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Assessing the intention of land trust representatives to collaborate with tourism entities to protect natural areas[1]

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Environmental degradation and dwindling natural areas can negatively impact a destination's image. Nonprofit land trusts have become important organizations in the US conservation movement and elsewhere. Their method of negotiating with landowners to protect land, yet leave the land in private ownership and on the tax rolls, is often popular with the public and local governments. This study explains how land trusts operate. It measured the collaboration potential between land trusts and tourism entities in the US, from the land trust representatives' point of view, by embedding six propositions considered necessary for collaboration into the theory of planned behavior. An email survey of land trusts in the US yielded 279 usable replies. Approximately 71% of the representatives' intention to collaborate was accounted for, with opinions of peers (subjective norm) providing the most influence; 64% of the representatives' attitude toward collaboration was identified. Land trusts were found to be able and willing to provide an efficient, economical method of protecting the landscape, while working with tourism entities that could provide financial support, promotion and increased awareness of the importance of natural areas to both local population and tourists.

Keywords: sustainable tourism; land conservation; collaborative planning; theory of planned behavior; conservation easement; land trust

Introduction

Rapid development since the 1970s has resulted in the loss of open space, natural areas and agricultural land over much of the US and elsewhere (Eldridge, 2001). The tourism industry has been responsible for some of this development, but regardless of the cause, environmental degradation and dwindling natural areas can mean substantial financial loss for the tourism sector (Graham, 1998; Johnston & Tyrrell, 2005; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1980; Romeril, 1985).

Jafari (1982) explained the connection between quality natural resources and tourism through his concept of three background tourism elements (BTEs): natural resources, sociocultural elements and man-made assets. BTEs form the destination's image, and in certain locations, natural resources and pristine open space are both a BTE and an important attraction. Therefore, the loss of natural resources can ruin a destination's image and reduce its ability to attract tourists (Briassoulis, 2002; Ellingson & Seidl, 2009).

Mieczkowski (1995) posited that tourism entities should be proactive in preserving natural resources that are important to the tourism product. However, Gunn and Var (2002)

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maintained that although attractive scenery, undeveloped mountain tops and slopes, pristine recreational waters, and protected wildlife are important to travelers, tourism business plans seldom include environmentalism. Briassoulis (2003) stated that business models focused toward short-term, high-revenue opportunities without consideration for environmental protection can lead to a degraded environment, which may hurt the tourism economy.

If tourism entities include land preservation or conservation in their business plans, they need an effective method to achieve their environmental protection goals. For any given parcel of land, fee-simple acquisition (complete ownership) would provide maximum control but would be costly and perhaps impossible, especially for smaller, less well-capitalized tourism destinations and entities. In the US, government agencies such as the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and similar state agencies own and protect large tracts of land, many of which are tourist attractions with numerous recreation amenities. However, convincing a government agency to acquire a targeted land parcel in fee simple may prove difficult. Additionally, if a natural area is in imminent danger of being lost to development, a government agency might not be equipped to act with the necessary alacrity to acquire the parcel. An alternative option for the protection of a targeted parcel is for tourism stakeholders to collaborate with a local, regional or national land trust. Land trusts are nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) which exist to preserve the natural environment, typically through acquiring land in fee simple or negotiating with landowners to place a conservation easement (conservation covenants in some countries) on a property. Typically, the term "easement" indicates rights that someone other than the property owner has to a given piece of land, e.g., utility companies may install poles or dig trenches for transmission lines. Conservation easements define what can and cannot be done to the property in an effort to conserve and protect the land in a desired natural state. A land trust–tourism entity collaboration is potentially an effective, relatively easy and inexpensive method of protecting a destination's natural resources.

Purpose of the study

This study's purpose was to better understand potential cooperation between land trusts and tourism entities, through investigating the collaboration process and identifying key issues associated with partnering. Specifically, the conceptual framework defined by Jamal and Getz (1995), in the form of six propositions necessary for collaboration, was embedded into the theory of planned behavior in order to measure the importance of land trust representatives' beliefs and attitudes toward collaborating with tourism entities. Information of this nature could help tourism planners to include environmentalism in their plans.

Literature review

Land trusts and conservation easements

Conservation easements are legally binding, negotiated agreements between a landowner and the holder of the easement, which can be a land trust, other nonprofit organization or a government agency. The negotiated agreement describes the limits to development on the property, which aids permanent protection of open space and vital natural areas (Land Trust Alliance, 2008). Property owners surrender specific development rights, thus ensuring the protection of their land and often gaining federal, state and/or local tax incentives (Airey,

2010). The public sector and taxpayers find conservation easements attractive as they are less expensive than fee-simple acquisitions and the land is still privately held, so it stays on the local property tax listings (Gustanski & Squires, 2000). In addition to lost taxes, if a government agency acquired the land in fee simple, costs borne by the public would include the purchase, maintenance and management of the property.

Land trusts are autonomous, so each may have different goals regarding size, location and type of land it will protect. Some common land characteristics of interest to land trusts include parcels that are important for water and air quality, contain significant wildlife habitat, have significant scenic qualities, are used for agriculture, are border-protected natural areas and contain recreation amenities (Gustanski & Squires, 2000). These particular characteristics may also be important to the local tourism industry, particularly land with significant scenic qualities (Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011), which may be an outright attraction or a BTE. Several land trusts protect land for its scenic quality, which benefits local tourism stakeholders (Roe, 2000; Teton Regional Land Trust, 2010; Wroblicka, 2011).

Wildlife viewing has become a major tourist activity, so the protection of wildlife habitats sustains certain tourism-dependent economies (Sutton & Sartore, 2001). Yellowstone National Park, in Wyoming, US, is a renowned protected natural tourist wildlife-viewing attraction. However, some animals need a larger habitat range than is contained within Yellowstone's boundaries in order to maintain a healthy sustainable herd, flock or pack (Goldstein, 1992). Therefore, the ability to protect private land adjoining Yellowstone would increase the habitat available to wildlife, thus increasing the animals' ability to maintain healthy numbers, enhancing the Yellowstone tourism experience and the prospects of regional communities that depend upon tourists for their economic viability.

