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Electronic Green Journal

Title

Chilkoot: An Adventure in Ecotourism

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9vt4p8rm>

Journal

Electronic Green Journal, 1(17)

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Publication Date

2002

DOI

10.5070/G311710493

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Peer reviewed

Review: Chilkoot: An Adventure in Ecotourism
By Allan Ingelson, Michael Mahoney and Robert Scace

Reviewed by [Fred Mason](#)
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Allan Ingelson, Michael Mahoney, & Robert Scace. *Chilkoot: An Adventure in Ecotourism*. Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press & University of Alaska Press, 2001. 264 pp. ISBN 1-55238-030-0 (paperback). CDN\$34.95. Acid-free paper.

The Chilkoot Trail between Alaska and the Yukon holds a near-mythological place in the history of North America. The major route for gold rush Stampeders from 1897-1898, it became legendary through the writings of travellers, historians, and poets. Over the last 30 years, the Chilkoot has become a site for high-use, yet low impact ecotourism. *Chilkoot: An Adventure in Ecotourism* offers useful insight into the history of the region, and its development and management as a tourism site.

The book is fruitful collaboration between a former museum curator (Ingelson), a freelance photographer (Mahoney) and a geographer and environmental consultant (Scace). Split into three major parts, the book discusses how the trail epitomizes the practice of ecotourism, details the long history of use of the trail, and conveys the authors' personal experiences hiking it.

In the earliest section, the authors define ecotourism as including personal experiences, the natural and cultural heritage of an area, management strategies to maintain the environment's integrity, and local community and government involvement. This section is a very good basic introduction to ecotourism for both the general reader, and an academic audience new to the topic. It would make good reading for undergraduate classes in environmental management or tourism and recreation planning.

The historical section of the book draws primarily on secondary sources about the trail's history; understandable given the amount of interpretative work Parks Canada and the U.S. National Park Service have done on the trail. The authors have included, however, a good assortment of historical photographs demonstrating both the heavy usage of the trail by Stampeders, and the hardships they faced. The great strength of this section is that it includes the history of trail usage before and after the gold rush. Avoiding the temptation to limit coverage simply to events in 1897 and 1898, the authors describe the utilization and management of the trail by the local Tlingit peoples since time immemorial, and the early beginnings of

tourism in the area.

The last section of the book is a personal travelogue. In word and picture, the authors describe their personal experiences of hiking the trail. Over 100 color photographs are included, depicting the spectacular landscape, historical artifacts encountered, and structures and features related to trail protection and management. This section is a necessary inclusion, as personal experience is an integral part of ecotourism. Throughout, the authors keep historical interpretation and management strategies in mind while relating their experiences.

Chilkoot: An Adventure in Ecotourism is successful as a simple trail guide, and as a work with higher goals of displaying how good ecotourism practices are carried out. The authors hold up the Chilkoot Trail as a shining example of ecotourism, a strong collaboration of state and national governments and the local community in protecting, promoting and managing a historically and environmentally significant area. The book will be enjoyable and informative for the armchair traveller and the academic.

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