

**Ecotourism Plan Proposal  
for  
American Samoa**

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prepared by

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## Summary

The proposed Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa will provide the process to help plan and build a viable and meaningful Ecotourism Sector in American Samoa within the immediate future. All the key ecotourism stakeholders in American Samoa must become aware of the principles of ecotourism, must share a vision for ecotourism, and must appreciate the potential benefits derived nationally from ecotourism activities. This Ecotourism Plan Proposal clarifies the steps that need to be taken to achieve this understanding, the joint expertise that will be required to successfully prepare an Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa, and the technical advantages the proposers have in having the direct practical ecotourism experience in a Samoan context (i.e. both in Samoa and American Samoa).

This Proposal incorporates the *FaaSamoa* in its design by focusing on rural communities, by including the Chiefs and Orators who have already committed to sustainable living practices (e.g. those villages within the National Park of American Samoa), and by relying on direct practical ecotourism experiences obtained in Samoa over the past decade. Ecotourism in Samoa has become, by default, Samoa's best environmental management tool with participating villagers now endorsing sustainable living practices. Ecotourism in Samoa has been shown to be a development catalyst within the context of preserving the *FaaSamoa*: Samoa's cultural heritage underpins a successful Ecotourism Program in both American Samoa and Samoa.

This proposal for an Ecotourism Plan is also timely (in that sufficient ecotourism infrastructure is already in place), is justified for many reasons (especially in terms of meeting the economic and developmental aspirations of rural villagers) and is capable of serving an educational role within Samoan communities (raising environmental awareness culturally, biologically, physically, socially and economically). The Ecotourism Plan will be designed to complement existing tourism practices as outlined in the 5-Year Tourism Action Plan for American Samoa (1994), possibly with an initial specific emphasis on designing an ecotour targeted at the cruise ship market.

Finally, there are potentially significant direct benefits to the two Samoas should a holistic and combined Ecotourism Plan be put in place. The Samoan archipelago is one biosphere, with one culture, with similar environmental challenges and similar development aspirations. The proposed Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa may, therefore, be used to strengthen the "2 Samoa Talks" that are encouraging stronger trade, cultural, economic and tourism relationships between the two Samoas. On that basis, this proposed Ecotourism Plan has been recognized by the Government of American Samoa as a '**window of opportunity**'.

It is the proposers' firm belief that American Samoa has the vital ecotourism assets, tourism research knowledge, information technology and cultural opportunity to be a leader in South Pacific ecotourism development by the Year 2010. The attached Proposal, therefore, explains how tourism has been shown internationally to be an effective development tool if applied correctly. In addition, the long list of 'sustainable tourism indicators' identified for Samoa may also be applicable to American Samoa. Therefore, the

proposers would like to highlight in this Proposal exactly how important it is to also adopt the specific internationally-proven ecotourism principles (and 'best practices') in American Samoa.

The design and construction of a new interactive Ecotourism Website for American Samoa ([www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com](http://www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com)) is proposed during the Planning Phase (2003). This medium will allow for maximum cost-effective input from all potential ecotourism stakeholders in American Samoa and elsewhere, especially international travel wholesalers specializing in ecotourism. Draft versions of the proposed Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa will be published on the proposed website along with all relevant data. In addition, key ecotourism stakeholders will be invited to neighboring Samoa to participate in an award-winning ecotour of Samoa: this practical experience will familiarize participants with the key principles of ecotourism from a practical sense and expose them to existing ecotourism businesses.

Finally, this Proposal helps highlight existing opportunities and tourism-related activities that could quite simply and cost-effectively be packaged as ecotourism activities. Establishing closer public/private sector partnerships is essential, but the proposers firmly believe that the Tourism Sector can benefit markedly from adopting some key ecotourism initiatives, hence catalyzing the fledgling Ecotourism Sector in American Samoa. For example, if American Samoa was to adopt an ecotourism promotion program (see proposed Eco-Paradise 2010 Program in Section 7), then another website could be designed (e.g. [www.Eco-Paradise2010](http://www.Eco-Paradise2010)) that markets ecotourism activities and holidays in American Samoa in an educational format. This suggestion is modeled on the successful Paradise 2000 Program which was aimed at beautifying American Samoa by the Year 2000.

The proposers submit the following Ecotourism Plan Proposal (and 5 copies) in line with your RFP, and would welcome the opportunity to jointly explore new ecotourism developments in American Samoa. The proposers look forward to the possibility of discussing the contents of this Proposal in more detail should such a request be made by the reviewers.

N.B: This Proposal can be revised and re-presented for re-evaluation to the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) in an Internet-based/Powerpoint format should it be requested by the reviewers. If so, please contact John Wasco (Ph 684-6992566 or 6998011 or [busycorner@samoatelco.com](mailto:busycorner@samoatelco.com)) or Dr. Steve Brown (Ph/fax 685-22144 or 71414 or [tours@ecotoursamoa.com](mailto:tours@ecotoursamoa.com)) and a draft website design of the proposed websites, [www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com](http://www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com) and [www.Eco-Paradise2010](http://www.Eco-Paradise2010), can be presented to the SEB.

## **SECTION 1 Introduction and Definition of Ecotourism**

Ecotourism is the fastest growing sector of the tourism industry worldwide, and more and more travelers are demanding ecotourism holidays. By definition (see Appendix 1), ecotourists are interested in 7 key activities or experiences, namely:

- (i) village development projects (**Developmental Tourism**)
- (ii) a wide range of adventures (**Adventure Tourism**)
- (iii) communing with nature (**Nature Tourism**)
- (iv) immersing themselves in the culture (**Cultural Tourism**)
- (v) a travel learn experience (**Educational Tourism**)
- (vi) spending their tourist dollars wisely (**Economic Tourism**) and
- (vii) helping to protect the environment (**Environmental Tourism**)

American Samoa needs to offer visitors an eco-travel itinerary that offers all 7 experiences: ecotourists want to have a holiday, it must be an educational experience, and they also want to make a positive contribution to their holiday destinations. Cruise ship visitors may be an existing potential ecotourism market: some targeted ecotourism itineraries need to be developed, and the Office of Tourism would need to market such ecotourism activities to the cruise ship agents and local tour operators. Alternatively, a dedicated 'Tutuila Ecotours' commence commercial operation.

