

# Global Travel & Tourism Partnership (GTTP) Research and Award Competition 2015

## SUSTAINABLE ADVENTURE TOURISM: PARAGLIDING JAMAICA:

“From Sea to Sky- an off the beaten activity, off the beaten track”



amadeus



Carlson Wagonlit Travel



onata



Hertz

HRG



starwood  
Hotels and  
Resorts

Travelport  
Redefining travel commerce

## AUTHORS

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I am **Janielle Lyn**, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year student of the University College of the Caribbean reading for a degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management. It is with great interest that I have undertaken this research as it allows for a firsthand view of the premises taught in class. Paragliding lies in my alley of becoming a pilot as it is an amalgamation of my two passions; Aviation and Tourism.

My name is **Rowena Jones**, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year student of the University College of the Caribbean currently pursuing a degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Undertaking this research has allowed me to have a greater interest in a relatively unknown sport in Jamaica. As an aspiring tourism professional, I was also able to see the importance of sustainability and how to apply its principles in all my career endeavors in the near future



Miss **Johnnel Smith**-Tourism Lecturer and Head of the Tourism and Hospitality Unit

# Research Topic

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An investigation into Hard Adventure Tourism in Jamaica-Paragliding; An environmentally friendly and sustainable adventure tourism activity and possible differentiating experience for Jamaican tourists.



Source: J. Vonduelzn



Source: J. VonDuezln

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# RATIONALE

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**P**aragliding in Jamaica is indubitably a prime example of Sustainable Adventure Tourism on the island, as the entire premise of the sport is based upon risk, travel and exploration. Most often coupled with trekking, paragliding presents a dual opportunity for this research to purport that of all the adventure tourism activities in Jamaica, paragliding represents one of the most adventurous and sustainable activity as it has the least impact on the environment. Utilizing the wind, a natural, renewable resource, leaving nothing but footprints and adding to the sun, sea and sand adage an entirely new 's'-sport; Paragliding is not only adventurous but very sustainable. This activity takes nothing but pictures of the environment while showcasing the beauty of the island from the best view/angle... in the air.

Sustainability means people have employment, environments are protected, and visitors have a positive impact on the destination they are visiting. Sustainability involves actions on the production and on the consumption side of Travel & Tourism. In essence, our actions and activities should have such little impact on the environment that it will not compromise the ability of future generations to enjoy. Paragliding is an activity, powered largely by wind energy and does not hinder or cause any damage to the environment. The wind-a natural renewable resource- allows any pilot/flier to soar through the air like a bird.

Extremely popular in Europe and other parts of the world, Jamaicans and visitors to the island have been paragliding for many years. Below the clouds and amidst the birds, you will see several paragliders launching, flying or landing on a typical Sunday morning in Kingston, St. Elizabeth and Montego Bay. This amazing activity is still very much unknown to many Jamaicans and destination marketers as we seldom look above but straight ahead. Therefore, we saw it suitable to explore this new, budding niche adventure tourism and explore its potential to attract more tourists to Jamaica and still remain sustainable.

# INTRODUCTION

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Imagine yourself floating aimlessly and peacefully over 5000 feet in the air, the winds kissing your face gently and the birds pass along with a chirp as if to say “hello, good to see you again”...such freedom, such bliss; now imagine yourself doing this in the land that represents the ultimate freedom and bliss-the land of “*One Love, One Heart*”, in Jamaica “*Getting Alright*”!

Paragliding is the simplest and most serene way of fulfilling your dream of free flight. A paraglider is an inflatable fabric wing. It is easy to transport, easy to launch, and easy to land. The pilot sits in a comfortable harness or seat suspended by Kevlar lines from the canopy and steers the glider with two controls. With a paraglider, you can fly, soaring upwards on currents of air. Paragliders often stay aloft for hours, climb to cloud base, and may go cross-country.

Paragliding, like most adventure sports, is as safe or as dangerous as you want. Safety comes by receiving instruction from a certified professional and use of appropriate equipment. New pilots must be willing to learn gradually, use good judgment and have a mature attitude. If you do, then you can paraglide until you're 90 years old!

Paragliding does not include a free-fall or jump off of a cliff. Your launches and landings are slow and gentle and, once in the air, you will probably be surprised by how quiet and peaceful the experience is. Even if you have a fear of heights, it will rarely be a factor, since there is no sensation of falling. Paragliding is about finesse and serenity, not strength and adrenaline. However, you want to be in good physical condition as the learning process especially in a tropical climate requires quite a bit of stamina due to heat and dehydration.

Paragliding Jamaica is operated by a German pilot and instructor named Jurgen Von Duszeln. He and his Jamaican wife began flying in Jamaica over 14 years ago. In 2001, Claus Vischer, a German paragliding instructor, assisted them in finding a suitable launch site on Skyline Drive near Kingston. It was probably the first time that paragliding was witnessed here. The couple began flying because they loved the sport so much and have been flying in other countries. The more Jurgen flew in Jamaica, the more popularity and recognition the sport began to receive both locally and internationally. He began offering his services to groups of tourists to the island and he also began inviting pilots from around the world to come to Jamaica for this experience. Since then, every year persons from all over the world have been coming to experience paragliding in Jamaica. He has hosted **tourists** from Germany, Croatia, Poland, and the Americas. Paragliding is a very popular activity in South America, the United States and all of Europe. However, due to extreme winters experienced by some of these countries, they are not able to paraglide all year round however in Jamaica, we enjoy 365 days of sunshine.

Paragliding Jamaica caters to **three** groups of people, inclusive of domestic and international tourists:

- 1) the already established certified pilot, who have flown in other countries and comes to Jamaica for flying;
- 2) persons visiting Jamaica and want to learn or have the experience of paragliding/free flight;
- 3) Jamaicans who would love to learn the sport by becoming paragliding students and have the experience of a lifetime

From your first steps of 'groundhandling' to altitude flights from the Malvern site, it will take approximately 10 (ten) lessons to become competent. Whether you complete your training in consecutive days, weekends or spread it out over half a year, it's all up to you, although the more concentrated your training, the better.

Jurgen the instructor schedules the first introductory session. This will give you a better feel for the mechanics and dynamics of the sport. On a typical weekend, once there is 'good weather' you can see the paragliders taking off from one of their launch sites on Skyline Drive (above UTECH) or in Malvern, St. Elizabeth. Tandem flying allows visitors or novices to fly strapped unto an experienced pilot. This gives many tourists the experience of flying without training to become a student or pilot.



Picture showing Groundhandling-Source: J.Vonduelzn

Paragliding Jamaica is a group of free-flight enthusiasts, who would love to make the sport of paragliding more popular in Jamaica. They would be happy to get more people involved in this fantastic out-door activity and breathtaking way of life. You might think that this is only for adolescent 'dare devils', think again, paragliding is for everybody: men and women alike, as well as for the young and the young at heart. There is **no** additional stress on the environment, costs or other fees to get you up into the sky, once you have lifted off; it's just you and nature. This is definitely something to put on your bucket list.



Picture Showing a Bulgarian Pilot who visited Jamaica for flying in 2014 Souce: J.Vondulzn

This niche of sustainable adventure tourism in Jamaica has room for expansion. It is not as featured as the other adventure tourism attractions in Jamaica, therefore it is still able to implement even more sustainability measures as it expands. It has tremendous potential to attract many more adventure tourists to the island. It is also an activity that many persons wouldn't imagine doing or would even be found in Jamaica thus showing the **diversity** of our product offerings and that we too have something for every and anyone.

In summing, we have chosen to shine the spotlight on this sustainable adventure tourism activity because of the following unique selling points:

- Many of the activities of Mystic Mountain, Dolphin Cove, Island Routes and other adventure activities/tour companies in Jamaica have been duplicated throughout the rest of the Caribbean many times. Paragliding in Jamaica represents an activity that is unique to the English speaking Caribbean, only Cuba and Dominican Republic has paragliding as an active hobby.
- Our unique, mountainous topography and favorable weather conditions lend itself to better, safer and great flying experiences in Jamaica.
- It has very limited or no destruction to the environment
- It diversifies our product offerings, as it is not something you would easily associate with Jamaica but yet it can be found here.



Source: L. Grant

*"Once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return." - Leonardo da Vinci –*

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

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**Adventure Tourism** - a type of niche tourism, involving exploration or travel to remote, exotic or possibly hostile areas

**Anglophone** - of or relating to speakers of English.

**Fauna** - the animals of a given region or period considered as a whole.

**Flora** - the plants of a particular region or period, listed by species and considered as a whole.

**Habitat** - the natural environment of an organism; place that is natural for the life and growth of an organism.

**Mass Tourism** - a form of tourism that involves tens of thousands of people going to the same resort often at the same time of year

**Niche** - a distinct segment of a market.

**Pollution** - the introduction of harmful substances or products into the environment.

**Species** - a class of individuals having some common characteristics or qualities; distinct sort or kind.

**Sustainability** - the quality of not being harmful to the environment or depleting natural resources, and thereby supporting long-term ecological balance.

**Sustainable Tourism** - Development that meet the needs of today without compromising the ability of people in the future to meet their needs.

