

# **Mechelle N. Best, Ph.D.**

*Assistant Professor & Graduate Coordinator*  
Department of Recreation & Tourism Management  
*Faculty Associate*, Institute for Sustainability  
California State University, Northridge

## **EDUCATION**

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- 2008      University of Florida, Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management,  
Gainesville, Florida  
Ph.D. Health & Human Performance  
Concentrations: Tourism & Sustainability  
Dissertation: Environmental management in the accommodations sector in the  
Anglophone Caribbean
- 2002      University of the West Indies, Centre for Resource Management & Environmental  
Studies, Cave Hill, Barbados  
M.Sc. Natural Resource Management  
Major: Coastal & Marine Resources  
Research Paper: An institutional evaluation of Caribbean marine protected areas:  
Dominica and the Turks & Caicos Islands.
- 1999      Barbados Community College, St. Michael, Barbados  
Certificate - Environmental Studies
- 1998      Caribbean Action for Sustainable Tourism & Florida Solar Energy Centre  
Certificate - Renewable Energy
- 1997      University of the West Indies, School of Continuing Studies, Barbados  
Certificate – Marketing & Public Relations
- 1995      University of the West Indies, Department of Management Studies, Bahamas &  
Jamaica  
B.Sc. Hotel Management (First Class Honours)

## **ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

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- 2008 -**      **California State University, Northridge**  
*Assistant Professor*, Department of Recreation & Tourism Management  
*Faculty Associate*, Institute for Sustainability

### ***Graduate Courses***

- RTM 510 Trends and Issues in Hospitality and Tourism
- RTM 530 Cultural Aspects and Global Perspectives in Tourism
- RTM 550 Marketing and Promotion in Recreational Sport and Tourism
- RTM 580 Tourism Planning: A Cultural and International Perspective
- RTM 610 Ecotourism
- RTM 693 A & B Supervised Internship in Recreational Sport or Tourism
- RTM 695AT Alternative Tourism (developed & taught)
- RTM 697 Directed Comprehensive Studies

### ***Undergraduate Courses***

- RTM 424/RTM 396MC Meetings & Conventions (developed & taught)
- RTM 434 Accommodations Management (developed)
- RTM 481/RTM 496ST Principles of Sustainable Tourism (developed & taught)
- SUST300/URBS 495C Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sustainability (developed & co-taught)
- SUST310 Best Practices in Sustainability (developed & co-taught)

***Major advisor*** – Tourism concentration (graduate & undergraduate)

***Thesis advisor*** - M.Sc. candidates (2009-10, 2 students)

***Independent study supervisor*** – various topics

### **2004 – 2008 University of Florida – Gainesville, Florida**

Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management

#### ***Instructor***

- LEI 3832 Special Events & Meetings Planning
- LEI 3836 Hospitality Management
- LEI 4833 Ecotourism (co-taught)

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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#### **2002 - *Tourism & Environmental Management Consultant***

*The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism (March, 2010 & June, 2011)*

- Prepared and delivered 3-day Environmental Management workshop for Tourism Development Services unit.
- Prepared guideline document to assist officers of the Tourism Development Services unit to support tourism companies in implementing environmental management systems.

*The Cayman Islands Environmental Project for the Tourism Sector (CEPTS) (April, 2008 – June 2009) (Sub-contract)*

- Prepared and delivered 2-day Environmental Management workshop for hoteliers
- Conducted 3-day environmental assessment at 7 hotels and 1 attraction and submitted reports on the assessments.
- Additional project tasks include: conducting an environmental assessment on an attraction; assisting hotels and attraction to develop and implement an environmental management system; assisting hotels with preparation for Green Globe benchmarking and certification.

*Rockhouse Hotel - Jamaica (2008) (Sub-contract)*

- Conducted a 3-day hotel environmental assessment.

*The Bahamas Sustainable Tourism Entrepreneurial Management & Marketing Project - Bahamas (2007) (Sub-contract)*

- Prepared and delivered 5-day Environmental Management System course for local consultants
- Prepared and proctored assessment examination for participants
- Prepared protocols for use by consultants to conduct 3-day environmental assessment, report on the assessment, and assist hotels with developing and implementing an environmental management system.

*The Tryall Club - Jamaica (2005) (Sub-contract)*

- Conducted a 3-day hotel environmental assessment.

