



TrailAngels

THE WAY BEYOND

JOINING FORCES

How Responsible Tourism & Nature Conservation can team up for a Sustainable Future



Luchs Trail/ ©Stefan Leitner

lifelineMDD Biosphere Reserve Conference
20 Slides by Rudi Trinko, Trail Angels
07.09.2022



Agenda

- (1) Who we are
- (2) The Challenges
- (3) Our Approach & Examples
- (4) Outlook

(1) WHO WE ARE

The Trail Angels



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Our Mission:

*„We are creators, enablers
& ambassadors for
sustainable tourism“*

„Sustainability as the new Normal - a Vision for the Future of Tourism“ World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). We are inspired to implement the vision of the UNWTO on a regional/local level.

(1) WHO WE ARE



©TRAIL ANGELS/HUBER

Our team is constantly growing, that's maybe why we are not able to take a photo of the whole team. More on the Trail Angels you will find here: <https://www.trail-angels.com/team/>

The Trail Angels

Our Team

- + Founded: 09/2015
- + Head Office:
Obervellach/Kärnten/Austria
- + Business licenses: Tourism consulting & Travel Agency/Tour Operator
- + Size of Team: 12 (as of July 1st 2022)
- + What we do:
 - Design, market, manage & enable sustainable tourism products and destinations, focusing on long distance hiking & cycling trails
 - Running a capable booking centre for appr. 30 trails & 25 B2B sales partner (e.g. National Geographic Expeditions)

(1) WHO WE ARE



© VARIOUS (CREDITS IN THE PICTURE CAPTION)

The Trail Angels

Our Projects:

- + Alpe-Adria-Trail
 - Flagship long distance hiking trail for Carinthia, Slovenia & Friuli Venezia Giulia (ITA)
- + Appr. 25 bookable trails in the Alpe-Adria destination
- + Amazon of Europe Bike Trail
 - Partner in two INTERREG DTP projects
- + High Scardus Trail
 - PPP with GIZ for development of sustainable tourism on the Western Balkans
- + Fair Trails® Himalayas
 - PPP with ADA for development of sustainable tourism in the Himalayas

Some of our projects (clockwise from top): Alpe-Adria-Trail (F. GERDL/KW); Amazon of Europe Bike Trail, (ISKRIVA); High Scardus Trail (TRAIL ANGELS/M. NELSON) and Fair Trails® Himalayas (FAIR TRAILS/M. MAUTHNER)

(2) THE CHALLENGES



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Our Assumption:

The challenge for joining forces of tourism and nature conservation is essentially to create a mutual trust and understanding. And this in a time of crisis, in which framework conditions continue to tighten!

Challenge 1: Increase mutual understanding

Challenge 2: React to the global climate crisis

Tourism is of paramount importance for the development of rural regions. However, the question always arises as to the direction in which tourism is developing: A new large resort in the traditional mountain village of Kals; Hohe Tauern National Park

(2) THE CHALLENGES



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1. Increase mutual understanding

The **tourism industry** still does not take nature conservation seriously. Not only because of their traditional opposition in terms of nature consuming and destroying investments. But also because the implementation of sustainable tourism does not promise short-term profits, or even reduce them in the long term.

Nature conservation still reflexively rejects tourism because the industry (see above) still lacks awareness and good will. But also because conservationists often do not believe in the potential of responsible tourism themselves, or do not want to deal with it.

Both sides have to move (tourism a bit more ☺) to make things better in the future!

We love nature to death: when the carrying capacity is exceeded, nature takes irreparable damage. And also deprives responsible tourism of its foundations in the future: Passo Falzarego, UNESCO World Heritage Site Dolomiti; August 2022

(2) THE CHALLENGES



2. React to the Global Climate Crisis

In recent years, the global climate crisis has added to the major challenges for nature-friendly and sustainable tourism. At a speed and intensity that we could not have imagined 10 years ago. A development that will call into question the future of travel as a whole.

Can tourism even provide any answers to the climate crisis and if so, which ones?

© FOTO WEBCAM

The scale and speed of climate change are frightening: the Mölltaler Glacier skiresort was opened in 1986. In 2022, only small remnants of the glacier are left. Believe it or not: There are still plans, to expand glacier ski resorts in the Alps!

(3) OUR APPROACH



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Our Approach & Examples:

To tackle these major challenges, we can provide approaches at the regional and local level. Applicable, scalable & based on proven examples:

Approach 1: Tell the exciting stories

Approach 2: Identify the needs

Approach 3: Get really involved

Approach 4: Be transparent & fair

Approach 5: Be climate neutral

Approach 6: Awake local talent & leadership

Local Life Trail: A Fair Trail® in the Himalayas. To immerse into the daily life of different ethnic groups of village Nepal. For a better understanding and to learn from each other.