The proposed Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa must, therefore, be designed in such a way that it fulfills two important criteria:

- (i) that it is achievable and implementable, and helps bring about sustainable tourism development in American Samoa by holistically including all relevant development and cultural programs in American Samoa, and
- (ii) that it meets the high expectations of international travelers, eco-travelers, as well as resident American Samoans who become involved in the Ecotourism Program as domestic tourists (e.g. experiencing the key ecotourism assets and activities within their own country for leisure and educational purposes i.e. Domestic Tourism).

The proposers would, therefore, like to share their expertise and ecotourism experience gained over the past 10 years while formulating and implementing a similar Ecotourism Plan for the Independent State of Samoa (Samoa) where ecotourism has become, by default, Samoa's best environmental management tool as well as a significant village development tool. Domestic tourism in Samoa is now an important growth sector, especially for Samoan rural economies. On that basis alone, emulating such an Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa could produce the same benefits (i.e. using tourists as a source of foreign revenue and also as a catalyst for attaining sustainable livelihoods for American Samoans in rural areas). Ecotourism is, therefore, simply a vehicle for delivering sustainability and cultural enhancement whilst combining an adventurous holiday with a travel/learn experience.

Ecotourism, by its very definition, attracts a different subset of travelers, not your usual resort tourists who are primarily interested in sun, sand, scenery and surf. Ecotourism

also should appeal to domestic tourists, that is Samoan residents who are willing to participate, directly or indirectly, in an Ecotourism Program in American Samoa. Residents tend to use tourism infrastructure once it is put in place, albeit for day use only initially. Involvement and commitment only come from understanding: true eco-travelers have a reputation worldwide of setting an excellent standard wherever they visit local communities (i.e. where eco-travelers have successfully managed to make a local tourism project successful, then the local residents often get involved simply for leisure purposes (i.e. **Domestic Tourism**)).

The Government of American Samoa has seen a timely **‘window of opportunity’** by requesting an Ecotourism Plan as an integral component of its national planning and development process. This Proposal highlights how ecotourism can be used as a development catalyst, integrating many of the existing and proposed development and planning and economic projects. The proposed Ecotourism Plan will need to identify all the key ecotourism assets, facets and activities, not to mention those key ecotourism stakeholders who have already made huge commitments towards bringing about sustainable development in American Samoa via tourism (e.g. the Chiefs and Orators of 9 villages within the National Park of American Samoa).

## ECOTOURISM IN AMERICAN SAMOA

*A window  
of  
opportunity*

Ecotour itineraries and activities need to be designed to meet the expectations of eco-travelers, but there is more to building a viable Ecotourism Sector. Section 2 outlines the general steps that need to be taken, the infrastructure that needs to be in place, and the expertise that is required. The proposed Ecotourism Plan will detail exactly how best to go about this process, but what is imperative is also the marketing of ecotourism products available in American Samoa (see Section 3).

## **SECTION 2      How to Build an Ecotourism Industry**

Many of the current tourism activities in American Samoa form the basis for a future dynamic ecotourism industry. In addition, there are numerous ‘**windows of opportunities**’ that exist where an ecotourism industry could be the major benefactor (e.g. declaring the South Pacific as a Whale Sanctuary; including American Samoa in a \$USD150,000 Nature Tourism Project on the basis that this is one biosphere; declaring the Samoan archipelago as a World Heritage Listed Area; operating the ‘Tutuila Ecotours’, etc.). All these proposed initiatives and opportunities would complement a future Ecotourism Program in American Samoa. In addition, true ecotourism incorporates its ‘best practices’ code of behavior and activities (see Appendix 2) that help ensure that sustainable living, sustainable tourism and sustainable development remain a reality for American Samoa.

However, the first step in building an Ecotourism Industry is to identify and highlight the key ecotourism locations, activities, experiences, opportunities and relevant projects. Once this task has been completed, then there is sufficient foundation on which to build viable ecotourism businesses. Visitors can only get an authentic Samoan holiday experience in either Samoa or American Samoa: numerous business opportunities exist for those interested in developing community tourism and ecotourism businesses in American Samoa, possibly modeled on the successful community tourism and ecotourism projects that have operated in Samoa over the past 10 years.

This Proposal provides the reviewers with a preliminary insight into ecotourism development in Samoa with the intention to expand the existing tourism products in American Samoa to include internationally recognizable ecotourism products that could be marketed confidently to both local and international markets (see Section 3). All 7 components of the ecotourism industry need to be featured initially, and eventually consolidated within proven itineraries as the expertise develops within the ecotourism industry locally.

### **1. Developmental Tourism**

Eco-travellers want to be left with a feeling that they have made a positive contribution to the places they visited, or that they have made a positive contribution to the peoples they visited, or that they have contributed to the success of a number of village development projects (i.e. **Developmental Tourism**). On that basis, an Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa could expose our visitors and residents to relevant village development projects and plans (e.g. wildlife conservation areas, archaeological preservation sites, Manu’a Economic Development and Environmental Management Plan, the proposed Eco-Paradise 2010 Program, etc.). In addition, numerous reference books are available that explain the process by which ecotourism can assist development with appropriate planning (e.g. “Pacific Islands Ecotourism: A Business Planning Guide” by Bushnell (1994) and “Pacific Islands Ecotourism: A Public Policy and Planning Guide” by Liu (1994).

## 2. Adventure Tourism

Eco-travelers are generally either very adventurous by nature and/or enjoy experiencing new activities for the first time. American Samoan Stakeholders need to identify exactly what adventurous activities already exist (see Wasco, 1994) and possibly contemplate including such activities as sea kayaking, whale watching, mangrove canoe tours, birdwatching, handicraft making demonstrations, etc. in their newly designed Ecotour itineraries.