*Caribbean Hotel Environmental Management Initiative (2003 – 2004) (Sub-contract)*

(CHEMI - a project implemented by the PA Consulting Group under the aegis of the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, funded by the United States Agency for International Development)

- Coordinated the production of five (5) training videos on environmental best practices for the hotel industry. Specifically responsible for selecting the hotels from throughout the Caribbean showcased in the videos, assisting in the drafting and finalization of each script, arranging logistics for the production team and assisting in the editing process.
- Conducted Hotel Environmental Assessments on eleven (11) hotels in six (6) countries of the Eastern Caribbean (Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines); conducted environmental assessments at three (3) attractions in Dominica.
- Provided technical input in the planning of phase 2 of the EMS segment of the project.
- Assisted hotels in developing and implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS).
- Monitored hotels' implementation of their EMS throughout on-site visits and provided off-site support as necessary.

- Reviewed EMS documentation submitted by the forty (40) hotels in phase 2 of the project.
- Delivered various training courses for hotels on the project during a 10 month period.
- Assisted the hotels with the establishment of a system for Green Globe 21 benchmarking and certification.

*Almond Resorts, Inc. - St. Peter, Barbados (2003 – 2004)*

- Assisted the hotels with their preparation for Green Globe 21 assessment for re-certification.
- Provided ongoing technical support on the hotels' Environmental Management System.
- Provided training to hotels' Green Team and general staff as necessary.
- Developed an Emergency Response Manual for the company's two hotels, detailing the procedures for responding to the most likely emergencies the hotel will experience. Includes procedures for fires, chemical spills, hurricanes, Kick 'em Jenny (an underwater volcano), and general accidents and emergencies.

**2006 - 2007** *Intern, The Original Florida Tourism Task Force, Gainesville, Florida*

Provided support to the Director of the Task Force in a range of areas including

- Preparing applications for prestigious state awards such as the Flagler Award bestowed by VISITFLORIDA™ and the Council for Sustainable Florida's Best Practices Award. These submissions were finalists for both awards.
- Preparing grant applications
- Designing a "Hands on" arts trail of North Central Florida
- Organising a series of agritourism workshops
- Marketing the North Central Florida Black Heritage Trail
- Re-designing brochures and other promotional material
- Designing a webpage for the Task Force's partners

**1999 – 2002** *Environmental & Conservation Manager, Almond Resorts, Inc., Barbados*

- Organised and managed all environmental issues within the company.
- Implemented Environmental Management system at each of the company's two (2) hotels, resulting in the certification of the Almond Beach Club & Spa and Almond Beach Village by Green Globe 21.
- Conducted various workshops and seminars for staff on environment related issues.
- Provided orientation for new employees on the company's environmental programme.
- Chaired the company's Emergency Response Team.
- Chaired the company's Green (environmental) Team.

- Represented the company on the Barbados Hotel & Tourism Association's Environmental Committee.
- Performed limited duties as Training Coordinator.
- Y2K Project Manager (1999-2000) Coordinated Almond Resorts' Y2K Project. This involved complete inventory and analysis of all equipment within the two hotels, and coordinating the contingency plans of all departments to ensure the continued operation of the company in the event of systems/equipment failure.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

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Best, M. N. & Phulgence, W. (2012). The contested heritage of sugar and slavery at tourism attractions in Barbados and St. Lucia. In L. Jolliffe (Ed.) *Sugar Heritage and Tourism in Transition*. Bristol, UK: Channel View Publications (forthcoming).

Best, M. N. & Thapa, B. (2011). Environmental management in the Caribbean accommodations sector. *Tourism*, 59 (2), 145-168.

Kurland, N. B., Michaud, K. E. H., Best, M., Wohldmann, E., Cox, H., Pontikis, K., et al. (2010). Overcoming silos: The role of an interdisciplinary course in shaping a sustainability network. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(3), 457-476.

Vasishth, A., Stephens, D., Wohldmann, E., Michaud, K., Best, M. N. (2010). Campus greening project: An integrative approach. In Proceedings of the Ball State University/AASHE Greening of the Campus Conference VIII, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Best, M. N. & Thapa, B. (2009). Environmental management outcomes in the accommodations sector in the anglophone Caribbean. In Proceedings of the Travel & Tourism Research Association Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Best, M. N. & Stein, T. V. (2007). *Nature-based tourism in Florida: Letting nature work for you*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Institute of Food & Agricultural Science.

Best, M. N. (2007). Management of marine protected areas in Dominica & The Turks & Caicos Islands. In J.C. Day et al. (Eds.), Proceedings of the First International Marine Protected Areas Congress, Geelong, Australia, 328-329.

Best, M., & Thapa, B. (2006). Nature-based tourism in Morne Trois Pitons National Park, Dominica. Abstract Proceedings from the 12th International Symposium on Society and Resource Management: Global Challenges and Local Responses, Vancouver, Canada, 22.