Although not a requirement, some land trust-protected parcels allow public access and promote outdoor recreational pursuits that are important to the destination's attraction base. The Pingree Forest in Maine is currently the largest land tract under conservation easement in the US (Maine Land Trust Network, 2006). The 754,673-acre tract is under a conservation easement that makes the land available for an array of recreation pursuits including: hiking, mountain biking, camping, fishing, hunting and motorized vehicle racing (New England Forestry Foundation, 2007). These recreational pursuits in the forest and surrounding parcels helped attract over 200,000 visitors annually, greatly contributing to the regional tourism economy. Smaller parcels are also important to tourism stakeholders. A 26-acre tract in Wisconsin is preserved through a conservation easement that allows for a hike/bike corridor to pass through while simultaneously preserving a view important to a major regional tourist attraction (J. Welsh, personal communication, September 3, 2010).

Land trusts experienced rapid growth in the last few years, particularly as conservation easements became more accepted and as their use included tax benefits for the landowners (Bray, 2010). Data from the 2005 land trust census indicated that 1667 local and regional land trusts in the US directly protected 6,245,969 acres of private land through conservation easements and 1,703,212 acres through fee-simple ownership (Land Trust Alliance, 2007). In total, local and regional land trusts were involved in protecting 11,890,109 acres, which includes not only conservation easements held and fee simple, but also re-conveyances of acquired land, and contracts between landowners and various agencies that were negotiated by land trusts. These numbers do not include the protection efforts of the large national organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, The Conservation Fund and the Trust for Public Land (Land Trust Alliance, 2007). Although this study focuses on the US, land trusts or similar organizations play an important role in protecting property in the UK (http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk, http://www.wildlifetrusts.org),

New Zealand (http://www.openspace.org.nz/), Canada (http://www.clta.ca/en/), and Australia (http://www.trustfornature.org.au/) (Eagles, 2009).

Collaboration

Gray (1989) suggested that collaboration is more likely to occur if all stakeholders define the problem similarly and there is agreement, even if in broad ambiguous terms. A recognized interdependence (Logsdon, 1991) is central to the concept of collaboration; it is because each stakeholder brings some degree of influence or contribution, or provides a necessary resource that collaboration is possible (Gray, 1989). Pfeffer (1981) explained that individuals or organizations obtain influence by being able to provide the most critical and difficult-to-obtain resources, and that the more a partner is depended upon, the greater that partner's influence (Emerson, 1962). In a land trust–tourism entity collaboration, land trusts, through their use of conservation easements, could provide an efficient and cost-effective method of natural resource protection, while tourism entities could provide financial resources, constituency, promotions and networking.

Collaboration occurs when individuals and/or organizations work with others to achieve what they cannot do on their own. Wood and Gray described collaboration as occurring when stakeholders engage using shared rules, norms and structures to decide issues related to a problem domain (1991, p. 146). Stakeholders are interested individuals, groups or organizations that have a concern regarding the problem domain (Wood & Gray, 1991). Stakeholder autonomy is an important concept of collaboration in that stakeholders retain some degree of independence in decision-making. Bramwell and Lane (1993) suggested that stakeholders control resources, and the pooling and coordination of these resources enables a greater effort toward resolving the issue around the problem domain. Land trusts and tourism entities appear to be stakeholders with a common interest in protecting natural resources.

Collaboration/partnership has long been a major theme in many aspects of tourism marketing, planning and development (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Chancellor & Cole, 2008; Gunn & Var, 2002; Hawkins, 2004; Weiler & Moore, 2009; World Tourism Organization [WTO], 2010). Land trust organizations strongly promote land trusts collaborating with other land trusts, conservation organizations and public agencies due to their overlapping interests and ability to do more collectively than individually (Campbell & Salus, 2003; Macdonald, 2002; Soto, 2004). While there is little literature exploring the collaboration potential between businesses such as tourism entities and nonprofits such as land trusts, 39% of land trusts have worked with tourism entities in some capacity (Chancellor, Norman, Farmer, & Coe, 2011). The majority of land trust–tourism entity collaboration efforts were for general marketing and fundraising (French, 2010), not specific parcel protection. Although there is a dearth of literature on collaboration efforts between nonprofits such as land trusts, which focus on private lands, and privately owned tourism entities, an array of partnerships centered around protected natural areas have been explored, primarily through case studies.

Ramutsindela (2003) suggested that conservationists' most daunting challenge is integrating human needs and desires with conservation goals. Therefore, it is not surprising that management and the use of protected natural areas has long been a contentious topic. Tension between conservation and human needs has been observed in Nepal (McLean & Straede, 2003), South Africa (Ramutsindela, 2003), and Bolivia (Jamal & Stronza, 2009), as villages within national park boundaries tried to balance land use for their basic needs with park policies.

Most national parks experience a tension between conservation and the need to develop areas for visitors, a tension evident in the US National Park Service's mission "to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources" while providing for future generations' "enjoyment, education and inspiration" (Borrie, Freimund, & Davenport, 2002; http://www.nps.gov/legacy/mission.html). Many protected natural areas are major attractions for recreationists and tourists, and private entities are necessary to meet the needs of the visitors. Tourism often becomes an important economic resource for nearby communities (Wilson, Nielsen, & Buultjens, 2009). Protected natural areas are usually owned and managed by a national or regional government, and partners often include tourism entities, local communities, recreation user groups and environmentally oriented NGOs (Buckley, 2002). In order to best reach sustainable tourism goals, McCool (2009) suggested that in addition to resource protection and visitor satisfaction, the local communities' economic and social needs must be considered, and that neither protected area management nor the tourism industry can solve the complex issues alone. He posited that to better address these intricate and potentially competing issues, protected natural areas' management should collaborate with a representative collection of stakeholders who understand and take ownership of the issues.

The Chalalán Ecolodge project in Bolivia exemplifies a protected natural area–tourism entity collaboration scheme (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). A remote rainforest community collaborated with the Bolivian government, Madidi National Park officials, local and regional tour operators, and conservation- and economic development-oriented international NGOs to develop tourism while employing conservation measures. The international NGOs provided initial business expertise, conservation information and capital for the project, which focused on developing the ecolodge and training both local employees for tourism-related jobs and regional tour operators. Jamal and Stronza (2009) reported that the local community had trust issues toward an international NGO, but those were resolved, and eventually, a community-based organization assumed full control of the ecolodge. The local community later collaborated with a US-based globally focused land trust to protect 62,000 acres designated a "tourism refuge", which was to be used for another ecolodge community tourism project (http://www.worldlandtrust-us.org/).

