As we reflect on the past year, I am excited to share our team’s latest accomplishments and activities. Recent events have sparked our interests and led us to examine an exciting new area of research—health-related crises. We are particularly interested in tick-borne diseases and have begun to conduct multidisciplinary research in this area. In alignment with this research agenda, we will be co-hosting the Tick-Borne Disease Think Tank in partnership with the University of Florida Emerging Pathogens Institute this fall to identify gaps in knowledge (pg. 5). This will allow us to further develop our research agenda and provide innovative, research-based solutions to a relevant problem.

We are also delighted to be working with Japan Tourism Marketing Co. to expand the Online Continuing Education Program in Tourism Crisis Management. TCMI team members will travel to Japan this fall to train Japanese tourism professionals to teach the course (pg. 14).

Please feel free to contact us for additional information or any assistance needed for tourism crisis management research, consultancy, and education and training services. Also be sure to visit our recently revamped website (www.tourismcrisis.org), as well as our social media accounts, for all of our recent initiatives.

Warmest regards,

Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray
Institute Directory

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- Masato Takamatsu, Japan Tourism Marketing Co.
- Jorge Villegas, Ph.D., University of Illinois, Springfield
TCMI is dedicated to preparing the tourism industry for both nature- and human-induced crises that may disrupt normal business operations through innovative, evidence-based research in the following areas:
The Tick-Borne Disease Think Tank
Dr. Holly Donohoe

In partnership with the University of Florida Emerging Pathogens Institute, the Tourism Crisis Management Institute will host a Tick-Borne Disease Symposium and Think Tank in the Fall of 2013.

Cases of tick-borne disease, such as Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, have been on the rise for several decades in the United States. The research indicates that those at greatest risk are individuals who spend time working, visiting, or recreating in outdoor environments in endemic areas of the country. However, extant tick-borne pathogens are spreading across the U.S., new pathogens are being discovered at an accelerating pace, vaccines are not available, and tick control methods have not yet proven to be effective. A multi-disciplinary approach is needed to find solutions to this complex health problem. Such representation from both the natural and social sciences is needed.

Thus, a symposium entitled “The Tick-Borne Disease Think Tank” will bring together experts from U.S. government agencies and State Departments of Health, as well as leading University of Florida researchers. Participants will represent fields including but not limited to Public Health, Microbiology, Pathology, Anthropology, Communications, Geography, Health Education, Veterinary Medicine, Infectious Disease, and more.

Think Tank participants will be asked to brainstorm about gaps in tick-borne disease research and to identify key research needs and highly relevant research projects that warrant immediate investment. A panel of experts will speak to the growing epidemic of tick-borne diseases in the U.S. and highlight key areas where research is needed to get ahead of this public health crisis. A companion poster session will showcase the latest in tick-borne disease research.
Framing The Bed Bug Crisis on Social Media
Bingjie Liu

As a first-year doctoral student, I have been privileged to have the opportunity to work with TCMI over the past year. My research interest mainly focuses on the role of social media in health-related crises, particularly its influences on tourists’ risk perceptions, travel decisions, and behaviors.

This summer, we have launched a research project examining how tourists framed their risk perceptions towards the bed bug crisis in New York City hotels on social media sites. Safety has always been a consideration for tourists when making travel decisions and the findings of our study suggest that the bed bug crisis has emerged as one of the main concerns for most tourists visiting NYC. Further, in terms of gathering and disseminating information, social media has become one of the primary information platforms for tourists to conduct crisis communications. Results of this study also reveal that tourists’ encounters with bed bugs in hotel rooms can exert dramatic impacts on both their evaluation of the hotel service quality and their revisit intentions in the future. However, effective responses and appropriate measurements practiced by hotels can help relieve tourists’ anxiety and, therefore, remedy the bad impression.