Stein, T. V., Albriton, Wyman, M., Holland, S., Floyd, M. & Best, M. N. (2006). *Jackson County Florida sustainable tourism plan*. Submitted to the Jackson County Tourist Development Council.

Francis, S., O'Sullivan, C., Richards, R., Best, M. N., Oxenford, H. & Anderson, W. (2004). A preliminary investigation of the relationships between the legislative status and ecological impacts of marine protected areas on the socioeconomic status of stakeholders in Jamaica and

The Turks and Caicos Islands. In R. L. Creswell (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 55th Annual Meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute*, Xel Ha, Yucatan, Mexico, 19-35.

Best, M. N. (2004). Barbados' GG 21 hotels: A reflection on their journey. In *Proceedings of the Green Globe 21 Conference on Sustainable Tourism*, Kaikoura, New Zealand.

Anderson, W., Best, M. N., Richards, R. A. (2002) *Marine protected areas report: Legal and policy framework*. Cave Hill, Barbados: Faculty of Law, University of the West Indies. Submitted to the Marine Resources Assessment Group for the UK Department for International Development NRSP Project R7976.

### ***Manuscripts in Progress***

Best, M. N. & Phulgence, W. (2012). Contested heritage at a sugar heritage attraction in St. Lucia (manuscript in review).

Best, M. N. & Phulgence, W. (2012). Perspectives on slavery interpretation at a sugar heritage attraction in Barbados (manuscript in preparation).

Best, M. N. (2012). Tourism education in Barbados (manuscript in preparation).

## **GRANTS**

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### ***Funded***

Best, M.N. & Cox, H. (2010-11). *CSUN on campus energy audits*. Center for Innovative & Engaged Learning Opportunities, California State University Northridge, \$2,000.

Best, M. N. (2010-2011). *Hugh Riley, Caribbean Tourism Organisation*. Distinguished Visiting Speakers, California State University, Northridge, \$1,200.00.

Best, M.N. & Cox, H. (2010-11). *CSUN & Northridge East Neighborhood Council Community Engagement Project*. Center for Innovative & Engaged Learning Opportunities, California State University Northridge, \$5,000.

Best, M. N. (Fall, 2010). *Tourism Planning study trip to the Barbados*. Instructionally Related Activities, California State University, Northridge, \$13,000.00.

Best, M. N. (PI) (2009-10). *The Greening of California's Lodging Industry*. CSUN Competition for Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, California State University, Northridge, \$5,000.00.

Michaud, K. (Dir), Best, M. N., Cox, H., Kurland, N., Pontikis, K. Vasisht, A. & Wohldmann, E. (Fall 2009). *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sustainability*. Judge Julian Beck Learning-Centered Instructional Project Grant, California State University, Northridge, \$6,000.00.

Best, M. N. (Spring, 2009). *Tourism Planning study trip to the Cayman Islands*. Instructionally Related Activities, California State University, Northridge, \$13,000.00.

Best, M. N. (Fall 2008). *Hunter Lovins, Natural Capitalism Inc.* Distinguished Visiting Speakers, California State University, Northridge, \$1,800.00.

### ***Unfunded***

Cox, H., Best, M. N., Foley, B. & Vandergon, G. (Submitted 2011). *A Student Energy and Water Consumption Analysis Tool (SEWCAT) for Data Sharing in the Classroom*. National Science Foundation, Transforming Undergraduate Education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (TUES) \$195,468.

Best, M. N. (PI), Stein, T.V., & Ricks, B. (Submitted April, 2010). *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area*. Santa Monica Mountains Fund, \$18,000.00.

Best, M. N. (Spring 2009). *Tourism Planning: A Cultural and International Perspective*. CSUN Probationary Faculty Support Program, California State University, Northridge, 3 units reassigned.

## **RESEARCH**

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*Tourism education in secondary schools in the Caribbean*, Principal Investigator (in progress).

*Heritage of sugar and slavery at tourism attractions in Barbados and St. Lucia*, Co-Principal Investigator (in progress).

*Environmental management in California's lodging industry*, Principal Investigator.

*Environmental management in the Caribbean accommodations sector*, P.I. (2007-2008) - Survey of accommodations in 19 countries in the English speaking Caribbean. Study looked at motivations, facilitators, and challenges of implementing environmental management. Also solicited outcomes of environmental management.

*Family experiences in off highway vehicle recreation in Florida*, Co-Investigator with Taylor V. Stein, Ph.D. (P.I.), (2007-2008) - Used the Delphi Method to investigate the experiences of families who participate in off highway vehicle recreation.