Collaboration between domestic organizations usually does not involve such geographic and linguistic challenges, but differing philosophies and desired outcomes can present challenges (Buckley, 2004; Gunn & Var, 2002). This is particularly true as managers of protected natural areas have policy mandates, NGOs have environmental and/or social priorities, local communities and governments seek economic and community wellbeing, and tourism entities operating in and around the area have profit motives. One overlying goal in the management of protected natural areas is the somewhat subjective term *public interest* (Dredge & Thomas, 2009), as each collaborator and visitor (Borrie et al., 2002) may define public interest based upon his/her organization's mission and agenda (Hall, 1999). Therefore, there can be a concern that protected natural areas will become overcommercialized, with profit motives overshadowing conservation and/or other land uses (Baringer, 2002; Borrie et al., 2002).

Wilson et al. (2009) found that public–private collaborations between the New South Wales, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Australia, and tourism entities were of a contractual nature, with the tourism operators being essentially lessees. Their findings suggested that a paradigm shift of viewing and treating the collaboration as a partnership rather than a contractual agreement would require greater cooperation, planning, and a more holistic approach toward the problem domain, which would ultimately be more beneficial to the stakeholders and toward meeting sustainable tourism goals. An Australia-wide study

revealed that open communication, inclusion of key stakeholders, trust between partners, and support provided by the protected area agency were the most important factors for a successful collaboration (Laing, Lee, Moore, Wegner, & Weiler, 2009). Other important components for successful collaboration around protected areas include dialogue, mutual learning and a clearly defined problem domain (McAvoy, Schatz, & Lime 1991; Saxena, 2005).

This study incorporates the work of Jamal and Getz, who discussed collaboration specifically from a tourism planning scenario, explaining that:

> collaboration for community-based tourism planning is a process of joint decision-making among autonomous, key stakeholders of an inter-organizational, community tourism domain to resolve planning problems of the domain and/or to manage issues related to the planning and development of the domain. (1995, p. 188)

They suggested that addressing six specific propositions was important to ensure collaboration in tourism planning or destination management contexts, and that these propositions provide a useful framework for destination managers, tourism planners and researchers interested in collaboration.

Proposition 1 emphasizes the importance of stakeholders realizing their interdependence regarding tourism planning. Gunn and Var (2002) pointed out that a successful tourism destination needs a critical mass of attractions, facilities and amenities, which means that there are several potential stakeholders.

Proposition 2 emphasizes that stakeholders must recognize the benefits, both mutual and individual, from collaboration. Jamal and Getz (1995) suggested that the perception of positive benefits might be more significant toward encouraging collaboration than recognition of the problem domain's importance. Mutual benefits might include more effective tourism development in the form of reduced environmental and cultural impacts and reduced stakeholder conflicts (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999).

Proposition 3 advocates a need for stakeholders to believe their input is important and that decisions will be executed. Jamal and Getz (1995) suggested that issues of power and authority of the collaboration process might need to be addressed in the early stages or else groups may refrain from participating. Reed (1997) suggested that power relations may alter collaborative efforts even when all stakeholders are included in the process.

Proposition 4 builds on Proposition 3 by emphasizing the need for key stakeholders to be included in the collaborative efforts. Key stakeholders can often affect change by virtue of their position within a community or organization and including them provides clout (Bingham, 1986). Suggested stakeholders include almost anyone who is interested, including local government officials (especially those responsible for resource allocation), managers of protected areas (Laing et al., 2009), tourism-related business, organization leaders from the Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau, resident groups (Lankford & Howard, 1994), infrastructure organizations (e.g. hospitals and energy companies) and any special-interests organizations (e.g. environmental, heritage and transportation) (Jamal & Getz, 1995).

Proposition 5 emphasizes leadership of the collaborative effort. Gray (1989) stated that a convener is especially critical in the beginning and is needed to organize key stakeholders. A successful convener would need legitimacy, expertise, authority and resources in order to promote the collaborative efforts. It is likely that the convener would come from one of the key stakeholder groups. In land protection efforts involving a land trust, it is likely that the land trust representative would be the convener, working with both tourism stakeholders and land owners.

Proposition 6 promotes the need for a vision statement with clear goals and objectives to be formulated by the collaborative body. In addition to a vision statement on desired growth and development, clear goals and objectives would need to be formed. Jamal and Getz (1995) suggested the establishment of an organization to assist with the ongoing fine-tuning of the agreed strategies, further supporting the need for continual key stakeholder and resident involvement in the collaborative process.

In this study, to further research and measure the relevance of the above six propositions for tourism collaboration with land trusts, they were embedded into the theory of planned behavior, which allowed for a systematic evaluation, resulting in a measure of the intention to collaborate from the land trust representatives' perceptions.

Theory of planned behavior

The theory of planned behavior was developed from psychological research on attitudes and behavior modeling and attempts to predict behavior by understanding an individual's intentions through the direct measures of attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). As modeled in Figure 1, the theory of planned behavior recognizes that the three direct measures (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control) are affected by an individual's beliefs (indirect measures):

(1) Behavioral beliefs – identifies the attitude toward the behavior
(2) Normative beliefs – results in perceived social pressure, called subjective norm
(3) Control beliefs – detects the individual's perceived control over the behavior.

Additionally, perceived behavioral control is considered a possible direct determinant of behavior since the individual may have limited volitional control to perform the task. All of these predictors of behavior are assessed directly through questions asking the individual to judge items on a scale.