**XC** - Cross Country

**ASL**-Above sea level

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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The researchers will embark on research methodology such as:

Collecting primary sources of information including-

- Face to face interviews with pilots and visiting pilots
- Emailed interviews with adventure tourists
- Questionnaires with tourists (both domestic and international)

Using Secondary Sources of information including:

- Statistics
- Articles
- Books
- the Internet

This will foster a fair, impartial and completely practical examination of adventure tourism in Jamaica worldwide and especially this sustainable adventure tourism niche.

# AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

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- ❖ To showcase this new and growing niche of sustainable adventure tourism in Jamaica
- ❖ To support the growth of adventure sports as a supplementary tourism product and to propagate awareness of 'sustainable' tourism development in this area;
- ❖ To improve tourism development on both the national and local scale
- ❖ To showcase the diversity of Jamaica and its attractions

# JAMAICA - a bevy of history, culture and attractions

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Jamaica is the third largest island country of the Greater Antilles situated in the Caribbean Sea. Jamaica's geographical location is 18° 15' N and 77° 30' W, 145 km South of Cuba and 191 km West of Hispaniola. Within the Caribbean, Jamaica is the fifth largest island country. Jamaica, in square kilometres, is 10,990 in area and is home to tallest point in the Anglophone Caribbean.

First inhabited by the Tainos, the island was named Xaymaca which translates to 'Land of Wood and Water' or 'Land of Springs'. In 1494, the Tainos welcomed Christopher Columbus to our shores and this marked the ensuing period of Spanish rule up until its capture in 1655 by the British. Within this period of British rule, Africans, Chinese, Germans, Indians, Lebanese among others came to the island and as such giving rise to the current national motto, 'Out of Many People'. It was not until midnight, August 6, 1962 that the Union Jack was lowered and the Jamaican National flag raised for the very first time, which marked the end of over 300 years British colonial rule and Jamaica's independence.

Jamaica's topographical nature is one of mountainous inland surrounded by a narrow coastal plain. These mountains include that of the Blue Mountain range ( a UNESCO World heritage site) whose highest point stands at 2256m (7402 ft) above sea level. The mountain range affects the weather experienced by



Figure 1. Simple topographic map of Jamaica source: [www.commonswikimedia.org](http://www.commonswikimedia.org)

the island. Rainfall in the island is both convectional and relief. Portland experiences more rainfall than Kingston due to its location on the windward side of the mountain range. Winds blow in a North-easterly direction across the island and are forced to rise upon meeting the inland mountain range. Winds blow from the sea by day and the land by night.

Like many other countries, Jamaica has turned to using its natural resources to support an industry that is its 2<sup>nd</sup> largest earner of Gross Domestic Product. So important is Tourism to the country that one in every four Jamaican is linked to the industry. The phrase sun, sea and sand stands resolute in the heart of persons everywhere, yet the island has so much more to offer. Culture, food, religion, literature, film, cuisine, history and weather are just some of the aspects to which tourists are also attracted. From its music being home of Reggae and birthplace of Robert Nesta Marley to its place in international athletics, home of Usain Bolt, the island boasts a tremendous track record unsurpassed by none.

# Sustainability and Sustainable tourism

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According to the United Nations World Trade Organization, sustainable tourism is one that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

Sustainability alludes to the fact that an activity will be able to continue forever. It must therefore blend the three pillars seamlessly of social, environmental and economical.

- **Environmental Sustainability:** Environmental sustainability refers to living within the constraints of our natural resources. To truly live in environmental sustainability we need to ensure that we are consuming our natural resources, such as materials, energy fuels, land, water...etc, at a sustainable rate. Some resources are more abundant than others and therefore we need to consider material scarcity, the damage to environment from extraction of these materials.
- **Economic Sustainability:** Economic sustainability requires that a business or country uses its resources efficiently and responsibly so that it can operate in a sustainable manner to consistently produce an operational profit. Without an operational profit a business cannot sustain its activities. Without acting responsibly and using its resources efficiently a company will not be able to sustain its activities in the long term.
- **Social Sustainability:** Social sustainability is the ability of society, or any social system, to persistently achieve a good social well being. Achieving social sustainability ensures that the social well being of a country, an organisation, or a community can be maintained in the long term.

Taking these three pillars of sustainability further if we only achieve two out of three pillars then we end up with:

- **Social + Economic Sustainability = Equitable**
- **Social + Environmental Sustainability = Bearable**
- **Economic + Environmental Sustainability = Viable**

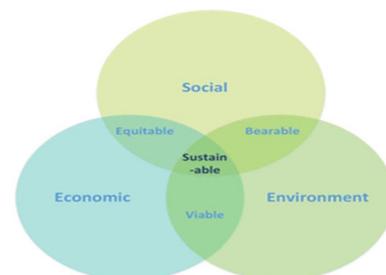


Figure 2: Sustainability Venn Diagram Source:UNWTO Global Report on Adventure Tourism

# ADVENTURE TOURISM - An Overview

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Adventure Tourism is a type of niche tourism, involving exploration or travel to remote, exotic or possibly hostile areas. According to Adventure Travel Trade Association, Adventure Tourism may be any tourist activity, including two of the following three components: a physical activity, cultural immersion and engagement with the natural environment. Adventure tourism activities require significant effort and involve some degree of risk (real or perceived) and/or physical danger.

A growing niche...

Adventure tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the travel industry, an economic area which is booming in general. From 2009 to 2010 the adventure tourism sector saw 17% growth.

And according to the ATDI report, one company

that provides a booking engine services for adventure companies noted that the number of travellers accessing tour operator websites to book trips increased from 8% to 18% between 2010 and 2011, demonstrating that interest continues to grow year on year. With so much potential for growth, it's important to ensure that the industry develops sustainably and doesn't detract from the ability of future generations to enjoy these activities.

Moreover, adventure tourism is innately linked to the natural world that supports it, so it's in a unique position to set the trend going forward in terms of conservation and sustainable development. Adventure tourism not only *can* do more to encourage people to conserve the natural environment by fostering an appreciation of the natural world, but to ensure its own survival as an industry it *must* protect the environment that provides the stage for so many of these activities.



Figure 3: Adventure Tourism activities.  
Source: [www.tablebaydiving.com](http://www.tablebaydiving.com)

# Hard and Soft Adventure Tourism

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Adventure tourism activities are divided into two categories; hard and soft. Classification is highly debated and identification is done based on primary activity and level of risk involved. Commercial Tour operators usually offer soft adventure activities as extreme tourists have highly specialized needs. Extreme adventurers spend less money, because they have their own equipment, may not seek commercial support to practice the activity, seek out locations that are difficult to access, and often camp or provide their own transport (Paragliding fits this description).

Hard adventure: this includes trekking, climbing (mountain, rock and ice) and caving. These activities are high risk and require a high level of specialized skill. Unsurprisingly, these represented small percentages of the population but still uncovered a sizable market. The trend over the past three years indicates that the number of hard adventure trips has held steady, at around 2% of the population. However, respondents in Latin America and Europe indicated that they intended to take a hard adventure trip for their next vacation.

Soft Adventure: The number of soft adventure departures represents a substantial percentage of trips worldwide. Interestingly, compared to North Americans and Europeans, Latin Americans are taking the most adventure trips at 35% of total outbound travellers. On average, 25% of international trips taken from all three regions are soft adventure trips. Soft adventurers are an important market for destinations, gear companies and tour operators. They are more likely to try different activities and destinations than hard adventurers. Around 43% of Europeans indicated that for their next vacation, they would take a soft adventure trip.

### Classification of Adventure activities

ACTIVITY	TYPE
Archaeological expedition	Soft
Attending local festival/fairs	Other
Backpacking	Soft
Bird watching	Soft
Camping	Soft
Canoeing	Soft
Caving	Hard
Climbing (mountain/rock/ice)	Hard
Cruise	Other
Cultural Activities	Other
Eco-tourism	Soft
Educational programs	Soft
Environmentally sustainable activities	Soft
Fishing/fly-fishing	Soft
Getting to know the locals	Other
Hiking	Soft
Horseback riding	Soft
Hunting	Soft
Kayaking/sea/white-water	Soft
Learning a new language	Other
Orienteering	Soft
Rafting	Soft
Research expeditions	Soft
Safaris	Soft
Sailing	Soft
Scuba Diving	Soft
Snorkelling	Soft
Skiing/snowboarding	Soft
Surfing	Soft
Trekking	Hard
Walking tours	Other
Visiting friends/family	Other
Visiting historical sites	Other
Volunteer Tourism	Soft

Source: ATTA (2013)

# Characteristics of Adventure Tourism

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**Resilience:** Due to the passionate and risk-taking nature of adventure tourists, destinations that have suffered significant setbacks in traditional tourism due to political destabilization or natural occurrences, appeal greatly to these types of tourists. Travel companies therefore create packages for these types of travellers who are seeking a break from the mainstream tourist experience.

**Attract high value customers:** With the variance of trip length, luxury, activity levels, destination and distance from a traveller's starting point, adventure operators have reported an average of US\$3000 spent per person.

**Encourage sustainable practices:** Adventure Tourism companies and policymakers adhere to sustainable environmental practices. This is because without a pristine natural environment, tourists would go elsewhere.

**Support local economies:** Avoids leakages by ensuring that direct income is maximized upon by local vendors.

## Adventure Tourism versus Mass Tourism

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Adventure tourism and Mass tourism vary in many different ways; according to the UNWTO adventure tourism is not mass tourism. Adventure tourism relies on economies of scale, replication of standardized products and reduction of costs. Mass tourism centres on the sun, sea and sand strategy and normally takes place in warm climates to facilitate activities which are geared to mass tourism.

