GROW WITH MT. HUANGSHAN OBSERVATORY

UNWTO Mt. Huangshan Observatory on Sustainable Tourism Development

Mt. Huangshan Scenic Area Administrative Committee (HSAC)
Jingming CHENG        Nov. 11 2021
International Conference on Tourism Management and Sustainable Development in Heritage Sites (jointly held by UNWTO, UNESCO, the former National Tourism Administration and Anhui Provincial Government) was held in Huangshan City. At the conference, Mt. Huangshan Observatory on Sustainable Tourism Development at a World Heritage Site was awarded. HSAC is responsible for the daily affairs. Later, HSAC has set up the Sustainable Destination Research and Communication Center (SDRCC) to ensure the staff and expenditure for the monitoring.

According to UNWTO’s suggestion, Mt. Huangshan Administrative Committee (HSAC) signed the cooperative agreement with Sun Yat-Sen University, to commonly build Huangshan Station of UNWTO Sustainable Tourism Observatories (HSAC provides Sun Yat-Sen University with 200,000 RMB and the relevant monitoring conditions each year).
Intention 1. Serve for the strategic decision-making

01 How to clarify the objective
Balance the inter- and intra-generation equity, coordinate the relationship between the resource environment and the social economic development, how to find the dynamic balance among environment, society and management performance

02 How to deal with problems
How to deal with the problem on the natural resource conservation and the ecological environment management objective, how to respond with the cultural conflict and the social transition
Intention 2. Improve the capacity building

With the requirements of the modern governance system and capacity building proposed by the Chinese government, HSAC need various platforms to raise the staff’s sustainable consciousness.

By training to improve professional personnel’s sustainable working capacity

By participating in the project, give them chance to enter the international sustainable field
Intention 3. Join in the international system

Joining in the international system, we could analyze the relevant statistics and apply the relevant conclusions from the global aspect, then get the more broad theoretical perspective and the more obvious practice effect.

“In 2008, the International Conference on Tourism Management and Sustainable Development in Heritage Sites, UNWTO Secretary-general pointed out, the heritage sites have been the key cultural and tourism destination. The cultural tourism would grow most rapidly. With the increase of the tourist number, the economy benefit and the enormous pressure to the heritage sites would come together. Only the positive cooperation within the industry globally, could help to find the approach to the tourist disorder and out-of-control in heritage sites, and realize the comprehensive target of the scientific protection, the systematic management and the sustainable development in heritage sites.”
Intention 4. Display the image of responsibility

“As not only the world mixed heritage site, but also the cradleland for reforming of tourism, Mt. Huangshan explores the sustainable development method, which is our responsibility and has the reference significance for the peer.

“In 2008, the International Conference on Tourism Management and Sustainable Development in Heritage Sites, Director of the former National Tourism Administration pointed out, the world heritage sites in China bear the oriental civilization and the magnificent landscapes, which are the most important resource support in China’s tourism development. As the outstanding representative, Mt. Huangshan – a world mixed heritage site, the venue for the conference, insists on the sustainable development mode to integrate the sustainable development, the cultural inheritance and the environment protection together. The mode has been the model for the world heritage sites in China to promote the harmony and unity of the tourism management and the sustainable development.”
PLAN 1. Make Clear the Purpose of Setting up the Observatory

Minimize environmental impact and maximize economic output (By the UNWTO and UNESCO)

2008

Optimize social impact and tourist experience

2010
PLAN 2. Incorporate into the Overall Layout

**Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations: A Guidebook (2004)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Requirement</th>
<th>Social and Culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Formulate Destination Sustainable Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Destination Planning and Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Enhance Wellbeing of Host Communities</td>
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<td>✓ Improve Tourist Satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Healthy and Safety</td>
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<td>✓ Sustaining Culture Assets</td>
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<td>✓ Guide on Tourist Experience</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Resource and Environment</th>
<th>Tourism Economy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Protection of Valuable Natural Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Managing Scarce Natural Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Controlling Impacts of Tourist Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Designing Products and Services</td>
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<td>✓ Community Participation in Tourism</td>
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<td>✓ Sharing Tourism Dividends</td>
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Guilin: Focus on Monitoring Social and Cultural Impact.
Zhangjiajie: Focus on Monitoring economic dividend impact generated by tourism development.
PLAN 3. Focus on Own Needs