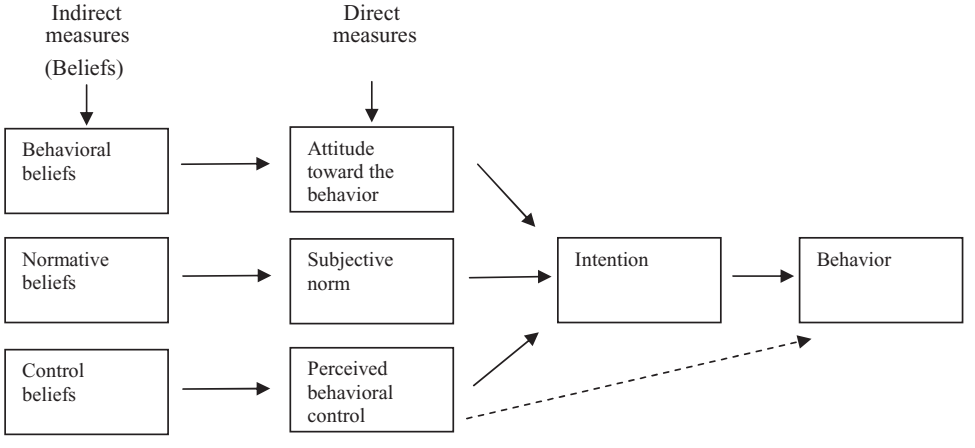

Figure 1. Theory of planned behavior: schematic representation (adapted from Ajzen, 2002).

Indirect measures (beliefs)

Beliefs are an integral part of the theory of planned behavior, as they are understood to provide the cognitive and affective foundations for the constructs of attitudes, subjective norm and perceptions of control. However, an indirect measure such as behavioral belief only identifies the attitude toward the behavior; it does not determine the direct measure of attitude. The same is true for the normative beliefs (subjective norm) and the control beliefs (perceived behavioral control relationships; Ajzen, 2002). Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) suggested that the direct measures correlate more highly with intention than do the indirect measures. However, the indirect measures provide valuable information that explains the underlying reasons for the intention and this knowledge is useful for understanding and designing strategies to change behavior.

Beliefs are measured through questionnaire data about an individual's outcome evaluations and belief strength (Ajzen, 1991). Outcome evaluations are based upon the notion that individuals develop beliefs by associating the behavior with certain outcomes. Belief strength refers to the "subjective probability that the behavior will produce the outcome in question" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 191). Belief strength and outcome evaluation about a particular salient belief can be used to compute a belief-based measure of attitude toward the behavior. The computation is based upon an expectancy value model:

$$A(\text{bbm}) \alpha \sum b_i e_i .$$

This equation illustrates that a person's belief-based measure of attitude (A(bbm)) is directly proportional to the summation of the belief strength (b) multiplied by the corresponding outcome evaluation (e) for each salient belief (i). This same process is used to determine measures of normative beliefs and control beliefs.

Normative beliefs refer to the perceived behavioral expectations of the individual's important referent groups. The referent groups are surmised to be behavior-specific, depending upon the social world affected by the behavior. For example, if the behavior is vacation destination choice, then the referent groups may include family, friends and coworkers, yet if the behavior is purchasing a new bicycle, the referent group may only be riding partners. Normative beliefs are assessed similarly to behavioral beliefs in that two components make up a normative belief – belief strength and motivation to comply.

Control beliefs refer to a person's perception of having the necessary resources and opportunities to perform the behavior. Perceived behavioral control scores should be greater if respondents believe they have the requisite resources and opportunities to perform the behavior. A control belief is composed of a control factor and the perceived power of the factor to aid or hinder performance of the behavior. The three belief-based measures of behavioral, normative and control beliefs are theorized to explain their corresponding direct measures which are more global in nature.

Direct measures

While indirect measures seek to identify and measure the variables concerning beliefs about behaviors, direct measures can be viewed as global or overall measures of the constructs considered antecedents to behavior: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2002). Individual direct scores are obtained by summing the items' scores for each measure or by taking an average of the means.

Attitude toward the behavior is considered an individual's general evaluation of his/her performing the behavior. This construct is composed of instrumental and experiential components. The instrumental component is concerned with identifying whether there is value and benefit to performing the behavior, while the experiential component seeks to determine whether the behavior will be pleasant and enjoyable.

The direct measure of subjective norm is determined through injunctive and descriptive components (Ajzen, 1991). Injunctive qualities refer specifically to whether the individual's referent groups think that the individual should perform the behavior. Injunctive qualities are determined by questions about expectations and approval of performing the behavior. A descriptive norm is information on whether the referent group members perform the behavior, and can be gathered by rewording the injunctive questions (Ajzen, 2002).

Perceived behavioral control as a direct measure should illustrate an individual's confidence in performing the behavior. The two components of this construct are self-efficacy and controllability. The self-efficacy component is measured through determining an individual's perception of the difficulty and likelihood of performing the behavior. Controllability refers to an individual's belief that he/she has control over the behavior.

The discovery and determination of indirect and direct measures leads to understanding and predicting the intention to perform the behavior, which is the direct antecedent to performing the behavior. Additionally, intention is measured by direct questions gathering information on what the individual intends, will try and plans on doing regarding the behavior. Regression is then used to determine each direct measure's contribution to intention. Depending upon the context, there may be much disparity regarding the direct measure's contribution to intention, and in some cases, additional direct measures can be added, which may improve the model (Ajzen, 2002; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

The theory of planned behavior has been used to understand and explain behavior in a range of tourism-related situations. Many researchers modified the model by adding additional direct measures of intention. Shen, Schüttemeyer, and Braun (2009) found that the additional direct measures of past experience and cultural involvement contributed more to Chinese residents' intention to visit a heritage attraction than any of the prescribed direct measures, and furthermore, neither attitude nor subjective norm was significant. In an effort to predict the purchase of entertainment packages, Petrick, Morais, and Norman (2001) discovered that the additional direct measures of past behavior, satisfaction and perceived value did not improve the model.

Research directed toward predicting the intention of tourists to take a wine-based vacation found subjective norm to be an important direct measure, which was probably due to the social nature of wine collection and consumption, according to Sparks (2006). However, the additional direct measures of past behavior, food and wine involvement, personal development and core wine experience were also significant. Another example of using the theory of planned behavior to predict travel behavior involved surveying Mainland Chinese residents regarding their intention to visit Hong Kong (Lam & Hsu, 2004). They found that perceived behavioral control, attitude and past behavior were important direct measures of intention. The authors surmised that travel restrictions placed upon Chinese residents as well as costs made perceived behavioral control the most important measure.

