* place-based tourism is a viable approach; we don't need to be convinced. However, we also realize that the goals and values that define "place" and "tourism" are sometimes in conflict, and so we want to explore this tricky terrain with others. Scholars have been doing so for years; it's time to embark on a more public conversation.

Deliberation, Not Debate

To further our conversations it helps to step outside our "tourism boxes." If people have strong feelings about tourism, they tend to fall into one of two camps: either those who believe the industry is a great economic tool that can do no wrong, or those who think tourism is a homogenizing juggernaut that destroys towns. Let's admit there is a degree of legitimacy to both views and move on to a third place – conceptualizing tourism as a vehicle to help communities enhance their economy *and* preserve the things residents cherish. It's not "either/or" but "both/and."

Conference Design

The schedule is designed so the sessions build on one another. The agenda moves from the natural environment Friday morning, to the cultural landscape later that afternoon, to public engagement on Saturday.

Within that structure, each of the three program clusters begins with a main Conversation, followed by four Concurrent Conversations that explore the topic in detail, then all presenters come together for a Roundtable Conversation. The goal is to arrive at principles for each cluster, and eventually bring these findings to the Concluding Conversation at Saturday's lunch.

Do we intend to "define" Civic Tourism, answer every question, or articulate a vision for every community? Of course not. But we do hope to uncover the values and identify the priorities that point toward possibility – and encourage us to continue the conversation.



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