While many travelers may not consider making tapacloth an adventure, there are some travelers who would: the best definition of adventure is “doing something for the first time” and making *siapo* has been a real adventure for some, the highlight of their trip and a sense of achievement. Ecotourism is about offering new experiences, things that make a holiday successful and memorable, opportunities that bring the two cultures together, thus helping to exceed the expectations that travelers may have had. **Adventure Tourism** is just one such process and trained ecotourism guides encourage such adventurous experiences. Therefore, appropriate ecotourism itineraries need to be cleverly designed with this in mind.

## 3. Nature Tourism

Eco-travelers are attracted by pristine ecosystems abundant with wildlife, and American Samoa offers both the pristine and majestic scenery, as well as a unique biodiversity (e.g. visitors to Vatia, Afono, Ofu Island, Tau Island have been ecstatic about the sheer beauty and variety and abundance of both terrestrial and marine species) (i.e. **Nature Tourism**). The fact that American Samoa has its National Park and numerous marine sanctuaries means that these ecotourism assets are already in place. Eco-travelers are generally interested in plants and animals and welcome the opportunity to learn about the biodiversity of the different locations that they visit. Biodiversity reference books, such as “Plants in Samoan Culture” (Whistler, 2000), Ecotourism and Conservation: A Review of Key Issues (Brandon, 1996) and “Islands, Plants and Polynesians – An Introduction to Polynesian Ethnobotany” (Cox and Banack, 1991) are invaluable to ecotourism guides and visitors. Biodiversity research must be encouraged to help assist the Ecotourism Industry, but also to assist the customary landowners whose assets the Ecotourism Industry is reliant on. The proposers, therefore, firmly believe that the National Park of American Samoa and its 9 villages could become one of American Samoa’s main marketing attractions for the international ecotourism markets.

## 4. Cultural Tourism

International eco-travelers are generally interested in learning about different cultures (e.g. reference books like “Samoan Culture” by Hart, 1996 and “Natural History Guide to American Samoa” by Craig, 2002) are also invaluable to ecotourism guides and visitors. Living in a new culture for them can be a rewarding holiday experience. Community tourism is an integral component of ecotourism providing the perfect cultural experience (i.e. **Cultural Tourism**). Some villages already offer homestays (*Fale ma Ti* Program) in American Samoa for visitors. However, there are numerous other ways to showcase the *FaaSamoa* and these need to be identified in the Ecotourism Plan (e.g. eco-travelers overnighing in community tourism ventures like beach *fales* as in Samoa – see Beach Fale Owner’s Manual (*Mo Le Au Fai Fale Apitaga Tu I Matafaga*), Twining-Ward, 1999).

## 5. Educational Tourism

The fact now remains that as tourism is a science, and **ecotourism is a science**, then tourism will become more of an educational experience as we learn to do tourism better, locally and internationally (i.e. **Educational Tourism**). Ecotourism by definition, is a travel/learn experience. Many universities worldwide, therefore, now have Professors of Tourism, Professors of Ecotourism, Faculties of Tourism, even a Cooperative Research Center For Sustainable Tourism that is combining the scientific and tourism skills of academic staff from 10-20 universities in Australia and the South Pacific. Scientists (e.g. archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnobotanists, environmentalists, leisure management consultants, economists, ecologists, sociologists, etc.) all have an important role to play in formulating an Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa (i.e. telling us how to do tourism better). Therefore, an Ecotourism Program needs to be designed to be educational for visitors, villagers, ecotour operators and tourism industry stakeholders alike, and it must encourage tourism research at a tertiary level.

In addition, if the Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa was to take a more scientific approach, then the Ecotourism Plan would include the on-going involvement of students and researchers and academics, both local and international (e.g. Samoa has taken such a scientific approach over the past 8 years, directly contributing to the travel/learn experience that is now a key component of ecotourism in Samoa).

## 6. Economic Tourism

Ecotourism has a tendency to spread the economic benefits of tourism into the rural areas with considerable benefits. In Samoa, community tourism in the villages of Manase and Lalomanu alone may be responsible for over USD\$500,000 of tourism receipts annually. In American Samoa, it is not unreasonable to consider attracting an extra 1000 eco-travelers annually, each spending \$USD2000 (i.e. \$USD2million annually). With a typical multiplier effect of about 4, then \$USD2million becomes \$USD8million as this money changes hands 4 times within the communities involved before it leaks out of these communities. This can be a significant injection into rural economies that are otherwise somewhat depressed, lacking employment opportunities and lacking business investment opportunities.

There is now a worldwide movement (i.e. **Pro-Poor Tourism**) that is attempting to address global poverty (affecting an estimated 2 billion people) by encouraging expenditure of global tourism receipts in the impoverished regions in the world (Pro-Poor Tourism Strategies: Making Tourism Work For The Poor, Ashley, Roe and Goodwin, 2001). This is the kind of tourism research that helps create to create the correct travel ethic that is developing amongst genuine eco-travelers, and American Samoa can capitalize on this by having appropriate ecotour itineraries that directly benefit the less privileged rural communities. The potential benefits of ecotourism should be an integral component, for example, of the Manu'a Economic Development and Environmental Management Plan.

## 7. Environmental Tourism

Eco-travelers are generally interested in environmental issues and welcome the opportunity to learn about local efforts to protect the environment (i.e. **Environmental Tourism**). All the environmental challenges facing American Samoa need to be

incorporated into the Ecotourism Plan, and steps need to be taken to ensure that eco-travelers actually help protect the environments that they visit. Whether it is the cultural environment, the economic environment, the biological environment, the social environment, the physical environment or even the political environment, eco-travelers are encouraging sustainable livelihoods in peaceful and equitable environments. Eco-travelers want to learn about local environmental issues, and they want to participate in environmental programs that actually improve the holiday destinations that they visit: the proposed Ecotourism Industry in American Samoa needs to make these opportunities available to both international and local tourists.

In conclusion, the best way to build an Ecotourism Industry is to expose eco-travelers to all the above 7 components of ecotourism, introducing them subtly to one component at a time: this is the perfect eco-itinerary. However, within a 7-Day Ecotour itinerary, there is ample time and opportunities to witness firsthand all 7 components of ecotourism. The challenge lies in designing a comprehensive half-day/full-day ecotour tailored for the cruise ship sector and free independent travelers to American Samoa: it must be informative and participatory, affordable and safe.