# Who is the Adventure Tourist?

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Adventure travelers often seek unique or new travel destinations and activities. It is often believed that a percentage of this sector is willing to accept limited tourism infrastructure with the promise of an exceptional, authentic experience. Given their penchant for exploring new destinations and seeking new experiences, they are frequently coveted by emerging destinations at the early stages of tourism development and also in more mature destinations that have protected and/or developed appropriate product. They are fairly evenly split male to female, even within in category of “hard” adventure sports. Soft adventurers skew slightly more female, but not as much as other types of travellers who are predominantly female (62.3%). (Adventure Tourism Market Study 2013)

The average age of an adventure traveller is 35 (again, this may seem low from the perspective of adventure travel tour operators, however, this number reflects the overall adventure traveller, not just consumers of tours), slightly younger than the “other” traveller who is on average 42. Adventure travellers are more likely to be single or married; less than 10% are divorced or separated. They are also more highly educated than other types of travellers, with 70% of hard adventures having postsecondary education and 63% of soft adventurers having post-secondary education. 47% of other travellers have a two year degree or higher. Considering these demographic trends, it is unsurprising that adventure travellers also have higher levels of household income.

According to the Adventure Tourism Market Study 2013, 57% of adventure travellers were male and 43% were female. The 2013 study further revealed that 37% of adventure travellers have at least a four-year degree, 11% have a professional degree, and the average individual income of an adventure traveller is USD 46,800 per year. Interestingly, while many hard adventure travellers clearly view international travel as important (75% have valid passports), among soft adventure travellers, only 56.5% have valid passports. From this we can theorize that among soft adventurers, many are engaging in activities

domestically.

### **What do adventure travellers want when they plan a vacation?**

Hard adventure, soft adventure and other travellers place a high importance on similar things when planning their vacations: time to be with friends, time to be with family, relaxation, exciting new activities and learning about different cultures. However, adventure travellers place a higher importance on exploring new places, time to be in nature, meeting and engaging with local cultures and pushing their physical limits. Not surprisingly, most adventure travellers are now turning to the Internet to research their trips.

When researching a destination, most travellers will go directly to Google with generic search terms such as the destination name. Over 30% visited the destination's official website; this may be because it appeared high in the search results. Around 20% used social media to learn about the destination either by reading a blog post or viewing a friend's photos on a social network. The survey results reveal that Facebook dominates the social networking space, and targeted ads would best be placed here. Secondary to the Internet, travellers routinely consult friends and family for opinions and suggestions on destinations.

Adventure tourists assess:

1. Adventure Activities (Risk/Satisfaction) Adventure: by definition, involves an element of risk. Past literature on adventure travel has suggested that location can be an indicator of adventure based on the perceived or real riskiness involved in that place. However, this survey finds that the perceived level of risk associated with the activity performed while on vacation is much more significant to travellers. Adventure travellers rated the level of risk associated with their activities higher than other types of tourists, but did not extend this assessment of risk to their destinations. Perhaps adventure travellers are aware of the safety of their activities but less sensitive to destination safety; this is an area for further research.

2. Expenditure and Length of Stay of Adventure Travellers Adventure travellers indicated that their average trip was between 7 and 8 days. They indicated that their next trip would be longer and also involve more challenging activities and far-flung destinations. On the other hand, while other travellers (whose average stay was the same, at 7.5 days) indicated that their next trip would also be longer, over 12% respondents shifted from the “other” category to adventure category based on their selection of activity

### **How Much Are They Spending?**

On average, hard adventure travellers spend less per trip than soft adventure travellers. Anecdotally, it is known that hard adventurers are also less likely to use a tour operator for their trip, so this could explain part of the difference in spending.

Average Spending per Trip Excluding Airfare for Hard and Soft Adventure Travellers:

	Hard	Soft
European Travellers	\$500	\$525
North American Travellers	\$500	\$914
Latin American Travellers	\$375	\$861

Hard adventurers do however spend more on gear than people engaging in other types of travel.

# Current Adventure Tourism Activities in Jamaica

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## Black River Safari

Located on the Southern coast of the island within the parish of St. Elizabeth lies the Black River safari. A pitch black, American crocodile infested river where tourists are able to see not only the crocodiles but also the three species of mangrove, Thatch palms, Royal palms and freshwater swamp forest which are home



Figure 4: Picture of Black River Safari Source: [www.negriltransportation.com](http://www.negriltransportation.com)

to over 100 species of birds such as egrets, herons, ducks and snakes. A one and a half hour boat ride up Jamaica's largest navigable river through Jamaica's largest wetland area, the Black River lower morass amongst running commentary from the captain on both ecology and history of the area create an unforgettable experience for those who are brave enough to venture there.

## Chukka Adventures

This adventure tour operator located in Montego Bay and Ocho Rios offers tourists the chance to choose from a list of activities such as horseback riding, zipline canopy tours, river tubing, ATV safaris and dog sleigh tours.



Figure 5 Picture of Chukka Adventures activities source: [www.goodhopejamaica.com](http://www.goodhopejamaica.com)

## Cliff Diving

Located in Negril, Rick's Cafe boasts one of the prime spots to go cliff diving on the island. With cliffs up to 35 ft high, thrill seekers are afforded the opportunity to take the plunge into the crystal clear water below.



Figure 6: Picture of Rick's Cafe located in Negril source [www.things-to-do-in-jamaica.com](http://www.things-to-do-in-jamaica.com)



Figure 7: Picture of Cliff Diving in Negril from [things-to-do-in-jamaica.com](http://things-to-do-in-jamaica.com)

## **Cockpit Country**

The 500 square miles area located in Western Jamaica, spanning three parishes, is one of the most geologically diverse areas in the country. Consisting of pits and valleys where rainwater have seeped through the permeable limestone; below the surface are caves, streams and rivers. Cockpit Country is a prime area for hikers, birdwatchers, plant watchers, scientists and those who dare to traverse in what is referred to as one of the most inhospitable regions. Adventure tours offered in the Cockpit Country include Burnt Hill Nature Walk, Quashie River Sink Cave Exploration, Rocky Fort Cockpit Trek, Dromily Cave Tour, McKenzie's Farm Riverside Picnic, Bunker's Hill Cave and Picnic Combo

## **Dunn's River Falls**

The 55m high, 180m long waterfall is a popular tourist attraction where persons are allowed the opportunity to climb the terraced falls and use slippery boulders as waterslides. The 1 1/2 hour long climb is often dangerous so a hand-holding chain is normally guided by a tour guide up the falls.



Figure 8: Picture of Dunn's River Falls from [www.dunnsriverfalls.com](http://www.dunnsriverfalls.com)

## Hiking/bird watching/ATV tours/ camping in the Blue Mountains

Multiple tours are located within the Blue Mountain ranging from bicycle tours, eco-tours, bird watching and hiking. The mountain is home to eight hundred species of endemic plants, the world's second largest butterfly, *Papilio homerus* and two hundred species of birds.



Figure 9: Picture of Biking in the Blue Mountain;  
Source: [www.jamaicagatewaytravels.com](http://www.jamaicagatewaytravels.com)

## Mystic Mountain

In the heart of Ocho Rios lies Mystic Mountain where persons may try their hand at a bobsled ride in a rainforest, zip lining through the natural flora and fauna or the Rainforest Sky explorer which takes you 700ft above the Jamaican rainforest giving a once in a lifetime view above the tree tops.



Figure 10: Mystic Mountain attractions; Source:  
[www.jaital.com](http://www.jaital.com)

## **Rafting**

Inclusive of both bamboo rafting which takes place on the Rio Grande, Martha Brae, White River, Rio Bueno, tourists have the opportunity to experience the flora and fauna of the island from the viewpoint of a rafter. The relaxing scenery of rushing waters allows the adventure tourist the opportunity to view the island's gems from a unique standpoint.



Figure 11: Picture of Bamboo rafting; Source [www.cometojamaica.com](http://www.cometojamaica.com)



Figure 12: Picture of White water rafting; Source [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)

# What makes an adventure tourism destination sustainable?

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The Annual Adventure Tourism report cites these ten (10) areas that are considered when ranking destinations sustainability

- a) **Sustainable Development** - The judges use unemployment statistics and environmental legislation
- b) **Safety** - Tourists are naturally more attracted to countries that are considered safe. Countries with low levels of corruption, no travel warnings and a high level of transparency score highly in this category.
- c) **Natural Resources** - This category is graded on population density, the length of the coastline, and the ratio of coastline to total area of the country.
- d) **Health** - Countries with a high number of hospital beds and a high number of doctors per inhabitant score highly in terms of health. This is important to sustainable travel as a country with a good healthcare system is more able support adventure travellers.
- e) **Entrepreneurship** - This is essential to sustainable development as new businesses and start-ups must have the right environment in order to thrive.
- f) **Adventure Activity Resources** - The study focuses on the presence of forests, grasslands and drylands as indicators of adventure resources.
- g) **Humanitarian** - The human development of a country is judged by factors such as life expectancy and the presence and activity of NGOs and charitable institutions.
- h) **Infrastructure** - This includes both hard infrastructure such as roads, airports, lodgings and trails, as well as soft infrastructure such as the availability of maps and information, and the number of tour operators.
- i) **Cultural Resources** - This is calculated by counting the number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites and protected areas in a country.
- j) **Image** - In this study, a country's image is based on the opinion of a panel of adventure travel experts who all have more than 5 years of experience in the adventure travel industry. They use their wealth of experience to judge how desirable the country is considered as an adventure tourism destination.

# PARAGLIDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

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“Tourism can only prosper if it engages local populations by contributing to social values such as participation, education and local governance”

Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Secretary General, World Tourism Day 2014

Paragliding is a sport of assisted human flight. A paraglider is a motor-less, inflatable wing, made of rip-stop nylon and fixed with Kevlar lines that secure a pilot's harness. The pilot sits in the harness and launches the vehicle by foot, running off inclines, hills, or mountains. He or she steers the wing by weight shift and application of brakes that changes the shape of the rear edge of the wing. This flying device is made to soar on wind currents. The record for staying aloft is over 11 hours, and the distance record is 186 miles (300 km). The average flight for the everyday enthusiast is about 3 hours, with heights reaching 15,000 feet (4,500 meters).

One of the advantages of paragliding is that the entire wing and harness fold up into a 30 lb (13.6 kg) backpack. This makes it easy for a pilot to hitch-hike back from a flight, or to

transport his wing by

checking it in as baggage on a

bus or even an airline.



# HOW IS PARAGLIDING MORE SUSTAINABLE THAN OTHER ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES?

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Paragliding uses renewable resources to aid in its operation with the exception of the equipment. Unlike other activities currently located in Jamaica, paragliding requires no previous preparation of the site, only that it is accessible to paragliders and has sufficient wind.

Permanent setup such as ziplines requires clearing of land to ensure placement of poles to support zipliners. This damages the surrounding environment as birds and other species of animals are displaced from their natural habitats. Displacement of animals from their habitats disrupts ecosystems and food webs and by extension the energy flow throughout the ecosystem. Noise pollution can also be created as the hooting and hollering from zipliners scare animals. Ziplines and chairlifts only allow visitors to follow prescribed routes that allow for no deviation to support exploration.

Fumes from boats damage surrounding wildlife and increases the level of carbon dioxide in the surrounding atmosphere. Constant voyaging through the wetland area may cause damage to the mangroves' roots as the propellers could get entangled. To avoid this, sections of mangroves would have to be cleared. To be socially sustainable, this attraction would have to be constantly developed as boredom will eventually set in.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Equipment Required</b>	<b>Type of Pollution</b>	<b>Impact on environment</b>	<b>Mobility</b>	<b>Power Source</b>	<b>Launch Sequence</b>
Paragliding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wing</li> <li>• Harness</li> <li>• Helmet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footprints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Folds into 30lb backpack</li> <li>• Pilot follows free route</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thermal air</li> </ul>	Foot launch off a hill or slope
Skydiving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airplane</li> <li>• Parachute</li> <li>• Harness</li> <li>• Helmet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air</li> <li>• Noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fumes</li> <li>• Footprints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot follows free route after exiting airplane</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas for airplane</li> <li>• Gravity</li> </ul>	Free falling from an airplane
Zip-lining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helmet</li> <li>• Stainless steel cable</li> <li>• Anchored poles</li> <li>• Harness</li> <li>• Pulley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deforestation for initial setup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zip-lines prescribe route</li> <li>• Permanent setup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gravity</li> </ul>	Falling along the zip-line from higher point
Parasailing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parasail</li> <li>• Tow rope</li> <li>• Boat or land vehicle</li> <li>• Harness</li> <li>• Helmet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fumes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parasailer follows route of vehicle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas for vehicle</li> <li>• Wind resistance</li> </ul>	Parasail inflates due to wind resistance provided by vehicle
White Water Rafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kayak/boat</li> <li>• Oar</li> <li>• Helmet</li> <li>• Life Jacket</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footprints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kayak must be transferred via vehicles over long</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water current</li> </ul>	Water carries kayak/boat from initial point

				distances		
Hang Gliding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hang Glider Sailcloth</li> <li>• Triangle Control Frame</li> <li>• Helmet</li> <li>• Harness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footprints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glider cannot be folded</li> <li>• Pilot follows free route</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thermals</li> <li>• Ridge Lift</li> <li>• Mountain Waves</li> <li>• Convergence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• foot-launching from a hill</li> <li>• tow-launching from a ground-based tow system</li> <li>• Aero-towing (behind a powered aircraft)</li> <li>• powered harnesses</li> </ul>
Mountain Biking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mountain Bike</li> <li>• Protective Gear (helmet, knee pads etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tyre track</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bike needs to be transported over long distances by vehicle</li> <li>• Cyclist follows biking trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Energy-peddalling</li> </ul>	Cyclist provides initial energy and is aided by gravity downhill

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# Paragliding in Jamaica

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CERTIFICATION	P-0	Student	for pilots
	P-1	Beginner	
Ranking:	P-2	Novice	
	P-3	Intermediate	
	P-4	Advanced	
	P-5	Master	

Our research revealed that a pilot is ranked based on the aforementioned.

## Flying Sites

### Skyline, Kingston

Our 'house site' in Jamaica is located in Kingston, above *Hope Estate* next to the viewpoint on Skyline Drive, a mountain ridge 1,500 ft above sea level (ASL). This launch is on the lee side of the 7,500 ft high Blue Mountains and usually well sheltered from easterly trade winds. Due to the lush vegetation, thermals tend to be soft (2-4 m/s) most of the time. The site offers all year round flying with tremendous height on good days! Due to high humidity levels in the tropics, cloud base tends to be low between 3,500 and 5,000 ft ASL.

**Launch:** drive-up from *Papine*.

Note: the launch is short and steep, and the site is NOT a beginner's site. For visiting pilots/tourists, we recommend intermediate skill levels because of a restricted landing field.

Confidence in reverse launching is an asset!

**Landing:** several potential launching sites are located in Kingston. The regular launch site is the sporting oval of *UTECH*. This site can normally be made in a 'sled ride'

**Retrieval:** 10 min on paved road from bottom to top.

## **John Crow Hill - Malvern, St. Elizabeth**

2,000ft ASL, vertical: 1,800 ft in vicinity of Malvern and Treasure Beach, south coast. Easy site with ample landing space, XC for beginners, beach in 15 km distance, friendly country people

**Launch:** drive-up, 2 km W of Malvern, 15 km N of Treasure Beach. Marl road to site accessible with normal vehicles. Gentle slope next to road, suitable for beginners; Good thermaling site. Launchable from SE to W.

**Landing:** 200 ft ASL (above sea level) at the bottom of the hill on cattle land. Farmers are generally very co- operative. (Special thanks to Mr. F. Dunkley for offering his meadows as landing site. Note: always make sure NOT to land on vegetable plots of local farmers!)

**Retrieval:** 20 min on paved but narrow road from bottom to top.

## **Pen Hill - Kirkvine, Manchester**

2,600 ft ASL, vertical: 1,300 ft - in the cool hills of Manchester. This is a new site which needs further exploration.



Pen Hill launch (*#5 map*) *J.VonDuelzn*

**Launch:** 2,600 ft ASL, drive-up with heavy 4x4, facing S-SE, can be exposed to strong trade winds.

Landing: various landing options at the bottom of the hill at 1,300ft ASL. In light wind Kirkvine Sports Club best option. Careful with high tension wires spanning across 200 ft below launch!

**Retrieval:** 30min on bad road

## Other Flying Sites

Spur Tree South, Manchester

**2,100 ft ASL, vertical: 1,000 ft - this is a site which is only flyable in westerly conditions.**

**Access only with 4x4**

Cabbage Hill, St Thomas

**2,900 ft ASL, vertical: 2,200 ft - this is a new site which has often strong cross wind conditions on launch.**



# How can tourism destinations become sustainable?

## Benchmarking Chile

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When the Adventure Tourism Development Index was launched in 2009 Chile appeared at number six in the list, rising to 3rd place the following year, and finally topping the list for developing countries in the most recent study. Throughout this three year period it has remained the only Latin American country in the top ten for either developing or developed countries.

This shows evidence of a trend of improvement and advances in Chile that looks set to continue into the future. As Shannon Stowell, president of ATTA, remarks *“It is encouraging to see Chile’s rise to number one; their stable economy, **wealth of adventure activities** and dedication from their tourism boards on nature-based travel, indicate an understanding of the long-term value of well-managed adventure travel.”*

Chile even holds its ground when compared to the country that tops the list for sustainable development among developed countries, Switzerland, demonstrating that it’s more than capable of playing in the big leagues. It’s worth noting that Chile ranked even higher than Switzerland with regard to Natural Resources and Image as judged by industry experts, and only scored slightly less in terms of Adventure Resources.

In 2011 tourism represented a 2.9% direct contribution to Chile’s gross domestic product, and this is expected to rise by 3.9% a year between 2012 and 2022. As long as Chile continues to succeed with its implementation of sustainable tourism, there’s no reason to believe that both Chileans and adventure travellers can’t continue to reap considerable benefits into the future.

Jamaica can use Chile's example for developing their adventure tourism niche by diversify their adventure activities and targeting this growing and viable niche more earnestly. It will take collaborative effort and commitment from industry stakeholders, partners and communities.