As a starting point, our research project on the New York City bed bug crisis has not only shed light on understanding the crisis impacts on the tourism industry, but also has extended our research agenda by incorporating social media. I believe our future work in this area can add greater depth to our current knowledge of tourism crisis management and the findings of our research can be further utilized as empirical references for stakeholders making effective crisis management plans.
Community Resilience as a Guide to Disaster Tourism Readiness
Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray & Ashley Schroeder

Resilience has been defined in the disaster literature as “the ability of a social system to respond or recover from disasters and includes those inherent conditions that allow the system to absorb impacts and cope with an event” (Ainuddin & Routray, 2012). Disaster resilience is seen as a quality, characteristic, or result that is developed by processes that promote it and is essential for safeguarding communities and building safe communities in the event of a “shock” or “unexpected threat.” The ultimate goal of a resilient community is “to minimize the loss of lives and livelihoods and increase the ability for the community to return to normal within the shortest possible time” (Manyena, 2006: 438). Utilizing this understanding of community resilience, we have developed a model which demonstrates the key constructs that are vital to disaster tourism readiness.
Tourism Perspectives on Pine Beetles Impacts on Black Hills National Forest
Dr. Ignatius Cahyanto, Black Hills State University

The Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota has been negatively affected by an infestation of mountain pine beetles (Dendroctonus Ponderosae), which are found throughout the Rocky Mountain Region of the Western U.S. The beetle gradually changed the forest ecosystem and landscapes by killing pine trees. This study examined tourism business perspectives on the infestation. Two questions guided the study: 1) What are tourism businesses’ perspectives on the infestation? 2) What have the businesses done to cope with the infestation? The findings indicated six perceived impacts; those are biophysical impacts of the beetle, biophysical impacts of forest management, aesthetic and emotional issues, economic impacts, problems of inconvenience and safety, and potential for future impacts (e.g. fire and winds). Coping mechanisms included allocating budgets to spray trees on their property, thinning trees, or advocating the issue to the regional and state tourism business association. The findings can help policy makers to identify issues of high concern by tourism businesses that require management actions (e.g. available assistance) and recognition that potentially contentious issues will require special effort, as well as identifying businesses that are supportive or at odds with particular management options.

A mountain pine beetle’s size (left) and discolored foliage on pine trees, a signal of the mountain pine beetles’ attack (right).
Photos by: USDA Forest Service
Best Practice Highlight

#bostonmarathon
Twitter as a Crisis Communications Tool

When bombs exploded near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, the Boston Police Department sprang into action. Notably, they also turned to social media to disseminate and receive information about the situation. Their official Twitter account (@Boston_Police) was frequently used for crisis communications from within an hour of the first explosion until after the second suspect was in custody.

Updates were made as new information became available, which was at times by the minute. Thus, Twitter served as a real-time supplement for traditional crisis communications platforms and allowed B.P.D. to disseminate updated information between press conferences.

B.P.D. also utilized two-way communication through Twitter by asking for the public’s help in gathering information about the terrorist attack. For example, B.P.D. tweeted a request for any video footage of the explosion and surrounding area to aid in their investigation.

In addition, B.P.D. used hashtags to differentiate between messages targeted towards the media (#MediaAlert) and the public (#CommunityAlert). This allowed either party to follow the common topic and conversation by following the hashtag.

A testament to B.P.D.’s successful use of social media as a crisis communications tool during the Boston Marathon terrorist attack was when their tweet announcing the capture of the second suspect received over 141,000 retweets. This also demonstrates that social media is relevant in times of crisis and can be used as an effective crisis communications tool.

How to Apply 5 Key Takeaways to Tourism

There are five key takeaways that can be adapted and used by the tourism industry in times of crisis:

1. Provide targeted, real-time updates to the situation via established social media channels
2. Retweet updates from local law enforcement to demonstrate credibility
3. Use hashtags to provide targeted messages (e.g. #touristalert) and to reach a larger audience (e.g. #bostonmarathon)
4. Refer the media and your publics (i.e. tourists at the destination) to your official social media accounts for updates
5. Use social media as a supplement, not a replacement, for other methods of crisis communications
Dr. Holly Donohoe presenting at the 2013 TTRA International Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Ashley Schroeder and Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray on an excursion to Strom’s Farm in Guelph, Ontario, Canada while attending the Big Ideas in Rural Settings: Tourism & Rural Entrepreneurship Conference at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray presenting Ashley Schroeder and Dr. Holly Donohoe with awards at the 2013 TTRA International Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Global affiliate Masato Takamatsu came all the way from Japan to meet with the TCMI team.

Dr. Holly Donohoe presenting at the 2013 TTRA International Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Ashley Schroeder and Global Affiliate Dr. Ignatius Cahyanto presenting at the 2013 TTRA International Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Photos by: TCMI
Grants Received

- Dr. Holly Donohoe, and co-researchers Drs. Jason Blackburn and Rick Alleman, was awarded the 2013 Travel Research Grant from the Travel and Tourism Research Association to conduct the study entitled “Ticks, tick-borne diseases, and their knowledge and prevention amongst Florida State Park visitors and workers.”