### **SECTION 3      Marketing Ecotourism**

An in depth understanding of ecotourism is required to successfully market ecotours to the international markets. A list of existing ecotourism locations, activities, experiences and components in American Samoa needs to be compiled for the proposed Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa. The potential ecotourism markets to be accessed will depend on the contents of this list. The next stage of ecotourism development is to formalize these activities and opportunities into marketable ecotourism holidays.

In addition, genuine free independent eco-travelers are interested in professionally organized ecotours, possibly run in conjunction with local tertiary education centers in American Samoa. A list of proven key international ecotourism wholesalers, educational tourism websites and Internet booking sites is needed for the Ecotourism Plan. The target market initially could be international universities and colleges which are interested in both a travel-learn experience as well as an 'overseas study experience'.

Also, the proposed website ([www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com](http://www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com)) would become a valuable marketing tool as the majority of eco-travelers are booking on the Internet with specialist ecotourism sites. Provided the website is informative, it can also be a valuable educational tool to help up-skill local ecotourism stakeholders. This website can also offer links to important educational websites, to websites that promote responsible tourism, and to travel trade websites that are simply Internet Booking Sites. If American Samoa was to adopt an ecotourism promotion program (see proposed Eco-Paradise 2010 Program in Section 7), then another website could be designed (e.g. [www.Eco-Paradise2010](http://www.Eco-Paradise2010)) that internationally markets ecotourism activities and holidays in an educational format. This suggestion is modeled on the successful Paradise 2000 Program which was aimed at beautifying American Samoa by the Year 2000.

The initial success of the Ecotourism Industry in American Samoa will be reliant on effective marketing of high quality ecotourism products. With the pending update of the "Lonely Planet Travel Guide of Samoa and American Samoa" being scheduled, it is

imperative that a comprehensive ecotourism overview be published in this travel guide and other South Pacific travel guides/websites. And with 11 Cruise Ships booked to visit American Samoa during 2003, there is an opportunity here to potentially trial some high quality ecotourism activities and itineraries, and to include the feedback from such ecotours within the proposed Ecotourism Plan. Word-of-mouth marketing by the cruise ship agents and tour operators can be extremely effective, but the Office of Tourism would need to contact the cruise ship agents in advance to advise them of these new ecotourism services being offered.

Finally, the challenge remains to market ecotourism products to the local market, with educational school tours being effective training opportunities for ecotourism guides. Simultaneously, all ecotourism stakeholders in American Samoa could benefit from accessing a wide range of Internet sites that feature updated information on the Ecotourism Sector in American Samoa and elsewhere. American Samoa needs to link its ecotourism marketing site with as many other Internet sites as possible in order to gain maximum benefit.

## **SECTION 4      The 4 Phases of the Ecotourism Plan**

The Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa needs to be prepared within an 8 month period (February-September 2003) and consists of 4 phases, namely:

- PHASE 1      Consultation and Fact Finding Phase (5 weeks)
- PHASE 2      Public Participation Phase (5 weeks)
- PHASE 3      Policy and Strategy Development Phase (6 weeks)
- PHASE 4      Plan Preparation Phase (4 weeks)

The following Management Plans and a Schedules of Tasks have been prepared for each of the 4 phases above:

### **PHASE 1 – Consultation and Fact Finding**

#### **Management Plan - Consultation**

The proposers will work in close collaboration with all 5 sections of the Department of Commerce (and other key government departments), seeking direction and guidance from the Department of Commerce with respect to the preparation of the proposed Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa (e.g.)

- (i) Coastal Management Program
  - analyze land use patterns
  - analyze resource information
  - evaluate ecotourism potential within selected communities
  - identify relevant educational programs
  - identify role of conservation areas
  - explain potential ecotourism opportunities
  - identify potential stakeholders (e.g. Dept Marine and Wildlife Resources)
- (ii) Economic Development Division

- explain the economic and development impacts of ecotourism
  - identify commercially sustainable communities
  - identify relevant economic development programs
- (iii) Planning Division
- analyze resource management data/aspects
  - analyze environmental management aspects
  - discuss feasibility of ecotourism communities
- (iv) Statistics Division
- analyze relevant tourism/economic/land use statistics
- (v) Office of Tourism
- analyze tourism development data
  - analyze tourism activities data
  - review history of ecotourism development in American Samoa

### **Schedule of Tasks - Consultation**

- (i) Coastal Management Program
- identify and consult with all stakeholders
  - review relevant programs with ecotourism potential
- (ii) Economic Development Division
- identify and consult with all stakeholders
  - discuss ways to include ecotourism activities in economic development plans
- (iii) Planning Division
- identify and consult with all stakeholders
  - review planning process in American Samoa
  - explain planning benefits of ecotourism activities
- (iv) Statistics Division
- identify and consult with all stakeholders
  - discuss ecotourism trends/statistics
- (v) Office of Tourism
- identify and consult with all stakeholders
  - explain ecotourism development, future trends and key websites
  - discuss design of proposed American Samoa Ecotourism Website

### **Management Plan – Fact Finding**

- (i) Coastal Management Program
- identify eco-opportunities
  -
- (ii) Economic Development Division
- identify economic impact of ecotourism
  -
- (iii) Planning Division
- identify ecotourism infrastructure needs
  - identify potential funding sources
  - integrate existing eco-programs
- (iv) Statistics Division

- review relevant tourism/development/education statistics.
- (v) Office of Tourism
  - identify potential/existing eco-markets
  - update proposed American Samoan Ecotourism Website
  - assess ecotourism interests of visitors

### **Schedule Of Tasks – Fact Finding**

- (i) Coastal Management Program
  - conduct Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis
  - review literature on land use management and wildlife conservation
- (ii) Economic Development Division
  - conduct SWOT Analysis
  - review literature
- (iii) Planning Division
  - conduct SWOT Analysis
  - review literature
- (iv) Statistics Division
  - conduct SWOT analysis
  - review literature
- (v) Office Tourism
  - conduct SWOT Analysis
  - review literature
  - prepare inventory of existing eco-attractions and eco-activities
  - identify key ecotourism organizations (e.g. The Ecotourism Society, Cooperative Research Center for Sustainable Tourism [Aust], etc.)
  - identify key sustainable tourism websites
  - review American Samoa Tourism Website
  - conduct visitor survey to assess ecotourism interests of visitors

