



Kodiak, Alaska

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www.kodiaktreks.com

Kodiak Treks Management Plan and Sustainability Vision Updated November, 2008

Kodiak Treks was founded on a vision of sharing the beauty of Kodiak Island and the experience of observing Kodiak bears in the wild with visitors from around the world who appreciate quality, small-group trips in unspoiled areas of the world. From its first year of operation, the owners of Kodiak Treks have placed the health of animal populations and respect for the habitat that sustains them ahead of the potential to maximize business profits. They have determined that in order to be sustainable, wildlife-based tourism must consider the health of the wildlife population on which it depends first and foremost. This foundational belief has cultivated a program in which Kodiak Treks staff works diligently to educate guests about the needs of the Kodiak bear while collaborating with land-managing agencies and the Kodiak public simultaneously.

The following tenets represent the guiding principles and sustainability efforts of Kodiak Treks:

- ◆ Wildlife-based tourism is a viable industry only inasmuch as it does not threaten the health of the wildlife population on which it depends.
- ◆ Program participants should be individuals who seek education about world wildlife rather than a topical exposure to the world's unique animal populations.
- ◆ Access to pristine wildlife viewing areas should not be made available to the masses when to do so may pose threats to the health of the population.
- ◆ The bottom line profit of wildlife-dependent tourism businesses should not be the concern of public land management agencies. Instead, these businesses should devise a sound and sustainable business plan before embarking in a wildlife-based tourism endeavors. Doing so will allow land managers to focus on maintaining habitat and the health of wildlife populations who subsist from such habitat.

- ◆ All efforts should be made by wildlife-dependent tour operators to be knowledgeable about the impact they have in the areas where they operate and to minimize impact to the extent possible.
- ◆ Wildlife-dependent tour operators should volunteer their time to share their knowledge of remote areas and wildlife populations with land managers, wildlife biologists, and the public.
- ◆ Wildlife-based tour operators should be prepared to lower the volume of their business when necessary to assure sustainability and respectful levels of use in sensitive areas.
- ◆ Wildlife-dependent tour operators should be respectful of other permitted users and their activities in the area in which they operate.
- ◆ Wildlife-dependent tour operators should be respectful of local culture and traditional practices in the community where they operate. They should participate in local education efforts when possible and share their knowledge of local culture with their guests whenever possible.

On the whole, Kodiak Treks believes that when wildlife-dependent tour operators combine a focus on the health and well-being of the animal population on which they depend with an equally robust effort to educate the visiting public about the needs of wildlife, wildlife management strategies, and local history and culture, sustainability is achievable.

Sustainability Practices in Application

Kodiak Treks staff embraces the following guidelines designed to communicate our philosophy about responsible and ethical wildlife viewing programs:

- ◆ Kodiak Treks staff will communicate our philosophical approach to wildlife viewing through all advertising literature and communication with the public. Guests should be educated before arriving Kodiak and Aleut Island so that they are well-prepared both physically and mentally for the type of trip they will undertake. Staff will not misrepresent the Kodiak Treks experience in order to sell trips and will inform prospective guests that the Kodiak Treks experience is not appropriate for them when physical or other limitations become known.
- ◆ Staff will seek ongoing education to enhance their knowledge in the following areas:
 - Local history and culture
 - Alaska history and culture, especially Alaska Native
 - Bear and general animal biology
 - Global ecology and climate change
 - Botany

Alaska and local land management agencies and policies
Local and international tourism trends and concerns
First-aid and safety training, both land and water-based

- ◆ Kodiak Treks will network with other local tourism operators (e.g., air taxis, B&Bs, downtown merchants, ground transport companies) to foster an articulated, sustainable, and quality tourism experience for visitors to Kodiak Island.
- ◆ At the lodge and in the field, Kodiak Treks staff will be sensitive to the interests of individual guests, offering educational materials and relevant information as appropriate, as well as personalized itineraries appropriate for guests' communicated interests and abilities.
- ◆ Kodiak Treks will communicate regularly with guests regarding planned activities, necessary conduct, and safety concerns. Kodiak Treks will enforce program rules equally with all groups so that the behavior of any single group does not adversely impact the potential for future groups to enjoy the same quality experience.