*Florida Nature-based Tourism*, Co-P.I. (2006-2007) – Surveyed nature-based tourism sites and developed a catalogue of case studies in the state of Florida. Published through EDIS, the Institute of Food & Agricultural Science's online electronic publication database.

*Visitation to Natural Attractions in Barbados*, P.I. (2006) – Satisfaction survey of visitors to four popular natural attractions.

*Jackson County, Florida Sustainable Tourism Development*, Graduate Assistant (2005-2006) – Assisted with development of Jackson County Sustainable Tourism Plan. Coordinated and delivered workshop for the county's Tourist Development Council to

determine strategies for implementation of the plan. Coordinated and delivered presentations for County's Board of Commissioners.

## PRESENTATIONS

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*Best, M.N. (2012, May). "Caribbean R.O.G. (Return on Green) - How Have Caribbean Hotel Owners Profited by Being More Green and Sustainable? What Can be Learned From These Experiences?" Invited presentation for the Caribbean Resort and Investment Summit (CHRIS), Miami, Florida.*

Best, M. N. (2012, March). Integrating tourism into the public school curriculum in Barbados. Invited presentation for the Conférence on Tourism and Education, Fort de France, Martinique.

Best, M. N. & Phulgence, W. (2012, January). Contested Heritage at Sugar Heritage Attractions in Barbados and St. Lucia. Paper presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Tourism Conference, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.

Best, M. N. & Thapa, B. (2011, November). Environmental management in the Caribbean accommodations sector. Poster presented at the The Third Annual Green Lodging & Hospitality Conference, Orlando, Florida.

Best, M. & Cox, H. (2011, October). Extending our reach: Taking sustainability into the community. Paper presented at the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Conference, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Best, M. (2011, September). Tourism education in Caribbean secondary schools: Barbados. Presented to the Tourism Syllabus Working Committee of the Caribbean Examination Council, Barbados.

Best, M. N. (2011, August). Sustainable tourism development. Workshop for tourism managers from Hai'Nan Province People's Republic of China, hosted by US-China Business Training Center, California.

Wohldmann, E., Best, M. & Cox, H. (2011, February). Student engagement in sustainability practices. Poster presented at the Career Opportunities in Research & Research Infrastructure for Minority Institutions Program Regional Conference, California State University Northridge, California.

Wohldmann, E., Best, M. & Cox, H. (2011, January). Student engagement in sustainability practices. Poster presented at the California State University Northridge Faculty Retreat, Northridge California.

Best, M. N. (2010, August). Sustainable tourism. Workshop for tourism managers from Hubei Province, People's Republic of China, hosted by US-China Business Training Center, California.

Best, M. N. & Thapa, B. (2009, December). Motives for environmental management in the accommodations sector in the anglophone Caribbean. Paper presented at the First International Tourism Conference, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados.



- Best, M. N. & Thapa, B. (2009, June). Environmental management outcomes in the accommodations sector in the anglophone Caribbean. Paper presented at the Travel & Tourism Research Association Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Mincer, R. & Best, M. N. (2009, June). Developing a state birding trail for California. Paper presented at the National Extension Tourism Conference, Park City, Utah.
- Best, M. N. (2009, April). Greening the hotel sector of California's tourism industry. Paper presented at the Greening XVIII Conference, Northridge, California.
- Best, M. N. (2008, October). Sustainable tourism. Workshop for tourism managers from Hubei Province, People's Republic of China hosted by the China Institute, California State University, Northridge.
- Best, M. N. & Stein, T. V. (2008, February). Family experiences in off highway vehicle recreation in Florida (poster). Poster presented at the Southeastern Recreation Research Conference, Savannah, Georgia.
- Best, M. N. & Stein, T. V. (2006, September). Identifying the opportunities & challenges of implementing nature-based tourism businesses in Florida. Paper presented at the National Extension Tourism Conference, Burlington, Vermont.
- Stein, T. V., Best, M. N., Holland, S., Albriton, R. & Floyd, M. (2006, September). Creating a sustainable tourism plan for Jackson County, Florida. Paper presented at the National Tourism Extension Conference, Burlington, Vermont.
- Best, M. N. (2006, March). An application of benefits-based management to the Laudat Community, Commonwealth of Dominica. Poster presented at the University of Florida Graduate Students Council Forum, Gainesville, Florida.
- Best, M. N. (2005, April). A review of legislation, policy and institutional arrangements, impacting the implementation of marine protected areas in Dominica & The Turks & Caicos Islands. Poster presented at the University of Florida Graduate Students Council Forum, Gainesville, Florida.
- Best, M. N. (2004, July). Environmental management - Improving operations & increasing the bottom line: The CHEMI experience. Paper presented at the Green Hotels Conference & Educational Symposium, Jamaica.
- Best, M. N. (2004, March). Barbados' GG 21 hotels: A reflection on their journey. Paper presented at the Green Globe 21 Conference on Sustainable Tourism, New Zealand.
- Best, M. N. (2003, October). Sustainable hotels for a better environment. Paper presented at the Caribbean Youth Symposium on the Environment, Barbados.
- Best, M. N. (2003, April). Community outreach: A means through which Barbados' accommodations sector is making tourism sustainable. Paper presented at the Jamaica Institute of Environmental Professionals' National Scientific Conference on the Environment, Kingston, Jamaica.
- Best, M. N. (2002, October). The greening of Barbados' tourism industry: The private sector role. Paper presented at the Caribbean Waste Water Association's Conference & Environmental