### **PHASE 2. Public Participation**

#### **Management Plan – Public Participation**

- coordinate public meetings “Introduction of Ecotourism Planning”
- assist with the presentation of the positive and negative impacts of ecotourism
- coordinate public hearings
  - “Review of findings of Expert Panel Meetings”
  - “Introduction of draft Ecotourism Plan”

#### **Schedule Of Tasks – Public Participation**

- identify the outcomes for attendees at these public forums with an emphasis on ‘training’ and ‘up-skilling’
- record all public and governmental inputs
- assess the goals and desires of stakeholders for ecotourism development
- formulate and release press releases based on the findings of the public meetings and public hearings

### **PHASE 3. Policy and Strategy Development (goals and objectives)**

#### **Management Plan – Policy And Strategy Development**

- participate in expert panel meeting
- help determine policies and strategies for the Ecotourism Plan
  - a. First Session – Preparatory Policy Fact Finding Sessions
  - b. Second Session – Policy Determination Sessions

#### **Schedule Of Tasks – Policy And Strategy Development**

- record all potential policies, goals, strategies and objectives
- identify other relevant policies, goals, strategies and objectives that impact the proposed Ecotourism Plan (e.g. Manu'a Economic Development and Environmental Management Plan, General Economic Development Plan, Environmental Action Plans, etc.)
- identify new programs similar to the Paradise 2000 Program (e.g. Eco-Paradise 2010 Program) where each village designs its own unique ecotourism Action Plan

### **PHASE 4 – Plan Preparation**

#### **Management Plan – Plan Preparation**

- organize and develop the draft Ecotourism Plan including
  - (a) statement of existing conditions
  - (b) analysis of the issues confronting ecotourism development
  - (c) analysis of the issues endorsing ecotourism development
  - (d) forecast of probable conditions/events that will impact tourism
  - (e) forecast of probable conditions/events that will endorse tourism
  - (f) statement of existing ecotourism assets/proposals/opportunities (e.g. World Heritage Listed Area, South Pacific Whale Sanctuary)

#### **Schedule Of Tasks – Plan Preparation**

- (a) conduct a virtual ecotour of American Samoa (on the proposed [www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com](http://www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com) website as a training exercise for all key stakeholders and as a preliminary testing of the existing eco-activities and proposed eco-itineraries (website presentation).
- (b) write the draft Ecotourism Plan which includes the
  - Ecotourism Policy
  - Ecotourism Goals and Strategies
  - Ecotourism Objectives
  - Schedule for Development and Implementation.

## **SECTION 5      Additional Principal Tasks**

5 additional principal tasks have been included in the Schedule of Tasks, namely:

(i)      Construct an Ecotourism Public Display

It was felt that the development of the proposed Ecotourism Plan could be both an educational process for the stakeholders as well as an opportunity to up-skill for all involved in the development of the Plan. On that basis, and in order to attract more public participation, the ongoing design and gradual construction of an “Ecotourism Public Display” may encourage more public participation.

(ii)     Participate in an Award-winning Ecotour

Experiencing an existing award-winning ecotour in Samoa with Ecotour Samoa Ltd. could be another potential additional principal task. These proven ecotour itineraries (see Appendix 4 for Ecotour Samoa brochures) have attracted a number of ecotourism awards over the past 6 years (see Appendix 5).

(iii)    Constructing an Ecotourism Website for American Samoa

All 4 Phases of the Ecotourism Plan could be featured on an interactive website ([www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com](http://www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com)) during the course of the development of the Plan, thus allowing all stakeholders at all times to remain abreast with the issues, debates and progress of the proposed Ecotourism Plan. In addition, another website could be designed to directly market ecotourism holidays in American Samoa to the international markets (e.g. using the proposed [www.Eco-Paradise2010.com](http://www.Eco-Paradise2010.com) website)

(iv)     Trialing a virtual ecotour in American Samoa

Upon completion of the draft Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa, it would be advantageous to trial a virtual ecotour of American Samoa to see if all the recommended components of ecotourism can be satisfactorily included. This may also provide the opportunity to inform the private sector of the real potential of ecotourism business opportunities in American Samoa. This is best done on the proposed [www.Eco-Paradise2010.com](http://www.Eco-Paradise2010.com) website.

(v)      Trialing an ecotour to suit the needs of cruise ship visitors

There may be some justification in trailing an ecotour during the course of the preparation of the Ecotourism Plan, using the cruise ship market. This would allow for considerable feedback to be obtained and would assist the proposed Eco-traveler/Visitor Survey. In addition, it would provide the ecotourism stakeholders with an excellent training opportunity, thus encouraging their added commitment to adopting the principles of ecotourism and related ‘Best Practices’.

## **SECTION 6      Proposal Preparation**

- A. Technical**
- B. Prior Related Experience**
- C. Contract Price**

The previous 5 Sections of this Proposal clearly outline the approach that the proposers wish to take with some justifications included. 5 additional principle tasks (see Section 5) have also been included as the proposers feel that both vital educational and training components be included in the Ecotourism Plan Phases because of the need to up-skill all stakeholders in order to attract their support and commitment to ecotourism principles. Without the realization that ecotourism principles in general can lead to sustainable development, then, no matter how technically qualified the proposers are, the Plan may lack the implementability it requires. The following Schedule of Specific Tasks (see pages 18-19), pinpoints the key steps that need to be taken to best formulate an implementable Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa.

### **A. Technical**

The detailed contents included in this Ecotourism Plan Proposal have been pertinently laid-out in such a fashion that clearly indicates that the proposers have the necessary technical knowledge as well as the firsthand experience of implementing a similar Ecotourism Plan in Samoa over the past 10 years (1992 – 2002).