## ADVENTURE TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN CHILE

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### **Hiking the Paine Circuit**

The Paine Circuit around the famous Torres del Paine Massif is one of the most striking trekking routes in the world. The Circuit is the perfect adventure for trekkers who crave the ultimate challenge in Torres del Paine and want to be part of a unique group experience with expert guides in one of the world's most stunning national parks.



Figure 13: White water rafting source  
[www.cascada.travel](http://www.cascada.travel)

### **Rafting the Maipo River**

Raft through the rushing Maipo River surrounded by gorges and a towering mountain backdrop on this water adventure.

### **Cycling through Torres del Paine National Park**

This trip takes you through Torres del Paine's highlights and lets you enjoy the best of the park's flora and fauna on nature walks, treks and cycling excursions with the local expert guide. EcoCamp



Figure 14: Cycling in Torres del Paine  
Source:[www.patagoniaworld.it](http://www.patagoniaworld.it)

Patagonia's domes, immersed in the park's wilderness, provide cozy accommodation each night after dinner and wine with fellow travellers in EcoCamp Community Domes.

### **Snowboarding in Valle Nevado**

An entire day of excitement and spectacular views skiing in Valle Nevado, a ski resort in the Andes Mountains with powdery slopes and surrounding glacier valleys. At 7am the adventure starts by driving towards the Andes mountains. Leaving behind the city streets and follow a beautiful

going up to the views are white Andean stretching horizon in clear



winding road ski centers. The breathtaking - mountains across the blue skies.

Arriving in Valle

Figure 15: Skiing in Valle Nevado from [powdertavel.com](http://powdertavel.com)

Nevado the

excitement begins! Around midday, a break is taken for lunch and visitors enjoy the culinary delights of Don Giovanni restaurant. Then we head back for an afternoon on the slopes, which cover 2,000 acres.

### **Horseback Riding in the Andes**

Ride deep into the heart of the Andean Mountain range on this horseback excursion through natural scenery and discover a hidden glacier. Extend your day trips to the El Morado area by continuing on to the Colina Hot springs, set deep in the Andes Mountains, for an evening soaking in natural hot springs.

# PARAGLIDING IN CHILE

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Iquique is a paragliding mecca, a unique combination of weather patterns and geography. A steady Pacific breeze cooled by an ocean current, blows against the coastal mountain range. The coastal mountains span thousands of miles throughout nearly the entire Pacific coast of Chile, reaching its most spectacular shape in the northern part of the country.

Farther inland, the enormous Andes Mountains and volcanoes create a rain shadow effect that is responsible for the existence of the Atacama Desert, the driest desert on Earth. Endless sand and rock-covered mountains of the coastal range plus constant sunshine and a steady breeze create a perfect thermal generator while the closeness of the ocean provides a calming effect on an otherwise very strong desert flying environment. There are no trees or other vegetation, which means landing nearly anywhere outside of the city.

Additionally, Iquique's miles-long beaches provide many safe landing options. It doesn't rain in the Atacama. Flying season in Iquique never ends. The best time for long cross country flights is during austral spring, which is October to December.

# Who is in charge of Sustainable Tourism?

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## **UNITED NATIONS WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION**

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the leading international organization responsible for promoting responsible, sustainable and universally accessible Tourism. The UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide. Jamaica stands as one of the 156 member countries as well as 6 territories and over 400 affiliate members.

Within the Jamaican context, the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment is the governing body of Tourism. They are on a mission to enhance and transform Jamaica's tourism product, while ensuring that the benefits which flow from the tourism sector are increased for all Jamaicans. Under the purview of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, agencies such as the Jamaica Tourist Board, Tourism Product Development Company and the Tourism Enhancement Fund, fulfil different mandates but ultimately solidifies Jamaica's position on being a sustainable destination.

## **JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD**

The mission of the Jamaica Tourist Board is to develop and market the tourist industry so that Jamaica remains the premier Caribbean tourist destination. The Jamaica Tourist Board is the premier marketing and promotion engine for the island and does this through the uniqueness and diversity of the island which they promote worldwide. This speaks to the effort of making Jamaica economically sustainable as without this agency considerable losses would be accrued by the government.

## **TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (TPDCo)**

The mission of the Tourism Product Development Company is to facilitate the diversification, development and improvement of the tourism product, utilizing an experienced and qualified staff to enhance visitor experience by building consensus and strategic alliances with industry stakeholders in order to engender socioeconomic growth.

Being at the forefront of sustainable development in Jamaica, the Tourism Product Development Company aims to:

- Develop plans and programmes for the improvement of resort areas
- Assist with the improvement of the infrastructure and physical environment of resort towns
- Encourage investment in tourism-related activities
- Establish, inspect and monitor the standards of all entities operating in the tourism sector
- Create, organize and conduct training programmes which will facilitate human development in the tourism sector

This agency's mandate therefore speaks to the economic and social pillars of sustainability by ensuring that the social well-being of our tourism product is well maintained through human development while ensuring that resort areas are aesthetically pleasing. Economically, investment ensures that profit is maintained from the product for years to come.

## **TOURISM ENHANCEMENT FUND (TEF)**

The "Tourism Enhancement Act, 2004" allows for

- A Tourism Enhancement Fee of US\$20.00 to be charged to incoming airline passengers and US\$2.00 to be charged to cruise passengers.

- The monies collected are paid into a dedicated Tourism Enhancement Fund.

The Tourism Enhancement Fund was established as a result of the Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development. TEF's mandate speaks to promoting growth and development in the tourism sector, encouraging better management of environmental resources in Jamaica, enhancing the country's overall tourist experience, and providing for the sustainable development of the tourism sector.

# FIELD WORK: A FIRSTHAND TOUR

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As a part of the study, the researchers decided to undertake an authentic experience of paragliding. This proved not only exciting and fun but also allowed for a firsthand view of Tourism in action. It is here that the researchers realized that one type of Tourism does not act in isolation of another as we had set out to partake of the Adventure Tourism niche but ended up participating in community Tourism as well.

The day began in the wee hours of the morning with the journey to Malvern where the researchers took part in tandem flights from the John Crow Hill. After this activity, we landed safely and were just off the coastline of Treasure Beach. We made a stop at the local corner shop, while there we refueled with beverages and brushed up on our domino playing skills. We continued to the Shakespeare Cottage in Treasure Beach which was our accommodation for the night. We experienced the epitome of community tourism with its friendly people and homely ambience. Swimsuits were immediately the new attire as we took a plunge in the beach, only a few steps away. Surfing was a common sight as the waves were something to write home about.

Wet hair and flip flops greeted the courteous staff of the Jack Sprat restaurant, where the local seafood steamed its way into our hearts and more importantly our stomachs. Not to be outdone was the Reggae music being piped into the background complimented by the Caribbean Sea crashing against the outdoor deck. As the ethnic fatigue began to descend, a few steps were all it took to make it back to the Cottage where serenity lulled the researchers into a well-deserved sleep.

Spectacularly, the entire community of chickens joined in a chorus and awakened the researchers to a brilliant sunshine that penetrated the tranquil atmosphere. A few steps in a

westerly direction brought a rustic, cozy, spectacular breakfast restaurant- Smurf's into plain view, where coffee mugs arranged themselves in military fashion awaiting the fresh coffee or tea, and a plethora of delicacies plastered the wooden board that was the menu. Discussions were to be had over the cuisine that greeted our eyes all produced by local farmers.

The researchers made it back to the Cottage and then we departed but not before making a stop at the Treasure Beach Sports Park and Academic facilities where a local pilot was doing some ground handling of his paraglide. It should also be said that this space is an ideal landing spot for those who desire a landing closer to the beach (with the proper permission of course).

Up the hill the researchers went, as Treasure Beach disappeared over the horizon but not out of exciting memories.

# Pictures of our ADVENTURE-

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From Sea to Sky- Treasure Beach/Malvern, St. Elizabeth



Source: J.Lyn/R. Jones

And we're off...Gone with the wind!!!



## Accommodation

Our adventure tourism activity benefits the community...

**(Shakespeare Cottage, accommodation for the night)**



Source: J.Lyn

From Sky back to sea: At the beach after Paragliding...