(3) OUR APPROACH



1. Tell the exciting Stories

Every destination has exceptional, exciting stories. Just tell them in an thrilling way and make them the focus of the journey. And include the abilities of the local experts. E.g.:

Lynx Trail

Dedicated to the protection of the Lynx in Austria's wild midwest (connecting 2 national parks & 1 wilderness area); former named as „Nature Forest Trail Eisenwurzen“

Snow Leopard Trail

Dedicated to the protection of the Snow Leopard in the Himalayas, close to the popular Annapurna Circuit

Amazon of Europe Bike Trail

Of course ;-); brand is creating images in the mind!

© FAIR TRAILS/T. SATTLER

Following the traces of the mystic Snow Leopard: Experiencing the Snow Leopard Trail in the Annapurnas with nature conservationist Tashi R. Ghale

(3) THE APPROACH



© TRAIL ANGELS/M. NELSON

The endemic Sharri dogs have been bred for centuries for the protection of sheep herds on the Western Balkans. The High Scardus Trail project supports the purchase and training of the dogs for financially disadvantaged shepherds.

2. Identify the Needs

If you want to give back with travel and let travelers become part of the solution, not the problem, you should address the destination's grand challenges. By involving local experts, identifying the needs that should be solved & where help can be provided efficiently.

Lynx Trail

Protection & monitoring of Lynx

Snow Leopard Trail

Protection of Snow Leopard and supporting cohabitation of locals & Snow Leopards

Amazon of Europe Bike Trail

Nature conservation projects in the MDD Biosphere Reserve

High Scardus Trail

(3) THE APPROACH



The Snow Leopard Scout Program, designed by our expert Tashi R. Ghale for the Shree Annapurna Secondary School in Manang, aims to increase the understanding of young people in the region for species conservation.

3. Get Really Involved

In addition to transparent & unbureaucratic management of the supported impact projects, travelers should be given the opportunity to immerse themselves in these projects during their trip. In the best case, even make an active contribution to them.

Lynx Trail

Purchase of tracking collars

Snow Leopard Trail

Purchase of fox lights & support of the Snow Leopard Scout Program

Local Life Trail

Purchase of portable water filters for homestays

Fair Trails Ladakh

Electrifying of remote mountain villages

(3) THE APPROACH



4. Be transparent and fair

If social, ecological & economic sustainability for travel is really implemented & not sacrificed in the hard nosed competition by means of greenwashing, this must also be reflected in the price of travel. Although customers accept a certain additional price, it is the responsibility of the DMO/DMC to implement a transparent business model that distributes profits fairly & ensures regional impact.

Alpe Adria Trail

Integrated, license based business model

Fair Trails

„Impact first“ business model

High Scardus Trail

Self steered, transnational DMO

© KAERTEN WERBUNG/F. GERDL

Stronger together: The cooperation of the Alpe-Adria-Trail partner accommodations has become more and more close over the years. The individual businesses between Heiligenblut and Muggia are proud to be part of an international flagship product.

(3) THE APPROACH



5. Be (at least) Climate Neutral

In these times of global climate crisis, tourism in particular must increasingly live up to its responsibility to keep its ecological footprint low. With various measures that are integrated into the travel product (and not optionally bookable) or, with regard to long-distance travel, also by means of self-restraint (e.g. life time experiences instead of frequent long distance vacations).

Travel Life

Obligatory sustainability certification for travel agencies

Atmosfair® for Fair Trails®

Carbon offset included in travel price

Alpe-Adria-Trail (and many more)

Green Spirit Program

© KLAUS DAPRA

With the Green Spirit program, the share of guests arriving by train on the Alpe-Adria-Trail could be increased to 40% within a few years.

(3) THE APPROACH



© TRAIL ANGELS/M. NELSON

Cooperation instead of competition: Experts from different sectors and from 3 countries work together with the Trail Angels and GIZ on a flagship project: The High Scardus Trail

6. Awake Local Talent & Leadership

Free destinations from one-sided dependencies on shareholder-driven investors and international travel agents. Instead, support locally or regionally steered structures, cooperative models, the local pride and self-confidence in the regions, and valorize the so often overlooked knowledge of local experts.

Lynx Trail

Cooperative model out of destinations and protected areas

High Scardus Trail

Transnational cooperation model

Fair Trails® Himalayas

Integrating outstanding local experts into the experience design

(4) OUTLOOK



© FAIR TRAILS/M. MAUTHNER

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness”

Marc Twain

Travelling should be part of our life in future too.

Let’s make this happen, by acting responsible, minimizing our ecological footprint and partnering nature conservation, social inclusion and sustainable tourisms.

Change through exchange: Fair Trails expert Nanga Sherpa explains to Fair Trails travelers, with whom he is already forming a team, about the real challenges in the lives of Sherpas today, far beyond the usual clichés



TrailAngels

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