Dr. Steve Brown was instrumental in working with Dr. Mike Parsons for 2-years (1992-1993), the anthropologist responsible for preparing the “Ecotourism Pilot Study” for Western Samoa (1993). Dr Steve Brown and Funealii Lumaava Sooaemalelagi have subsequently established an ecotourism operation in Samoa (Ecotour Samoa Ltd.) and have won a number of ecotourism awards over the past 6 years (see Appendix 5) for their role in ecotourism development in Samoa and are privileged to be part of this proposed Team.

Funealii Sooaemalelagi was recently consulted to review the past tourism development activities in Samoa which were derived from the earlier “Samoa Tourism Development Plan – 1992-2001” (Government of Western Samoa, 1992). This document “Review of the NZODA Samoa Tourism Development Programme 1995-2001” (Noakes, Trewenack and Sooaemalelagi, 2001) assisted technically with the preparation of the more recent “Samoa Tourism Development Plan 2002-2006” (Government of Samoa, 2002). In addition, Funealii has a strong interest in environmental education and sustainable technologies, two factors that are important for a successful Ecotourism Program. Both Funealii and Steve have been instrumental in introducing alternate human waste management systems into Samoa with a total of 20 such compost toilets now operating within rural villages, national parks and tourism resorts.

One of the proposers, John Wasco, was consulted by the Department of Interior to conduct an “Ecotourism Assessment Plan for American Samoa” (1998) and “Hiking Trails of Tutuila and Manu’a” (1994). In addition, John Wasco has strong Internet-based capabilities as well as publishing skills. The use of Internet-design software such as Dreamweaver and Director Studio will allow the proposers to design and construct an

effective and interactive Ecotourism Website ([www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com](http://www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com)) to help facilitate the formulation of the proposed Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa.

John Wasco's Internet-marketing input to this Proposal has direct ramifications to the successful implementation of the Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa. To be successful, American Samoa needs holiday bookings from potential eco-travelers, as well as a high level of cooperation from local residents. To get such bookings and commitment, American Samoa needs carefully planned eco-itineraries and ecotourism venues/facilities that can confidently meet the expectations of future eco-travelers to and from American Samoa. John has recently established such market contacts and it is our firm belief that such travel marketing contacts are an integral component of the proposed Ecotourism Plan.

Using a computer-projected Internet-presentation, the proposers would be happy to re-present their revised Proposal to the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) for re-evaluation if requested. John Wasco is adamant that an effective website design will not only assist with the preparatory phases of the Ecotourism Plan but can also form the basis of an ecotourism marketing site for American Samoa. John is willing to prepare a website map for each proposed site ([www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com](http://www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com) and [www.Eco-Paradise2010](http://www.Eco-Paradise2010)) to help demonstrate the ease and convenient way in which the proposers and the ecotourism stakeholders can assist with the preparation of this proposed Plan.

#### **Technical Schedule of Specific Tasks (in addition to the related objectives and goals)**

The following Schedule of Specific Tasks for Phases 1-4 of the preparation of the Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa includes 20 weeks of consultancy work over 32 calendar weeks (February to September 2003). One immediate specific task is to design and construct an interactive Ecotourism Website for American Samoa ([www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com](http://www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com)) that can become the main medium for consultation, public presentation of facts, allow for wide inexpensive public participation, allow for input and review of the Draft Plan by the public and stakeholders, highlighting important links to relevant websites, provide a 'Virtual Ecotour' of American Samoa, present draft ecotour itineraries for American Samoa, etc. The Draft Plan can be prepared in webpage format with Website/Powerpoint Presentations to stakeholders, the public and the Plan Reviewers. Both Dreamweaver and Director Studio Internet-design software will be utilized.

**SCHEDULE OF SPECIFIC TASKS - Phases 1-4**

PHASES (1-4)	CALENDAR WEEK	SPECIFIC TASKS
PHASE 1 (5 weeks) Consultation and Fact Finding Phase (Feb & March 2003)	7	Introduction of tasks to stakeholders
	8	Design and Construct Interactive Website
		Presentation of Financial Reportings
	10	Powerpoint/Website Consultation - Tutuila
	11	Powerpoint/Website Consultation – Manu’a
	13	Website to feature Initial Draft Plan
		Complete Initial Fact Finding Sessions Conduct Award-Winning Ecotour (Samoa) Design Cruise Ship Ecotour Itinerary
PHASE 2 (5 weeks) Public Participation Phase (April & May 2003)	15	Public Presentation on Ecotourism Planning
	16	Media Interviews/Releases
		Conduct Eco-traveler/Visitor Survey
	19	Powerpoint/Website Introduction-Draft Plan
	20	Conduct Public Meetings (Manu’a)
	Presentation of Interim Financial Report	
	21	Conduct Public Meetings (Tutuila) Design Tutuila Ecotour
PHASE 3 (6 weeks) Policy and Strategy Development Phase (June & July 2003)	24	Determine and Record Policies
	26	Determine and Record Strategies
	27	Update Ecotourism Website
	29	Determine and Record Objectives
	30	Seek Public Participation on Website
	31	Final Policy/Strategy Determination Session
PHASE 4 (4 weeks) Plan Preparation Phase (Aug & Sept 2003)	33	First Draft finalized (Webpage Design) Panel Review, Evaluation & Editing
	34	Second Draft finalized with Web-Graphics
	35	Website/Powerpoint Presentation-Draft Plan Completion of Ecotourism Website (s) Conduct ‘Virtual Ecotour’ on Website
	37	Preparation of Final Draft (10+50 copies) Presentation of Project Financial Report

## B. Prior Related Experience

### (i) Experience

Dr. Steve Brown had 4 years experience in Environmental Management in Samoa (1990-1992) and Tokelau Atolls (1992-1994) and has had the past 9 years as Co-Director of Ecotour Samoa Ltd. with Funealii Sooaemalelagi. Brown has been a member of the Tourism Marketing Task Force in Samoa and was previously President of the Samoa Visitors Association. Brown has a PhD in Wildlife Conservation and has dedicated the past 9 years to implementing an effective Ecotourism Program in Samoa.