Source: R. Jones

Dinner



Dinner Time- Source: J.Lyn/R. Jones

## Breakfast



## More Flying after Breakfast



Source: L.Grant/J.Lyn

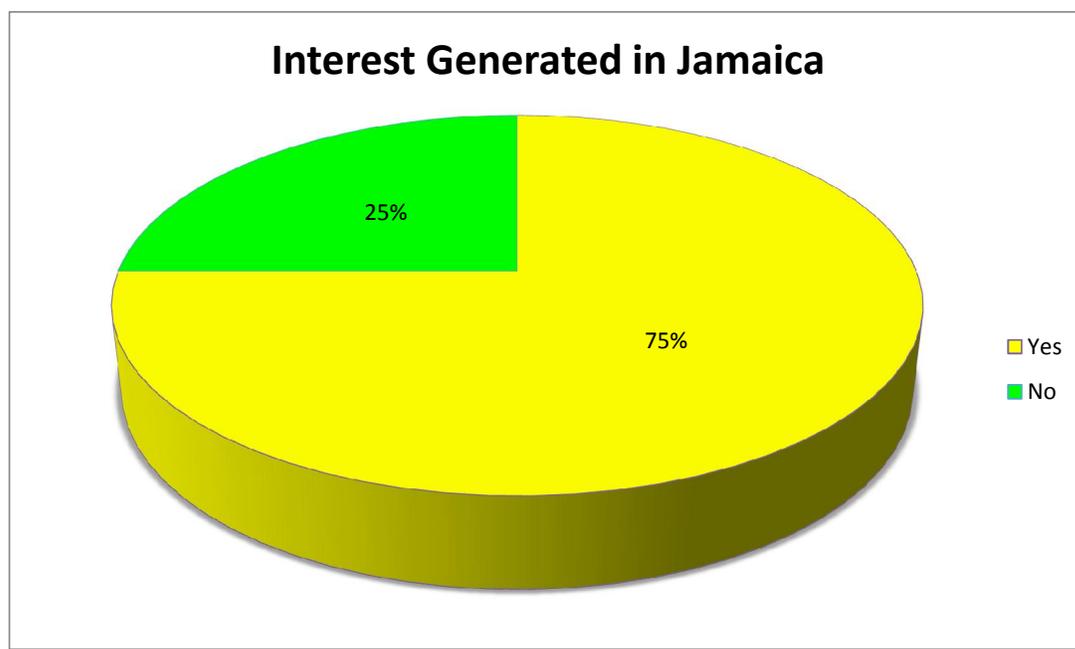
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# Presentation of data

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## Chart 1.

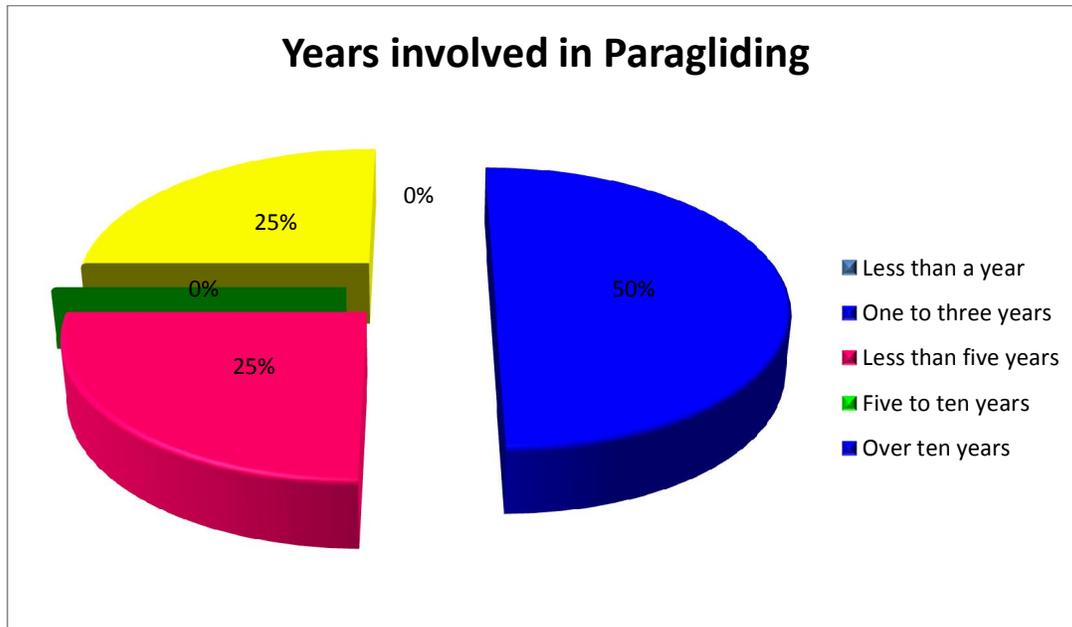
### PIE CHART SHOWING WHETHER WAS GENERATED IN JAMAICA



As seen in the above figure, the majority of local pilots' interests were first generated in Jamaica through various means. Most respondents said that interest was garnered through engagement with Jurgen Von Dueszlen who is the instructor for Paragliding Jamaica. Previous interest in other flying sports such as skydiving were shown by 25% of the respondents and 100% of respondents had had an interest in some sort of flying sport previous to becoming interested in Paragliding.

**Chart 2.**

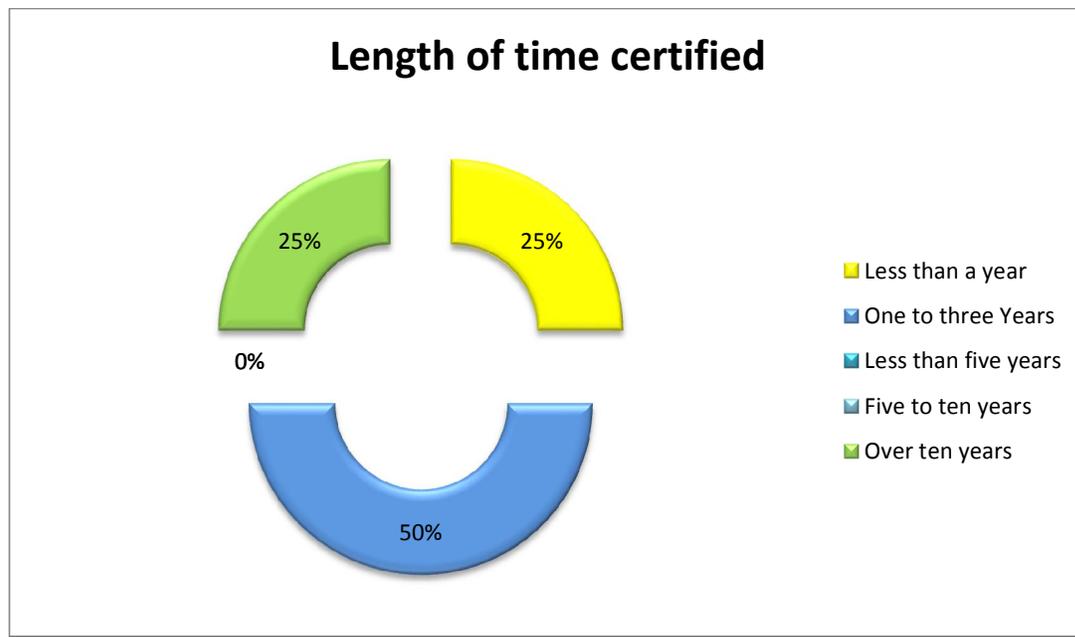
**PIE CHART SHOWING NUMBER OF YEARS INVOLVED IN PARAGLIDING**



So as to gauge the experience of respondents regarding the sport, whether as a student or pilot or for fun, the question of how long they were involved in paragliding. As shown by the diagram above, 50% of respondents have been involved for one to three years which shows that a majority of the respondents have been involved for a moderate period of time in comparison to the 25% who have been involved for over 10 years. This shows that there is room for growth in the sport as persons become more intrigued as time progresses. This speaks to the sustainability of the sport.

**Chart 3.**

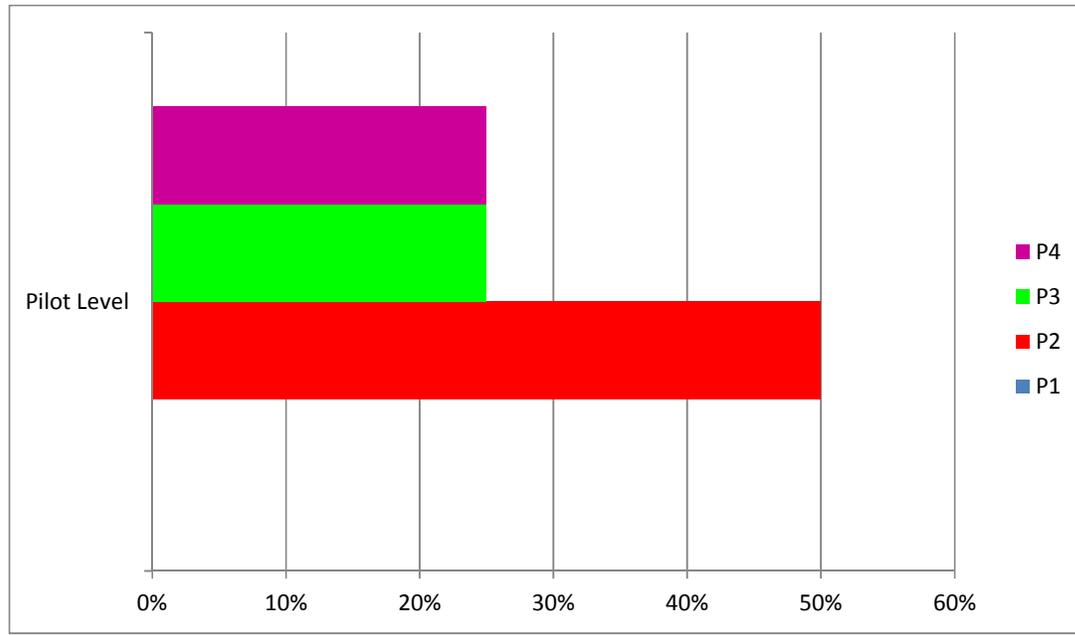
**PIE CHART SHOWING LENGTH OF PILOT CERTIFICATION**



It came as no surprise when the results of the duration of certification matched the length of time involved in the sport. As a part of training and safety procedures, paragliding pilots need to be certified to match their level of competency.