Except the regular monitoring, at the beginning of each year, HSAC and Sun Yat sen University agree on the annual additional special monitoring contents in combination with the last year’s work report and this year's work plan of Huangshan.

In the past 10 years, a total of 18 special monitoring items have been added:

1. Heritage Value and National Identity;
2. Huangshan Emerald Valley Community Case;
3. Huangshan Brand Image Perception;
4. Social Responsibility and Brand Awareness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises;
5. Analysis of the Current Situation of Tour Guide;
6. Waste Disposal System;
7. Tourist Education System;
8. Tourists' Spatiotemporal Behavior;
9. Perception of Life Quality of Community Residents around Huangshan;
10. Big Data Analysis of Tourism Emotion;
11. Earthcheck and Sustainable Development of Huangshan Mountain;
12. Travel Conditions and Travel Restrictions of community residents around Huangshan;
13. Construction Status of Huangshan East Gate;
14. The Practice of Community Responsibility Behavior of Tourism Small Business Operators;
15. Livelihood Capital of Residents in Huangshan Buffer Zone;
16. Distribution Status and Improvement of Billboards and Garbage Cans;
17. Huangshan Tour Guide Interpretation and Tourist Experience;
18. Resilience of Tourism Enterprises Under COVID-19
PLAN 4. Attached Great Attention to Both Vertical and Horizontal Connections

Highlighted a variety of requirements of Mt.Huangshan’s different competent authorities over the two goals: Resource and Environment Protection and Economic and Social Development

Balanced different demands of stakeholders within the whole range of Mt.Huangshan
Ten Years of Exploration (What the Observatory has done)

1. Established the data system

- 10 Years Monitoring Report
- 600,000 Words
- Entered into the UNWTO data system
- Provided HSAC relevant decision-making reference (including Five-Year Plan, Annual Work Plan and Relevant Thematic Creation Actions).
2. Deepened theoretical research

10 Years
7 Research Papers

- "Cultural Worldview and Cultural Experience in Natural tourism Sites" was published in *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* in 2020;

- "Understanding Aesthetic experiences in nature-based tourism: the Important Role of Tourists' Literary Associations" was published in *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management* in 2020;

- "The Impact of Internet on Distribution channels of tourism destinations -- a case study of Huangshang" was published in *Tourism Journal* in 2012;

- "Effective Environmental interpretation at Chinese natural attractions: the Need for an Aesthetic Approach" was published in *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* in 2013;

- "The Effects of Tourism Impacts on Satisfaction with Tourism between Native and non-native Residents" was published in *International Journal of Tourism Research* in 2014;

- "Tourist Experience of Nature in Contemporary China: A Cultural Divergence Approach" was published in *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* in 2015;

- "Sustainability and Nature based mass Tourism: Lessons from China's Approach to the Huangshan Scenic Park" published in *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* in 2015;
3. Promoted policy innovation

HSAC Led the drafting of the national criteria of *Guidelines for Sustainable Development of Tourist Attraction (GB/T41011-2021)*.