John Wasco is an experienced private sector consultant in American Samoa, has consulted to the Department of Interior and assisted the Department with the preparation of an "Ecotourism Assessment Plan for American Samoa" and also prepared the "Hiking Trails of Tutuila and Manu'a" Report. Wasco's experience in Internet publishing is invaluable to this Proposal.

### (ii) Background

Both Brown and Sooaemalelagi have lived in Samoa for the past 10 years, have been involved in community development work, environmental management, education research, ecotourism planning and development, ecotourism business implementation, assistance with tourism research in Samoa as well as alternate technologies.

Funealii Sooaemalelagi is a qualified educator, currently lecturing in Education at the National University of Samoa, and has a strong interest in protecting the environment in Samoa, building businesses and community development.

John Wasco has a background in publishing and private sector consulting and also has a strong interest in assisting private sector businesses in American Samoa.

### (iii) Credentials

As Directors of Ecotour Samoa Ltd. for the past 9 years, Dr. Steve Brown and Funealii Sooaemalelagi have witnessed a remarkable growth in ecotourism within Samoa, and have attracted some notable tourism awards. In 1997, they won

- (a) the Tourism Council of the South Pacific "South Pacific Excellence in Tourism Award (Ecotourism Category)",
- (b) were the "Overall Winner" and "Tourism Winner for the Exporter of the Year Awards" in 2001 (offered by the Department of Trade, Commerce and Industry, Government of Samoa),
- (c) they won the "Exporter Promoting Environmentally-Friendly Products" Award in 2001, and
- (d) were awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize for Tourism in the Exporter of the Year Awards for 2002.

Both Brown and Sooaemalelagi have presented at numerous ecotourism-related conferences (e.g. Cook Island Marine Ecotourism Workshop, Pacific Science Congress (Fiji),

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 BirdLife International Conference (Cook Island, Malaysia), Hawaii Ecotourism Workshop (1995) and many more.

John Wasco, as Owner/Operator of Calumet Industrial Service, has consulted to the private sector in American Samoa for over 15 years.

See Appendix 6 for copies of references and Curriculum Vitae.

### C. Contract Price

Prices for services being offered by the Proposers includes cost of the proposed websites, as well as the cost of the Familiarization Ecotour of Samoa for 10 key American Samoan ecotourism stakeholders. The consultants from Samoa anticipate working 50% (50 days) of their consulting time within American Samoa over the designated 8 month period (Feb-Sept, 2003).

ITEMS		\$USD
Material	computer/stationery/printing/website construction	\$4500
Labour	100 days (20 wks x 5 days) @ \$220/day	\$22000
Accommodation	\$60/day x 50 days	\$3000
Per diem	\$70/day x 50 days	\$3500
Flights	(Apia/Pago/Manu'a/Apia) \$100/trip x 20 trips	\$2000
Transport	\$40 x 30days (car rental)	\$1200
Ecotour 2-Day for 10 key stakeholders in Samoa	(including airfares/accommodation/meals&ecotour costs)	\$2300
Financial Reporting and internal auditing		\$800

**TOTAL \$USD39,300**

The Proposers will contract the financial consulting services of Financial Services (Samoa) (Apia) for preparation of all financial reporting and internal auditing reports. These financial statements will be presented to the Panel of Experts on a regular monthly basis throughout the course of the project (two weeks after completion of each month).

## **SECTION 7      An Ecotourism Vision for American Samoa (2010)**

As the expertise in ecotourism increases in American Samoa, a visionary approach to ecotourism planning is warranted. While there may be numerous ecotourism assets and facets required for a comprehensive and complete Ecotourism Program in American Samoa, some compromises may need to be taken initially. However, an Ecotourism Vision for 2010 will at least highlight some planning and implementation outputs, and will also allow all the stakeholders to realize how important it is to strengthen the Ecotourism Program in American Samoa by including some of the following draft visions. The following list of ecotourism outputs/assets is in no order of priority.

1. To construct a website [www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com](http://www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com)
2. To have an “Eco-Paradise 2010 Program” endorsing ecotourism
3. To construct a marketing website [www.Eco-Paradise2010](http://www.Eco-Paradise2010)
4. To host an Ecotourism Festival in American Samoa annually
5. To have an Ecotourism Officer within the Office of Tourism
6. To have a permanent public Ecotourism Display in Pago Pago
7. To operate an Ecotourism Development Fund
8. To develop interpretation signs at key ecotourism sites
9. To offer ecotourism guide training courses
10. To publish an Ecotourism Guides’ Manual
11. To publish an Ecotourism Field Guide for eco-travelers
12. To publish an Ecotourism ‘Best Practices’ for American Samoa
13. To train a specialist Ecotourism Inbound Tour Operator
14. To prepare 7-Day Ecotourism Itineraries for the private sector
15. To publish an Ecotourism Operators’ Manual
16. To operate a dedicated Ecotourism Bus Service on Tutuila Island
17. To produce ecotourism travel brochures for American Samoa
18. To design and manage ongoing ecotourism projects
19. To have travelers participating in an array of local eco-programs
20. To have ecotourists assisting with wildlife conservation efforts
21. To have ecotourism subjects being offered by local institutions
22. To conduct ecotourism research in American Samoa
23. To have ecotourism as an integral component of all local economic, development and environmental management plans
24. To attract 1000 eco-travelers annually by 2010 spending in excess of \$USD2000 each
25. To have completed an Environmental Audit on the benefits of ecotourism (i.e. to estimate the indirect and direct economic benefits of ecotourism activities to all communities in American Samoa)
26. To have a Samoan archipelago World Heritage Listed Area
27. To have specialized Centers of Ecotourism Excellence

Some of the above envisaged ecotourism outputs could be achieved within the timeframe for the preparation of the proposed Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa. The proposers realize that because the ecotourism potential in American Samoa is so high, and because numerous key ecotourism components are already in place in American Samoa, only the packaging of the proposed ecotourism holiday products and their marketing remains to be completed. On that basis, the proposers have included in the Schedule of Specific Tasks (including the related costs within the proposed budget) some activities that can be practically trailed, designed, conducted and/or implemented during the course of the preparation of the proposed Ecotourism Plan. Taking a somewhat practical approach to formulating the Plan will allow for more ecotourism business opportunities to be recognized and realized.