Forum, St. Lucia.

Best, M. N. (2002, July). Corporate environmental programmes: Greening from the top down. Paper presented at the Green Hotels Conference & Educational Symposium, Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Best, M. N. (2002, June). A Review of legislation, policy and institutional arrangements, assisting or constraining, the implementation of marine protected areas in Dominica and the Turks & Caicos Islands. Paper presented at the Sustainable Economic Development Unit Conference, UWI, St. Augustine, Trinidad.

Best, M. N. (2001, July). Best environmental practices for small hotels: Almond Resorts, Inc. Presentation at the Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association Annual General Meeting, Kingston, Jamaica.

Best, M. N. (2000, June). Eco opportunities for a sustainable future. Paper presented at the Caribbean Hotel Industry Conference, Cancun, Mexico.

## SERVICE

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### *California State University - Northridge*

- **Member**, Sustainability Curriculum Committee (2009- )
- **Faculty Associate** Institute for Sustainability & Core Greening Team **Member** (2008 –)

### *College of Health & Human Development, California State University Northridge*

- **Member**, HHD Sustainability Committee (2009-2011)
- **Marshall**, HHD Commencement Ceremony (2009, 2010, 2011)
- **Member**, HHD Research Fellows Program Selection Committee (2009/10)
- **Member**, Tseng College/HHD task force for MSc in travel and tourism management (2009-2010 )

### *Community*

- **Member**, Host Committee, Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Conference October 2012 (Jan- )
- **Reviewer**, Maritime Policy & Management (2012 - )
- **Reviewer**, International Journal of Tourism Research (2012 - )
- **Reviewer**, Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (2011 - )
- **Convenor**, Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) Tourism Management subject Panel, Caribbean Examination Council (July 2011 - )
- **Coordinator**, energy efficiency audits for select residences of the Northridge East Neighborhood Council (Spring 2011)
- **Coordinator**, tourism industry guest speakers for reading week, Vauxhall Primary School, Barbados (October 2010)
- **Coordinator**, 'Careers with a Purpose' in Travel & Tourism for Junior Achievement, Canoga Park High School (Fall 2010)
- **Member**, Water Track Committee, CA Higher Education Sustainability Conference (Feb-

- June, 2010)
- **External Thesis Examiner**, M.Sc. Tourism Development & Management, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine (2009 - )
- **Assessor**, environmental management assessments for 3 hotels, Santa Clarita Valley (Summer 2009)
- **Participant**, California Travel and Tourism Commission Sustainable Tourism Stakeholder Symposium (April 2009)
- **Member**, California Travel Industry Association Education Committee (Member, 2009)
- **Organising Committee Member**, Green Globe International & Caribbean Green Tourism Conference, Montego Bay, Jamaica 2006 (2005-2006)

## HONOURS & AWARDS

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- Outstanding International Student (HHP) – University of Florida (2007)
- Fulbright-OAS Ecology Scholar (2004 – 2006)
- Certificate of Recognition (Silver Star), Barbados Environmental Youth Programme (2003)
- Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association Environmental Ambassador Award (2001)
- European Union Natural Resource Management Scholar, University of the West Indies (2000 – 2001)
- Scotiabank Scholar, University of the West Indies (1992 - 1995)
- Barbados Government Bursary, University of the West Indies 1992 – 1995)

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & CERTIFICATIONS

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Building Performance Institute, Inc. - Certified Building Analyst Professional (energy efficiency)  
 California Travel Association  
 Caribbean Conservation Association  
 Green Globe 21 - Certified Consultant  
 International Association for Society & Natural Resources  
 Travel and Tourism Research Association  
 US Travel Association