- Dr. Holly Donohoe was awarded a grant from the Emerging Pathogens Institute at the University of Florida to host a Tick-Borne Disease Symposium and Think Tank, which will be co-hosted by TCMI.

- Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray received a sub-award from Spectrum Gaming to conduct a study on expanding gaming opportunities in Florida.

- Drs. Holly Donohoe and Lori Pennington-Gray were awarded the 2013 Bill Simms Endowment Faculty Research Award to conduct the study entitled “Employee and visitor perceptions and precautions related to Lyme disease in Florida State Parks.”

Awards Received

- Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray was selected as the recipient of the 2012-2013 Doctoral Dissertation Advisor/Mentoring Award for the College of Health and Human Performance.

- Ashley Schroeder was selected as the Merit Award Winner of the TTRA Masters Student Research Award Merit Award Winner from the Travel and Tourism Research Association for her Masters thesis on international tourists’ use of social media in the event of a crisis during travel.

- Ashley Schroeder was selected as the Third Place Winner of the IFITT Thesis Excellence Award from the International Federation for IT and Travel & Tourism for her Masters thesis on international tourists’ use of social media in the event of a crisis during travel.

Miscellaneous

- Dr. Holly Donohoe completed the Certificate in One Health from the Department of Environmental and Global Health at the University of Florida.

- TCMI’s website (www.tourismcrisis.org) underwent a major redesign to become more user friendly.
Refereed Presentations


Members of the TCMI team at the 2013 Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) International Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.
Refereed Journal Articles


**in Tourism Crisis Management**

To address the critical need to prepare tourism industry professional for crises, the Tourism Crisis Management Institute developed a comprehensive Online Continuing Education Program in Tourism Crisis Management for Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), Attractions, and Lodging Industry professionals.

The program focuses on crisis reduction, readiness, response, and recovery efforts from nature- and human-induced disasters that might affect destinations or tourism-related businesses. The interactive program aims to prepare industry professionals in the development of programs, policies, and recovery from crises. English-speaking participants develop a tourism crisis management plan for their destination or organization that will enable them to mitigate economic, social, and environmental consequences of crises.

We are excited to share that the Online Continuing Education Program in Tourism Crisis Management will soon be available in Japanese, in addition to English. TCMI is partnering with Japan Tourism Marketing Co. to bring the Program to Japan. The process of expanding the Online Continuing Education Program to Japanese will launch this fall when TCMI team members travel to Okinawa to meet with Japan Tourism Marketing Co. and government officials.

TCMI will also train several hotel managers, travel agents, destination management organization staff, and Japan Tourism Board staff to be program instructors. Instructors will be taught about the subject of tourism-specific crisis management, as well as the theories and policies to which TCMI subscribes.

For additional information about the Online Continuing Education Program, including upcoming dates, visit [www.tourismcrisis.org](http://www.tourismcrisis.org).
Tourism Crisis Management in Peru: Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu
Spring 2014

The University of Florida’s Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management (TRSM) and the Universidad San Ignatius de Loyola (USIL), Lima, Peru, will be offering a 10-day study abroad trip to Lima, Cusco, and Machu Picchu, Peru in Spring 2014. Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray will be leading a group of undergraduate and graduate UF students who are interested in tourism crisis management on the May 2014 trip.

Students will visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Machu Picchu with the goal of using the case of Machu Picchu to better understand crisis management specific to tourism. The program will also focus on topics such as culture, environment, natural resources, sustainable development, crisis management, and tourism planning and development. Accordingly, UF and USIL students will examine tourism crisis management aspects of managing the World Heritage Site. The study abroad will include a working relationship with the local Ministry of Environment to address issues related to tourism and the management of disasters, as well as field visits and meetings with additional tourism officials and local tour operators. As part of the program, students will work together to provide recommendations for safety and security to the Ministry of the Environment.

This should be a unique academic experience and an exciting opportunity for UF students to explore Peruvian culture while learning about tourism-specific crisis management.
A New York Fire Department vessel navigates the Hudson River on a stormy day.

Photo by: TCMI (Ashley Schroeder)

Please contact us if you have any questions or need additional information:
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