## Conclusion

The proposers are not only willing to share their firsthand experience in preparing and implementing a similar Ecotourism Plan in Samoa (Parsons 1992,1993), but are also anxious to take a very practical approach to preparing the proposed Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa. In addition, the proposers realize that there is considerable training opportunities for key stakeholders within the preparatory Phases of the Ecotourism Plan for American Samoa. The inclusion of a Familiarization and Training component within the proposed 4 Phases will allow some of the key ecotourism stakeholders to gain new experiences and up-skill at the same time. To achieve this, practical training has been included in this proposal for key stakeholders in the form of an educational ecotourism website ([www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com](http://www.EcotourismAmericanSamoa.com)) and a 2-Day Ecotour of Samoa.

Also, key ecotourism practitioners from Samoa may also be invited to American Samoa to meet with the “Panel of Experts” and to participate in public forums. Academics from the National University of Samoa and the Le Iunivesite O Le Aмоса O Savavau (Samoan Indigenous University) may also be called upon to assist with the formulation and preparation of this proposed Plan.

The marketability and implementability of the proposed Ecotourism Program for American Samoa rests both with the integrity of the advice given in the Ecotourism Plan, as well as with the skills acquired by the key ecotourism stakeholders and Panel of Experts during the course of the formulation and development of the Ecotourism Plan. The inclusion of a number of ecotourism practitioners from Samoa, as well as an opportunity to experience a proven, award-winning ecotour in Samoa, will provide the skills for designing a series of American Samoan ecotourism activities that would be vital components in the proposed ecotour itineraries for American Samoa.

The proposers would like to commend the Government of American Samoa for taking this initiative and for providing the opportunity to include various key facets of ecotourism in the preparation of a number of current and proposed Territory plans. A more holistic approach needs to be taken by both Government and key ecotourism stakeholders if the Ecotourism Plan is to be successfully implemented in American Samoa. By the Year 2010, American Samoa should be a leader in ecotourism development in the South Pacific provided a solid foundation is built initially – the key to this success is private enterprise, low investment, targeted marketing overseas and locally, and establishing an on-going partnership with the proposers over the next 5-7 years. The proposers are willing to continue

to share their knowledge and skills and assist American Samoan ecotourism stakeholders establish economically viable ecotourism businesses during this timeframe.

The proposers are confident that American Samoa has all the necessary components to become a prime ecotourism destination. The establishment of the National Park of American Samoa, with its 9 village stakeholders, created one of American Samoa's prime ecotourism assets. This community's commitment to wildlife conservation, community development and cultural heritage forms the very basis of the ideal ecotouristic backdrop. Eco-travelers expect to leave a holiday destination knowing exactly where they made their contributions to humanity, to the environment and to the culture they visited. Ecotourism is the medium that helps build and reinforce meaningful travel ethics that translate easily into high value travel experiences for both visitors as well as local Samoan villagers.

Using ecotourism as a developmental planning tool, American Samoa can continue to strive for attaining sustainable development using the Village Fono as the forum. As a member country of South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), this is not only a national objective but also a regional and global objective. Using sustainable tourism to help attain sustainable development is not a novel idea. Tourism worldwide is rapidly adopting a vast new array of sustainable tourism practices that all need to be incorporated within an Ecotourism Plan in American Samoa.

In conclusion, the proposers believe that the benefits of true ecotourism include:

- (i) long term economic benefits to local communities,
- (ii) direct and indirect environmental management inputs (with respect to helping address the environmental challenges in American Samoa),
- (iii) direct contributions to longlife learning,
- (iv) direct contribution to gender equity,
- (v) ability to improve land-use practices,
- (vi) likelihood of encouraging domestic tourism within American Samoa, and
- (vii) potential in ensuring sustainable living for all future generations in American Samoa.

Finally, the proposers have deliberately included some key information as References and Appendices to help highlight exactly what considerations need to be taken with respect to obtaining maximum benefits to American Samoa from ecotourism. Ecotourism has been considered worldwide to be the fastest growing sector of the tourism industry, but it has also become, by default, a very successful environmental management tool and community development tool that is directly applicable to American Samoa. It is up to the American Samoan community to exploit ecotourism in order to help satisfy its own development needs by incorporating all the advices and experiences outlined in "Linking Green Productivity to Ecotourism – Experiences in the Asia-Pacific Region" (Hundloe, 2002).

The proposers, therefore, submit the following Ecotourism Plan Proposal (and 5 copies) in line with your RFP, and would welcome the opportunity to jointly explore these new ecotourism developments in American Samoa. The proposers look forward to the possibility of discussing the contents of this Proposal in more detail should such a request be made by the reviewers.

N.B: This Proposal can be revised and re-presented for re-evaluation to the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) in an Internet-based/Powerpoint format should it be requested by the

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reviewers. If so, please contact John Wasco (Ph 684-6992566 or 6998011 or [busycorner@samoatelco.com](mailto:busycorner@samoatelco.com)) or Dr. Steve Brown (Ph/fax 685-22144 or 71414 or [tours@ecotoursamoa.com](mailto:tours@ecotoursamoa.com)) and a draft design of the two proposed websites can be presented to the SEB.

## References

A number of key scientific ecotourism references are listed here because they are pertinent for developing an Ecotourism Program in American Samoa. This list is by far from being complete.

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## **Appendices**

The following appendices are included to augment the Ecotourism Plan Proposal and to help justify and explain the contents of this Proposal.

Appendix 1 Definition of Ecotourism

Appendix 2 “Ecotourism Best Practices” for Samoa

Appendix 3 Samoa’s Sustainable Tourism Status Report 2000

Appendix 4 Ecotourism Product Brochures (Ecotour Samoa Ltd.)

Appendix 5 Ecotourism Awards 1997, 2001, 2002 (Ecotour Samoa Ltd.)

Appendix 6 Consultants’ Curriculum Vitae and References

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