

April 23, 2002

Dr. David Scott
Chair, Search Committee
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
2261 TAMU
College Station, Texas 77843-2261

Dear David;

The purpose of this letter is to offer my strongest recommendation regarding Andy Skadberg's application for the Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist position currently open in the TAMU Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences. I served as Andy's dissertation advisor. He assisted me in my role of Director of the Center for Nature and Heritage Tourism, so I have worked very closely with Andy since 1997. Andy successfully defended his dissertation on April 17, and will receive the degree on May 10, 2002.

As I review the qualifications for the position, it is clear to me that Andy is perfect for the job. He will soon have one year's professional experience in extension. In addition, much of what he did with me here at SWT involved work with landowners, community organizations, local governments, and a variety of state and federal agencies, all related to nature and heritage tourism. He is familiar with community development programs in a variety of states, as they relate to resource-based recreation and tourism. One of the first tasks Andy did as my assistant was to compile an extensive database of potential funding sources. He worked with me, sometimes taking the lead, in developing proposals for funding. Some of these were successful, such as our contract with the Texas Historical Commission, and some were not funded, such as our "Tourism Toolbox" proposal to USDA. However, Andy has continued with that particular idea and seems to be finding a good response.

Andy has experience in both the private and public sectors. He worked for private tour companies as well as the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Most of the work he did at SWT focused on the private sector. His dissertation research dealt with nature tourism enterprises and their use of the Internet. Thus, I am confident that he understands the processes of feasibility analysis, business management, marketing, and product development.

One of the projects that Andy worked on here focused on tourism networks. This was also a major focus of his dissertation, using actor-network theory as one of his theoretical perspectives. Andy has very good skills to facilitate network development. In fact, he has a rather impressive network of his own. He has been active in group facilitation here at SWT and in cooperation with other agencies.

Andy's computer skills are superior. He is extremely skilled at website development. He and his wife Yongxia Xia Skadberg developed a combination GIS-relational database system specifically designed to facilitate nature tourism development. Andy's dissertation not only used the Internet as its research focus, but as a survey tool as well.

Andy worked as my research assistant and therefore did not have direct teaching responsibilities here at SWT. However, I frequently asked him to teach classes and assist me in organizing student projects. Andy is effective with students. He is calm and positive and treats students with respect. I think he will be an effective teacher and mentor.

All of the above describes Andy's qualifications in relationship to the position announcement. However, I think equally important are Andy's motivations and qualities. He has a long-term motivation to facilitate resource-based tourism as a means to stimulate resource conservation. Andy recognizes that resource conservation must have an economic incentive and must provide benefits to the landowner. He is obviously intelligent and motivated, and he is also honest and dedicated. He is a very good colleague. I hope to continue to work with him as he becomes a member of the faculty at TAMU.

Sincerely,

Jim Kimmel
Associate Professor