The intention to perform pro-environmental behaviors was found by Powell and Ham (2008) to increase with context-specific interpretation materials. The interpretation efforts increased behavioral beliefs, and perhaps consequently, attitude contributed most to the intention. A study in Tasmania used a modified theory of planned behavior model in conjunction with communication theory to influence the behavior of picking up litter in a protected natural area (Brown, Ham, & Hughes, 2010). Regression analysis revealed that

the added direct measure personal norm, which concerns what an individual believes is right or morally correct, contributed most to intention. Researchers then determined the most salient beliefs related to personal norm and used them in signs encouraging litter pickup. Observations in a subsequent staged experiment found that the signs based upon personal norm beliefs resulted in a 15%–20% increase in litter being picked up (Brown et al., 2010).

This study furthers the collaboration investigation by seeking to more fully understand land trust representatives' intentions to collaborate with tourism entities. Analysis of this data will allow researchers to better evaluate the suspected components necessary for land trusts to collaborate with tourism entities. In addition, it will add to the understanding of the operation of collaboration and tourism partnerships.

Methods

Study participants were executive directors or appointed representatives of Land Trust Alliance (LTA) member land trusts. The LTA is the US national umbrella organization for land trusts and encourages its land trust members to collaborate with each other, other conservation organizations and public agencies (Soto, 2004). This project interested LTA representatives since it studied collaboration with the tourism sector, and as a result, they endorsed it by providing the database of members' email addresses.

Initially, 15 telephone interviews with land trust representatives were conducted to obtain additional information necessary to design the survey described below. LTA member land trusts (minus the 15 previously interviewed) were then invited via email to participate in the Internet-based study. A modified Dillman (2000) Tailored Design technique was employed, which included four emails to potential participants. The first email briefly introduced the project and stated that a more explanatory email would be forthcoming. The second email detailed the study, the third was a reminder and further detailed the study, while the fourth was a brief reminder that the link would close soon. Each email contained the link to the online survey. Data from the 279 usable questionnaires (possible 802; response rate 34.8%) were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 14.0. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to measure the theory of planned behavior components.

As illustrated in Figure 2, five of the six collaboration propositions (P1–P4 and P6) (Jamal & Getz, 1995) were represented as conceptualized in the literature and were identified in the "beliefs" section of the framework. Proposition 5 (P5) is not included as it is hypothesized that the land trust representative would be the legitimate convener of a collaboration effort, working with tourism entities to identify key parcels and with the owner of the parcels to negotiate a conservation mechanism. Each direct measure lists the objective needed to accurately determine the individual's respective attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control in accordance with Ajzen's (2002) prescribed method for the theory of planned behavior. Intention is the main focus of the theory, and for this study, it is a land trust representative's intention to collaborate with tourism entities.

As suggested by Ajzen (1991, 2002), the first step was to ask open-ended questions to determine the salient aspects of the indirect measures (behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs), which encompassed the collaboration propositions (Ajzen, 1991, 2002; Francis et al., 2004). Fifteen land trust executive directors or primary contacts were interviewed by telephone to determine the salient aspects of the indirect measures.

For behavioral beliefs, the open-ended interview questions sought the (1) advantages, (2) disadvantages and (3) any other opinions associated with collaborating with a tourism entity.

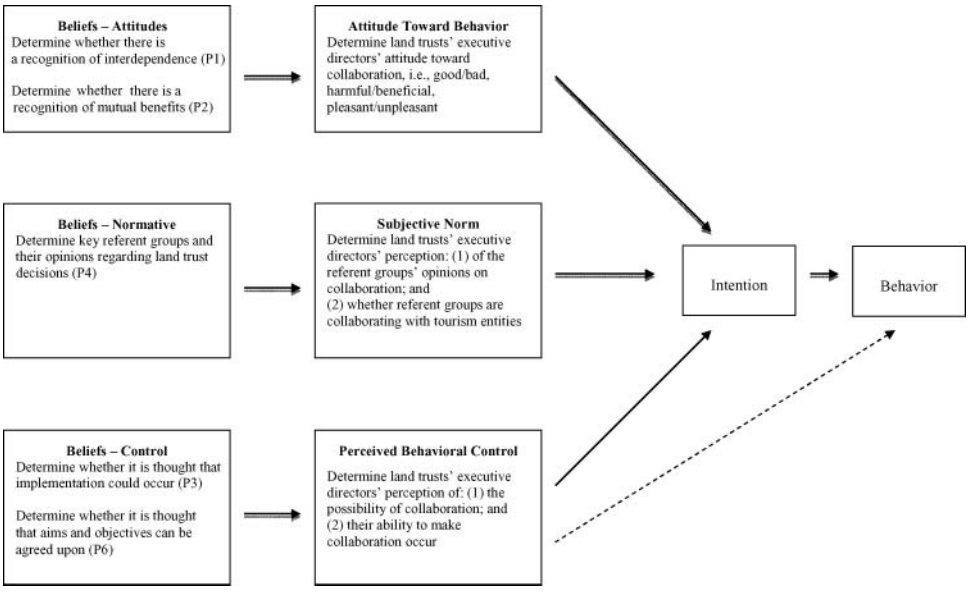

Figure 2. Conceptual framework of collaboration theory (Jamal & Getz, 1995) embedded into the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 2002).

Normative belief open-ended questions sought identification and information on individuals who would (1) approve, (2) disapprove or (3) who come to mind when considering the possibility of collaborating with a tourism entity. Perceived behavioral control belief open-ended questions were concerned with factors or circumstances that would (1) enable, (2) hinder or (3) come to mind when considering difficulties of collaborating with a tourism entity. Responses elicited from the 15 land trust representatives were used to establish the items for the indirect measures – behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs – questions. The collaboration propositions were represented through the items.

Findings and discussion

The means of the indirect measures (items based upon land trust representatives' responses and collaboration propositions), direct measures, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and intention were calculated from scale questions. Each scale was tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha (α). The reliability tests assessed the scales' measurement consistency, and according to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), scores below 0.70 are not consistent. All scales in this study had alphas above 0.70.

The behavioral belief questions asked respondents to rate their beliefs about collaboration with a tourism entity on 13 items. In accordance with Ajzen (1991), one question measured respondents' strength of the belief ($\alpha = 0.8622$), while the second question measured respondents' evaluation of the outcome of that belief ($\alpha = 0.7739$). For example, the item regarding financial benefit was assessed with the strength of belief question – "The land trust could financially benefit from collaboration with tourism entities: (1) Strongly Disagree – (6) Strongly Agree" – and the outcome evaluation question – "For the land trust, benefitting financially from collaboration with tourism entities is (1) Extremely Bad – (6) Extremely Good". The corresponding belief strength and evaluation of the outcome scores

Table 1. Behavioral belief scores.

