



Climate Change Risk Appraisal in the Austrian Ski Industry

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Ski tourism is an economically and culturally important industry in many parts of Europe. A growing number of studies in Europe, North America, Japan, and Australia have concluded that climate change has potentially serious implications for the sustainability of ski operations by reducing the average length of ski seasons and, where applicable, increasing snowmaking costs. To date, however, the climate change risk awareness and adaptive responses of stakeholders in the ski industry have not been examined. A survey of managers at low elevation ski areas in Austria was undertaken to explore their perceptions of climate change (past and future), how climate change had/will affect their operations, and their adaptive responses (past and planned). The results indicate that climate change is not perceived to be a serious threat to ski operations and that with technological adaptation, principally snowmaking, ski area managers believe they will be able to effectively cope with climate change in the 21st century. The consequences of these perceptions for the future operation of these ski areas are discussed and conclusions drawn for the future of ski tourism in Austria.