**INCLUDE:**

- **Sustainable Development of Tourist Attractions:** Follow the principle of inter-generational and intra-generational equity, dynamically balance different stakeholders’ legitimate demands, the development model for tourist attractions to realize the maximization on comprehensive benefits of tourism as well as minimizing the negative effects);

- **The Overall Principles:** Goal orientation, Problem orientation and Results orientation);

- **Main contents:** Resource and environment protection management, economic and social development promotion, tour experience and reception services, sustainable management and operation), etc.
### 4. Extensive mobilization and dissemination to stakeholders

<table>
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<tr>
<th>6,700 questionnaires</th>
<th>Interview 70 stakeholders</th>
<th>Organize more than 10 education activities</th>
<th>Hold 5 public publicity activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Distributed questionnaires to tourists, communities and practitioners, etc.</td>
<td>About 10 from business departments of HSAC, 10 from Huangshan Tourism Group Company and its subsidiaries and enterprises, 20 from Huangshan Tourism Co., Ltd. and its subsidiaries and enterprises, and neighboring communities including 16 administrative villages, 2 forest farms and their competent departments -- Huangshan District Government and 6 towns</td>
<td>Sun Yat-sen university assigned altogether more than 120 personnels of Ph.Ds, masters and undergraduates to tirelessly carry out the education activities themed &quot;go into Mt.huangshan heritage site - to renew tourism sustainable development&quot;, including small lecture halls for hotel tourists, small lecture halls for rural communities, small lecture halls for community schools)</td>
<td>Explain to tourists and practitioners what sustainable development of tourism is and how to support sustainable development of tourism through posters, signatures, Q&amp;A and other ways in tourist distribution center</td>
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FUTURE PLAN 1. Improve the mechanism

Do a clear Five-year plan connecting with the Development Plan of Mt.Huangshan 2021-2025

Detail work procedures
Including the annual monitoring plan consultation mechanism, the annual monitoring report review mechanism, and the sharing of intellectual results mechanisms, etc.

Improve the organizational system
- Continue to straighten out the working relationship between HSAC and Sun Yat-sen University.
- Clarify a business director of HSAC to Jointly serve as the head of Observatory with a well-known professor of Sun Yat-sen University, and SDRCC Office is responsible for the daily affairs of the observatory.

Strengthen information release
- Report to different level of competent authorities
- Organize drafts for media
- Disclose to the public
FUTURE PLAN 2. Strive for more resources

More Public Resources and External Intellectual Support

Expansion of the Work Platform

Such as: incorporating Mt. Huangshan Observatory into the "Huangshan Dialogue" system—a high-end international forum to be built by HSAC entrusted by Huangshan Municipal Government, which will provide policy and financial support.

Integrating scientific research forces

Currently, HSAC has implemented monitoring cooperation with Tsinghua University over designated heritage management, and Nanjing University for ecosystem protection, despite monitoring sustainable tourism development in cooperation with Sun Yat-sen University.
FUTURE PLAN 3. Fully stimulate vitality

Expand the circle of friends externally and strengthen cohesion internally.

External activity is reflected in the information sharing among partnerships
- Joined in 12 international organizations
- Established exchanges and cooperation systems with 10 foreign friendship parks
- Led the founding of China Mountain Tourism Alliance, with 43 members of high-level tourist attractions from 23 provinces

the experience of the Mt.Huangshan Observatory should be fully promoted

External vitality is reflected in the division and coordination between designated brands

Mt. Huangshan is not only a World Mixed Heritage Site, but a World Biosphere Reserve and a Global Geopark. Generally, the three brands have common requirements for protection, management and development, but with different perspectives and different focuses. Mt.Huangshan Observatory should actively seek cooperation and support from other professional departments.
FUTURE PLAN 4. Expand publicity channels

Currently, it’s planed to cooperate with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China and the Department of Culture and Tourism of Anhui Province to promote the Guidelines for Sustainable Development of Tourist Attractions (GB/T41011) in an all-round manner and through multiple channels.

Currently, it’s planed to cooperate with CCTV to include Mt.Huangshan Observatory in the promotional content of "World Heritage in China"; cooperate with Xinhua News Agency to promote Mt.Huangshan through its boutique column of "East and West Questions"; cooperate with Huangshan Daily and Huangshan Magazine to publish special articles.
THANK YOU!
WELCOME TO MT. HUANGSHAN!