Belief	Mean belief strength (range 1–6)*	Mean outcome evaluation (range 1–6)**	Weighted score (range 1–36)
Maintain conservation ethics	4.9 (SD = 0.81), $n = 267$	5.9 (SD = 0.43), $n = 260$	28.8 (SD = 5.3), $n = 257$
Increase dialogue about open space	4.9 (SD = 0.97), $n = 269$	5.6 (SD = 0.60), $n = 260$	27.7 (SD = 6.7), $n = 257$
Greater resident understanding of economic benefits of land protection	4.6 (SD = 1.0), $n = 268$	5.7 (SD = 0.53), $n = 262$	26.8 (SD = 6.7), $n = 260$
Greater local community exposure for the land trust	4.7 (SD = 0.98), $n = 269$	5.5 (SD = 0.64), $n = 264$	26.6 (SD = 6.8), $n = 261$
Benefit for the land trust	4.9 (SD = 0.89), $n = 269$	5.2 (SD = 0.66), $n = 262$	26.0 (SD = 6.3), $n = 257$
Existence of mutual interests	5.1 (SD = 0.97), $n = 274$	4.9 (SD = 0.78), $n = 259$	25.7 (SD = 6.9), $n = 258$
Increased financial support for the land trust	4.5 (SD = 1.0), $n = 268$	5.2 (SD = 0.79), $n = 260$	23.7 (SD = 7.2), $n = 256$
The economy as reason for land protection	4.5 (SD = 1.0), $n = 268$	5.1 (SD = 0.53), $n = 262$	23.3 (SD = 7.5), $n = 254$
Greater exposure to visitors for the land trust	4.6 (SD = 1.1), $n = 266$	4.9 (SD = 0.80), $n = 263$	22.9 (SD = 7.7), $n = 257$
Maintain public access to protected land protocols	4.4 (SD = 1.2), $n = 264$	4.8 (SD = 0.97), $n = 261$	21.4 (SD = 7.5), $n = 255$
Prevent public perception of conflict of interest	4.2 (SD = 1.0), $n = 267$	4.8 (SD = 0.85), $n = 257$	20.6 (SD = 6.5), $n = 253$
Tourism entities too opposed to open space	4.6 (SD = 1.0), $n = 267$	3.9 (SD = 1.4), $n = 250$	17.8 (SD = 7.9), $n = 249$
Tourism entities too growth orientated	3.8 (SD = 1.1), $n = 266$	4.0 (SD = 1.1), $n = 256$	15.7 (SD = 7.0), $n = 254$
Composite behavioral belief score	**307 (SD = 48.7), $n = 214$**		**Possible range (13–468)**

*1 = Strongly disagree, 6 = Strongly agree.
**1 = Extremely bad, 6 = Extremely good.

were then multiplied to obtain a single weighted (per item) score (WS), with a possible range of 1–36. A composite behavioral belief score was calculated by summing the WS for each item, with a possible range of 13–468. Table 1 indicates the 13 behavioral belief items and their respective scores.

Collaboration theory propositions 1 and 2 (Jamal & Getz, 1995) were conceptualized as being behavioral beliefs concerned with the recognition of mutual interests regarding the project and the potential mutual benefits arrived from collaboration. Analysis of individual behavioral beliefs, as illustrated in Table 1, revealed that land trusts' executive directors recognized the existence of mutual interests (WS = 25.7), that benefits may be derived (WS = 26.0) and that their land trust could maintain their conservation ethics (WS = 28.8) during collaboration. Specific benefits considered most viable included increased dialogue about open space (WS = 27.7), greater resident understanding of economic benefits of land protection (WS = 26.8), greater local community exposure (WS = 26.6) and increased financial support (WS = 23.7). Therefore, it appears that land trust representatives believed that propositions 1 and 2 could be met. Additionally, the behavioral belief composite score, 307 out of a possible 468, indicated that land trust representatives were moderately favorable

Table 2. Normative belief scores.

Referent group	Mean belief strength (range 1–6)*	Mean motivation to comply (range 1–6)*	Weighted score (range 1–36)
Land trust board members	3.9 (SD = 1.3), $n = 246$	5.3 (SD = 0.72), $n = 252$	21.1 (SD = 8.1), $n = 240$
Land trust financial donors	4.2 (SD = 1.0), $n = 246$	4.7 (SD = 0.87), $n = 249$	20.1 (SD = 6.0), $n = 241$
Local residents	4.3 (SD = 0.91), $n = 243$	4.3 (SD = 0.88), $n = 247$	18.5 (SD = 6.0), $n = 237$
Other conservation organizations	4.3 (SD = 0.88), $n = 241$	4.0 (SD = 0.95), $n = 247$	16.8 (SD = 5.6), $n = 237$
Local environmentalists	4.1 (SD = 1.1), $n = 243$	4.1 (SD = 0.99), $n = 248$	16.4 (SD = 6.0), $n = 238$
Other land trusts' executive directors	3.7 (SD = 1.3), $n = 218$	3.7 (SD = 1.1), $n = 239$	14.1 (SD = 7.0), $n = 213$
Composite normative belief score	**105 (SD = 29.3), $n = 204$**		**Possible range (12–216)**

*1 = Definitely false, 6 = Definitely true.

toward collaborating with a tourism entity (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Francis et al., 2004; Steel & Porche, 2005).

Laing et al. (2009) also found that major outcomes for collaboration around natural area issues included an increased understanding of the value of protected areas, an increased engagement of the local community and benefits for all partners. Gray (1989) suggested that greater recognition of the problem domain might be a major benefit of collaboration.

The normative belief questions contained six items regarding the land trusts' executive directors' perceptions of their referent groups' opinions about collaboration with a tourism entity. Land trust representatives identified the referent groups, and in accordance with Ajzen (1991), each item was measured with one question regarding respondents' strength of belief ($\alpha = 0.8866$) and one measuring the motivation to comply ($\alpha = 0.7935$). The corresponding belief strength and motivation to comply scores were then multiplied to obtain a single WS, with a possible range of 1–36. A composite normative belief score was calculated by summing the WS for each item, with a possible range of 12–216 (see Table 2).