**Chart 4.**

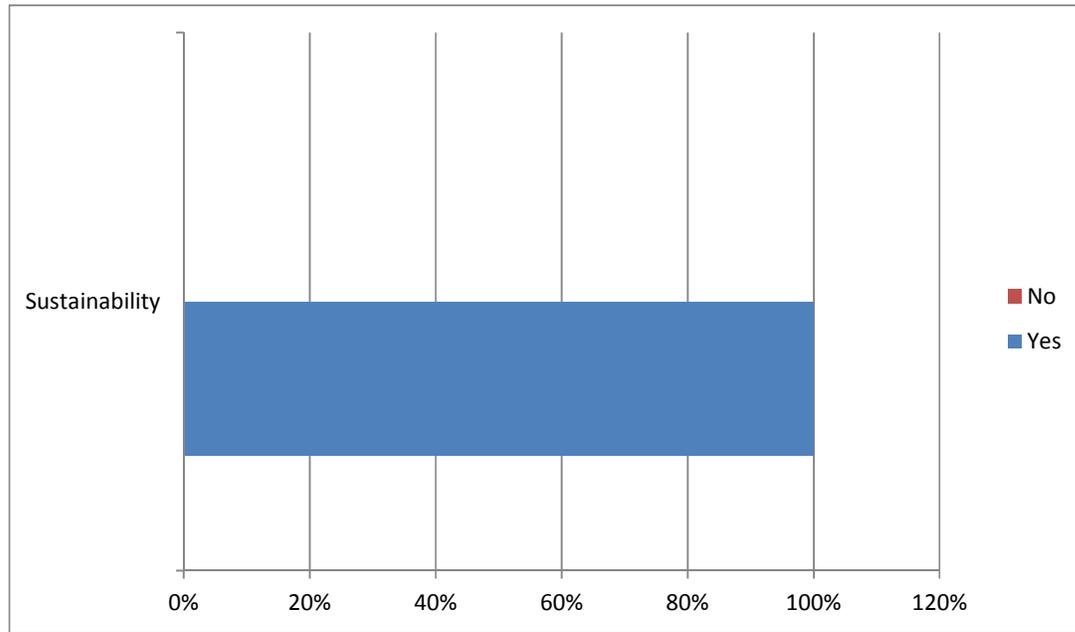
**BAR GRAPH SHOWING LEVEL OF PILOT CERTIFICATION**



The majority of respondents were shown to have achieved P2 status which as previously mentioned allows them to fly and practice without direct instructor supervision but within significant operating limitations.

**Chart 5.**

**BAR GRAPH SHOWING THE BELIEF IN PARAGLIDING AS A SUSTAINABLE SPORT**



The premise of which this research stands was wholeheartedly agreed upon by the respondents when a 100% response rate in the affirmative was given when asked if paragliding was a sustainable sport. This was also expounded upon when paragliding was said to act in tandem with other activities such as exploration for new sites or even hiking to current sites.

# Analysis of data

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Sustainability, as previously mentioned has to do with actions that do not hinder future generations from accessing what is currently present. Adventure Tourism as a growing niche has the potential to be one of the most sustainable forms of tourism if negative intervention is prevented.

The majority of pilots are located in the Kingston area which speaks to the possibility that rural areas are either not aware of or do not possess the resources capable of sustaining such a sport.

75% of pilots become intrigued with paragliding within Jamaica and as such if extended to the wider society greater interest and support could be shown towards the sport.

On average 50% of pilots have been engaged in the sport for one to three years with another 25% saying less than a year and 25% said more than ten years. With such interest in the sport, paragliding pilots become enthused and choose not to leave until it becomes impossible to no longer partake in such activity.

Equipment needed for paragliding safely are generally considered to be harness, wing, helmet, gloves and durable shoes which are all checked prior to launching. However, these equipment are built to safety standards and can withstand extraordinary conditions such as weight, rips, stretch, twist etc. In the rare event that the wing fails mid-flight a reserve parachute is packed among the equipment.

On average it is agreed that mediocre risk is presented while undertaking this sport due to extensive training of pilots over a number of years to meet safety standards. It should also be noted that paragliding is seen as not very popular in Jamaica as on a scale of 1-10 with 1

being low and 10 being high, the average response received was 2. Contrary to the previous belief when asked the level of adventure associated with the sport, the average response was 8.5 thus appealing to the basic nature of adventure tourism.

Sites that were seen as best in Jamaica were agreed upon entirely to be located in Malvern, St. Elizabeth and Skyline in Kingston.

Personality traits for individuals in this activity ranged from acrophobic to adventurous and extroverted. Individuals who are also adventurous, love outdoor activities and have a team spirit would be well suited for this activity.

In the Caribbean, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico have paragliding as an attraction or activity. Mention was also made of Colombia, Mexico, Brazil and Chile but the most interest in paragliding is shown in European Countries such as Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany and the United States.

Remarkably a whopping 100% of pilots believe that paragliding is sustainable and even went on to say that most paragliding pilots tend to be environmentally aware, and tend not to hurt or harm the environment and that paragliding itself has a very low carbon footprint.

Challenges perceived by the pilots stem from the non-popularization of the sport and the weather which may not always be suitable for flying. Investment in the sport is also said to be needed. The accessibility of sites, insurance coverage, and distance from traditional tourist areas and exposure to training were seen as drawbacks currently.

When asked if there was the possibility of being offered as a tourist activity, a resounding yes was heard as it has been done in the past and still has the potential to be on the map as a prime activity in Jamaica.

Drawbacks include the perception of individuals that the sport is not safe in comparison to others and it is actually quite the opposite. Good weather and logistics to co-ordinate tandem flights with tourists." To coordinate all the elements to make a series of flight possible requires mastery of organization, and access to myriad resources needed to make things happen". This was the view of one pilot.

The future of the sport looks bright as an association is being formed amongst current pilots who will seek certification to create training and certification systems. Also professional tandem pilots are being sought to provide tandem flight services to interested persons.

# CONCLUSION

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Tourism is an international business, characterized by severe competition, dynamism and the use of the environment as the base in which most tourism activities occur. Undoubtedly, adventure tourism provides a means for destinations to differentiate themselves and set themselves apart from their competitors. It is a way for destinations to attract more tourists as our research has shown that several persons are interested in adventure travel.

Sustainability is the goal for most Travel & Tourism destinations and enterprises.

Sustainability should be planned for with the creation and implementation of policies and actions from all stakeholders. Everyone is responsible and has to play their part in ensuring the sustainability of the environment and tourism. It is never a one person approach, it requires teamwork. Life is an adventure and the earth should be enjoyed to the fullest but in all our enjoyment we should ensure that our children and our children's children will inherit the same or an even better earth than our fore parents left us.

This experience certainly opened our eyes to all the adventure travels of the world and allowed us to take part in a little adventure of our own. We take from this experience a new sense of responsibility for ensuring sustainability in our own environments and a renewed sense of consciousness on how our activities impact the world. We have been able to view the natural beauty of our homeland, Jamaica , from the best view in the air and have savored the safe, environmentally friendly, new/different sustainable adventure tourism activity that is-Paragliding Jamaica...an off the beaten activity, off the beaten track.



# Lesson Plan

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**Subject:** Introduction to Travel and Tourism

**Topic:** Sustainable Adventure Tourism

**Class:** Year One students (Associate Degree Level)

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**General Objectives:**

To expose students to the concept of sustainable adventure tourism; Students will develop an awareness of the various adventure tourism activities within the tourism industry in Jamaica. Examine how adventure tourism can be used to attract more tourists to a destination. Develop an appreciation for sustainable practices in adventure tourism. Discuss how technology can aid sustainability. This will showcase the diversity and variety of our tourism product offerings and the natural beauty of our island home.

**Specific Objectives:**

At the end of the lesson students should be able to-

- Define and use correctly the terms associated with sustainability and adventure tourism e.g: Sustainable tourism, technology, tourism, sustainability, adventure, tour, risk, pollution
- Explain how destinations become sustainable
- Describe who is responsible for sustainable tourism
- Outline how technology helps sustainability
- Analyze the problems associated with sustainability in tourism
- Differentiate between 'hard and soft' adventure tourism
- Discuss what classifies as adventure activities
- Identify characteristics of the adventure tourist
- Describe how technology can be used to promote sustainability
- Examine countries who are leaders in sustainable adventure tourism
- Work cooperatively to complete a task

## Resources

- The Jamaica Tourist Board's Website [www.visitjamaica.com](http://www.visitjamaica.com)
- Video
- Multimedia Projector
- Smart board
- White board
- Map of Jamaica
- Laptop
- Handouts
- Methodology:
- Observation, Discussion, Brainstorming, Questioning, Cooperative learning, Research

## Introduction:

Students will be asked to reflect and then share with the class the most adventurous thing they have ever done. They will also be asked to give three words that come to mind when they think of the words 'adventure', 'sustainable' and 'tourism'. The group will be encouraged to research and present on at least one (1) adventure tourism destination. (10 minutes)

## Development:

### Step 1

What is Sustainable Adventure Tourism?

The class will be invited to watch a video of adventure tourism activities in Jamaica. Students will observe keenly where the use of technology aids in sustainable development. After watching the videos, students will be asked to compare what they observed in at least two videos and identify how they would group these activities into hard or soft adventure tourism (15 minutes)

### Step 2

How are tourists destinations sustained and who is responsible for sustainability?