Proposition 4 was concerned with identifying key stakeholders, and for this study, was conceptualized to be land trust representatives' referent groups and the perceptions of those referent groups. Table 2 depicts that the land trust board members (WS = 21.1) and land trust donors (WS = 20.1) were considered the most influential referent groups when determining the possibility of collaborating with a tourism entity. Additionally, the normative belief composite score, 105 out of a possible 216, indicated that the land trust representatives felt little or no social pressure regarding collaboration with a tourism entity (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Francis et al., 2004).

Jamal and Stronza (2009) depicted the importance of including appropriate groups and indicated that new groups may be formed during the collaboration process to fill a particular niche or to strengthen the position of particular stakeholders. Laing et al. (2009) noted that identifying and engaging key stakeholders was considered an important factor for successful collaboration. Considering collaboration as a partnership rather than

Table 3. Control belief scores.

Beliefs	Mean belief strength (range 1–6)*	Mean motivation of belief power (range 1–6)**	Weighted score (range 1–36)
Ability to operate in open and honest manner	4.9 (SD = 0.81), $n = 248$	5.1 (SD = 0.78), $n = 248$	25.0 (SD = 6.3), $n = 244$
Ability to determine conservation principles	4.9 (SD = 0.90), $n = 253$	5.1 (SD = 0.92), $n = 242$	24.9 (SD = 6.8), $n = 240$
Ability to increase land protection efforts	4.6 (SD = 0.96), $n = 249$	4.9 (SD = 0.78), $n = 246$	23.1 (SD = 6.8), $n = 241$
Ability to determine similar interests in land protection	4.4 (SD = 0.99), $n = 251$	4.9 (SD = 0.79), $n = 252$	21.9 (SD = 6.9), $n = 249$
Composite control belief score	**95.9 (SD = 23.4), $n = 231$**		**Possible range (4–144)**

*1 = Strongly disagree, 6 = Strongly agree.
**1 = Much more difficult, 6 = Very much easier.

a contractual agreement was suggested as a way to strengthen the relationship and provide better stakeholder participation (Wilson et al., 2009).

The control belief questions asked the respondents to rate four items regarding influences on whether collaboration with a tourism entity could occur. In accordance with Ajzen (1991), each item was measured with a question about respondents' strength of the belief ($\alpha = 0.8511$) and a question regarding the belief power of the issue ($\alpha = 0.8677$). The corresponding belief strength and power scores were then multiplied to obtain a single WS, with a possible range of 1–36. A composite control belief score was calculated by summing the WS for each item, with a possible range of 4–144 (see Table 3).

Propositions 3 and 6 were concerned with the ability to agree upon aims and objectives and the ability to implement an agreed-upon plan. These propositions were conceptualized as perceived control issues, and Table 3 reveals that the ability to operate in an open and honest manner (WS = 25.0) and the ability to determine conservation principles (WS = 24.9) were the beliefs that land trust representatives felt they had most control over. Additionally, the control belief composite score, 95.9 out of 144, indicated that land trust representatives believed they had a moderate amount of control over the decision to collaborate with a tourism entity (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Francis et al., 2004).

Laing et al. (2009) found that open communication between partners was the most important variable for successful collaboration, and that being able to trust partners was also necessary (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). The ability to determine conservation principles is both important and controversial as some protected areas are accused of choosing economics over the environment (Baringer, 2002; Borrie et al., 2002).

The direct measures of intention (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control) as well as intention itself were measured on scales. The questions used to determine the direct measures were based upon the global items suggested by Ajzen (1991, 2002). Attitude toward the behavior was determined by asking the respondents to rate five global attitudes (useful, important, rewarding, enjoyable and good) regarding land trusts' collaboration with a tourism entity ($\alpha = 0.9060$) on a scale from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree. The overall attitude score (4.52) indicated a favorable attitude toward collaboration.

Subjective norm was determined by asking the respondents to rate their opinion of (1) people who are important to them, people whose opinions they value, people who have

Table 4. Direct measures and intention scores.

Component	Mean	SD	*n*
Attitude	4.52*	.91	262
Subjective norm	3.79**	1.22	230
Perceived behavioral control	3.98**	1.26	249
Intention	4.12*	1.2	243

*1 = Strongly disagree, 6 = Strongly agree.
**1 = Definitely false, 6 = Definitely true.

expectations of them; and (2) those individuals' personal behaviors regarding collaboration with a tourism entity ($\alpha = 0.9581$) on a scale from (1) definitely false to (6) definitely true. The overall subjective norm score (3.79) indicated that the respondents felt little, if any, pressure from their referent groups to collaborate.

Perceived behavioral control was determined by asking the respondents to rate four items ("Belief that collaboration is possible", "I can choose to collaborate", "I have control over the choice" and "It is mostly up to me") regarding control issues surrounding collaboration with a tourism entity ($\alpha = 0.8163$) on a scale from (1) definitely false to (6) definitely true. The overall perceived behavioral control score (3.98) indicated that respondents felt they had some control over the choice to collaborate.

Intention to collaborate with a tourism entity ($\alpha = 0.9387$) was determined by asking respondents to rate three items (try to, plan on and intend to collaborate) on a scale from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree. The overall intention score (4.12) indicated that respondents had an intention to seek out collaboration efforts with a tourism entity, but it did not appear to be a strong one (see Table 4 for direct measures and intention scores).

Regression analysis revealed that the indirect measures with the embedded collaboration propositions significantly ($p < 0.001$) contributed to the corresponding direct measures (Figure 3). The indirect measures did a better job of identifying behavioral beliefs that influenced attitude ($R^2 = 0.64$) than normative beliefs influencing subjective norm ($R^2 = 0.45$) or control beliefs influencing perceived behavioral control ($R^2 = 0.17$). These scores indicate that while the indirect measures contribute to their respective direct measures, there is room for more beliefs to be identified in order to more fully understand the land trust–tourism entity collaboration potential (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). An in-depth interview inquiry of land trusts' representatives may reveal more beliefs and provide a better understanding of the beliefs (Wilson et al., 2009).

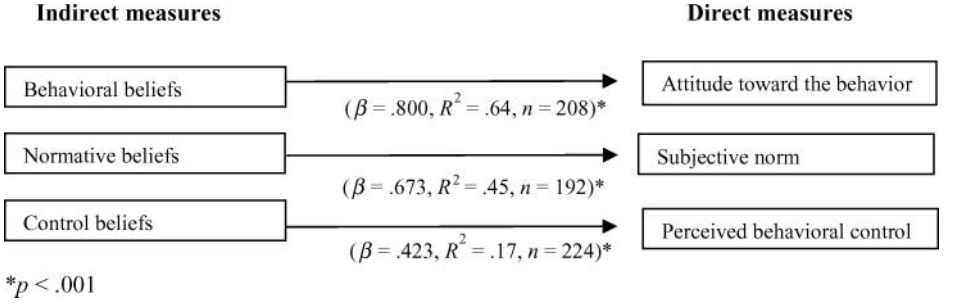

Figure 3. Indirect measures' effects on corresponding direct measures.

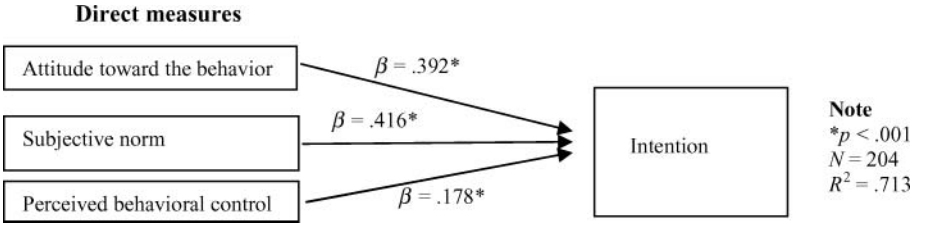

Figure 4. Direct measures' effects on intention.

As illustrated in Figure 4, each direct measure was significantly ($p < 0.001$) positively correlated with intention. The model accounted for a substantial ($R^2 = 0.713$) amount of the influence on intention, with subjective norm ($\beta = 0.416$) having the most influence. Therefore, the land trusts' executive directors were more influenced by their referent groups than by their own personal attitude ($\beta = 0.391$), and perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.178$) was much less influential.

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) stated that disparity between the direct measures' influences on intention is not surprising. Difference can exist on the same topic. In studying pro-environmental behavior, Powell and Ham (2008) found attitude to be the most influential direct measure, but Brown et al. (2010) found personal norms to be the most important.

Although subjective norm was the most influential direct measure in this study, research on travel decisions have found subjective norms to be the least important (Lam & Hsu, 2004) and even not significant (Shen et al., 2009). Additionally, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) suggested that the theory of planned behavior is a flexible framework and several studies have found that additional indirect and direct measures can improve the predictability of the regression equation (Kim & Han, 2010; Lee & Choi, 2009; Sparks, 2006), and in some cases, they can be the most influential predictor of intention (Brown et al., 2010; Sparks, 2006).

In this study, the collaboration propositions were conceptualized as indirect measures or beliefs, which according to the theory of planned behavior, affect the corresponding direct measures. Although the results illustrated in Figure 3 indicated that not all of the important beliefs regarding collaboration were identified, several beliefs were identified and these should be addressed for a successful collaborative endeavor.

Conclusion and future research

This study is unique in its attempt to measure the collaboration process using the theory of planned behavior. It addresses the collaboration potential between local and regional nonprofit conservation-minded land trusts and profit-driven entities in a tourism context in the US. Furthermore, this research is an early step directed at creating a practical model that may allow tourism stakeholders to more easily build environmental conservation into their business plans. It also contributes to the tourism collaboration literature by building from the case study approach to a quantitative study incorporating numerous respondents across the US, which allows for a greater degree of generalization.

Although the model accounted for 71.3% of the variance in intention, the β-values for attitude and subjective norm were only moderate, while the β-value for perceived behavioral control was weak. Modifying the theory of planned behavior model to include additional direct measures such as past experience may increase the ability to understand intention. A

more in-depth interview process focusing on land trusts that are collaborating with tourism entities may provide data that allows for more beliefs to be identified, while providing a better understanding of the direct measures.

Jamal and Getz's (1995) collaboration propositions were chosen for this study because they were based upon collaboration between tourism destination organizations. Although these propositions were useful in determining a land trust's intention to collaborate, they were part of a model that only identified moderate amounts of the indirect measures. A higher number of beliefs might be accounted for by re-conceptualizing the meanings of the propositions, especially the control issues. An in-depth interview inquiry of land trusts that have successfully collaborated with tourism entities might also aid in better understanding the propositions in this context. Further exploration through interviews could reveal other direct measures of intention that should be included along with attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control.

This study was from the land trust representatives' point of view because it was surmised that they would be the most likely initiators of collaboration. However, they are only one-half of the equation. Research on collaboration from the tourism entity representatives' point of view is essential to fully understand the relationship and assess the potential. The fractured nature of the tourism sector could mean that local, regional and state tourism boards might be the first place to start this line of inquiry. These boards most likely represent a cross-section of tourism interests which would be useful to collaboration research. Studies revealing the amount of development and environmental degradation that must occur before the destination loses its appeal would be useful. Data of this nature could clarify and help quantify tourism's need for a quality environment and allow or encourage tourism planners to evaluate their destinations' environment as an attraction or a BTE (Jafari, 1982).

Another important component in land trust research is the landowner. Regardless of the land trust representatives' and tourism entities' interest in a property, the landowner may not be interested. Therefore, it is important to understand landowners' motivations to place a conservation easement on their land. Research in the US Midwest, which is primarily farmland, found that landowners were motivated by their connection (often generationally) to the land rather than by monetary gains (Farmer, Chancellor, & Fischer, 2011). However, landowners in other locations, specifically where tourism is more prevalent and is a major economic resource, may have different motivations.

In conclusion, land trusts are able to provide an efficient, economical method of protecting the landscape, while tourism entities may be able to provide financial support, promotions and an increased awareness of the importance of natural areas to the local population and tourists. A better understanding of potential collaboration between land trusts and tourism entities may increase the number of natural areas that are protected and aid in protecting a destination's BTEs and image. Collaboration of this nature may become a viable and effective tool for sustainable tourism planning particularly at the local and regional levels.

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