Students will be brainstormed on the concepts given and who they believe should be responsible for sustainability. Correct responses will be written on the board. Handouts will be given to students with information on tourism management and opportunities associated with tourism development. Students will read then answer focus questions that follow:

- How are destinations sustained?
- Explain how travel and tourism companies become sustainable?
- Outline the problems associated with sustainable tourism.

The smart board will be used to highlight students' responses (via the use of concepts, maps, figures etcetera). (15 minutes)

### Step 3

Where can you find adventure tourism in Jamaica?

On a map of Jamaica, students will be asked to pin (using a thumbtack), places where sustainable adventure tourism can be found (5 minutes)

### Step 4

How can technology promote sustainable tourism?

In groups, students will discuss the role of technology as an integral aid to the industry's sustainability. Each group will be given specific tasks/questions as well as guide lines for their presentation. Students will also be shown a video of countries that are leading in sustainable adventure tourism (10 minutes)

### Step Five:

Identifying the characteristics of an adventure tourist

Based on the introductory activity, students will be asked what feelings/emotions led them to try adventurous activities. They will be asked to write on the white board the emotions they felt while doing these activities. The students will be given handouts on the characteristics of the adventure tourists. (10 minutes)

Culminating activity:

Each student will be given an egg and asked to hold it in their hands. The egg is symbolic of the fragility of the tourism industry and the environment. They will be asked to break the egg in their hands, to conclude the point that if you do not care for the environment it will be damaged and ruined and of no more use/benefit to us, therefore sustainability is of great significance (5 minutes)

Homework:

Create a pamphlet or brochure on adventure tourism in Jamaica, that can be given to tourists who come to the island (be sure to showcase destinations that are sustainable)

Rubric:

Creativity (5marks)

Presentation (5 marks)

Content (10 marks)

TOTAL: 20 marks

# References

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# APPENDICES

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## Copy of questionnaire issued to paragliding pilots

Good day, we are from the University College of the Caribbean currently writing a case study on Sustainable Adventure Tourism. The information gathered will be confidential, and is collated to meet research and statistical reporting requirements. It will be released only as statistical summaries in which individuals are not identified. Place a tick or place an appropriate response where applicable. Thank you.

Name:

Location:

1) What is paragliding (PG)?

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2) How did you become interested in this activity?

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3) How long have you been involved in paragliding?

4)  less than a year     one to three year     less than five year  
 five to ten year     over ten years

5) How long have you been a certified pilot?

a)  less than a year     one to three year     less than five year  
 five to ten year     over ten years

b) What level are you? E.g. p1, P2, etc.:

6) What physical gears are needed in order to paraglide safely?

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7) On a scale of 1-10 (1= low and 10 = high):

a) What level of risk/ danger is involved in this sport? \_\_\_\_

- b) How popular is paragliding in Jamaica? \_\_\_\_
- c) What level of adventure is involved in this sport? \_\_\_\_

8) Which locations in Jamaica are the best for launching/paragliding activity?

\_\_\_\_\_

9) What personality traits, in an individual, are mostly associated with this activity? E.g. risqué, adventurous etc.

\_\_\_\_\_

10) How many other Caribbean islands have paragliding as an attraction or activity?

\_\_\_\_\_

11) In which country(ies) is/are paragliding most popular?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Sustainability** is broadly defined as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; do you think paragliding is a sustainable activity?

12) In your opinion, what would be the greatest challenge in developing paragliding as a tourist activity in Jamaica?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13) Is it possible to offer paragliding as an adventure tourism activity?

\_\_\_\_\_

14) What is the greatest drawback in engaging in this activity?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15) What is the future of paragliding in Jamaica?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Sample of an answered questionnaire

Name: Jurgen VONDUESZELN

Location: Kingston, Jamaica

16) What is paragliding (PG)?

PG is an air-sport which can be exercised re-creationally as well as competitively. It is usually done without additional power, but by soaring in the air on parcels of warmer lifting air. The pilot lifts the wing at launch like a kite and then flies off with it in running off the mountain. Once airborne pilots can stay up for hours and fly for distances of hundreds of kilometers, depending on weather and skill. In places without mountains the pilot and glider can also be towed up into the air by a winch to catch a thermal and fly away.

17) How did you become interested in this activity?

I was always intrigued by air and wind sports such as sailing and windsurfing. I tried it once in California and was hooked ever since.

18) How long have you been involved in paragliding?

over ten years

19) How long have you been a certified pilot?

a) over ten years

b) What level are you? E.g p1, P2, etc.: P4 and instructor

20) What physical gears are needed in order to paraglide safely?

At least three pieces of equipment: a wing, a harness to sit in and a reserve parachute in the rare case of the wing being out of control

21) On a scale of 1-10 (1= low and 10 = high):

a) What level of risk/ danger is involved in this sport? 5

b) How popular is paragliding in Jamaica? 1

c) What level of adventure is involved in this sport? 8

22) Which locations in Jamaica are the best for launching/paragliding activity?

Santa Cruz mountains near Malvern, St Elizabeth and Skyline Drive above Kingston, Mona.

23) What personality traits, in an individual, are mostly associated with this activity? E.g risque, adventurous etc.

A PG pilot should be physically fit, not suffering from motion sickness, not be afraid of height, enjoy outdoor environments.

24) How many other Caribbean islands have paragliding as an attraction or activity?

Dominican Republic and Cuba.

25) In which country(ies) is/are paragliding most popular?

Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany, but also Colombia and Brazil.

26) **Sustainability** is broadly defined as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; do you think paragliding is a sustainable activity?

Absolutely. Besides the flying gear it does not require any other inputs and leaves no marks in the environment other than the foot prints of the pilot walking to launch and walking away from his/her landing spot.

27) In your opinion, what would be the greatest challenge in developing paragliding as a tourist activity in Jamaica?

We need to distinguish between 12.1 paragliding as a visiting active pilot and 12.2 paragliding as a tandem passenger:

12.1 for active pilots: to reach flyable launch sites with a car and marketing of paragliding within the PG communities in the USA and Europe,

12.2 for tandem passengers: availability of certified local tandem pilots

28) Is it possible to offer paragliding as an adventure tourism activity?

Of course and it has been done in former years. In 2014 two groups of pilots from the USA and Germany visited Jamaica to fly their paragliders in this warm tropical environment. They were accommodated in Treasure Beach and Kingston. For tandem passengers, we have tested this and are just about to develop this opportunity.

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29) What is the greatest drawback in engaging in this activity?

The **perception** of the general public is that anything dealing with the 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension, meaning the air, is too dangerous and risky. I am convinced that this is a **myth**. There are other sports in Jamaica which are more prone to accidents and injuries, such as polo, horse back riding, mountain biking, motor cycling, car racing etc.

30) What is the future of paragliding in Jamaica?

Currently there are just a dozen PG pilots. We are in the process of forming an Association and will pursue recognition by the International Aeronautical Federation (FAI) to create our own training curriculum and certification system.

## Sample of Questionnaire for tourists

### Questionnaire

Good day, we are from the University College of the Caribbean currently writing a case study on Sustainable Adventure Tourism. The information gathered will be confidential, and is collated to meet research and statistical reporting requirements. It will be released only as statistical summaries in which individuals are not identified. Place a tick or place an appropriate response where applicable. Thank you.

i) Gender

Male                       Female

ii) Age

18-20             21-25             26-30             31-35             35+

1. How long have you been engaged in paragliding?

less than a year     1 year     2-5 years     more than 5 years

2. How did you start paragliding?

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3. How adventurous would you describe your personality?

Not adventurous     Slightly adventurous     Adventurous     Very adventurous

4. How many of your friends are currently engaged in paragliding?

None     Between 1 and 5     Between 5 and 10     More than 10     All of my friends are paragliders

5. How similar are their personalities to yours?

Completely different     slightly similar     similar     very similar     we are practically twins

6. Where is your favourite paragliding location and why?

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7. If possible, would you want to improve this location?

Yes  No

7b. If yes, describe the change you would make?

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8. Do you believe paragliding is sustainable?

Yes  No

9. Do you believe technology can aid in its sustainability?

Yes  No

10. What kind of technology do you currently use?

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11. Are there any technologies that would aid in paragliding's sustainability in Jamaica but have been inaccessible to you for various reasons?

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12. On average, how expensive would you say paragliding is in comparison to other activities?

Cheap  Fairly cheap  Expensive  Very expensive

13. Which is the most expensive piece of equipment?

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14. Was it acquired from a Jamaican entity?

Yes  No

15. If no, why?

Wasn't available  Too expensive  I have certain specifications  It is custom made and the manufacturer is located overseas  Other \_\_\_\_\_

16. How great would you say is paragliding's effect on the environment?

Doesn't have an effect  little effect  large effect  not sure

17. Would you recommend more Jamaicans engage in paragliding?

Yes  No

18. Would you say that your paragliding company has managed to achieve sustainability?

Yes  No

19. What practices have led you to come to this conclusion?

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20. What opportunities are there for persons of varying ages within this area, if any?

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# PICTURES

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Mommy, look!  
I'm going flying!!!



I'm ready to go!  
#excitement



Safety First!



Happy Tourists enjoying a coconut



I want to go to the  
BEACH

(An American tourist wants to go swimming after flying)

Source: J.Lyn/J.Vonduelzn/L.Grant

**THE END**