

ABSTRACT

Title of Research Paper : Public Participation in Ecotourism: Case Study of Kret Island Community at Amphur Pak Kret, Nonthaburi Province

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The study of Public Participation in Ecotourism: Case Study of Kret Island Community at Amphur Pak Kret, Nonthaburi Province has objectives to study 1) public participation in ecotourism 2) factors that have impacts on public participation in ecotourism management at the Ban Koh Kret community and 3) the obstacles and suggestions for further public participation in managing ecotourism.

The sampling group used in this study is 310 heads of the family in 7 villages in the Kret Island community. The method used is accidental sampling and the tool is a questionnaire involving personal factors such as sex, age, marital status, education, profession, income, and length of residency in Kret Island community. Social factors surveyed include knowledge, understanding, information receiving, and vested interests in ecotourism. Faith in the community leader and social grouping were independent variables and public participation in ecotourism management included studying the problems, cooperation in planning ahead, cooperating in the working process, and cooperation in evaluating results.

Results of the study are as follows: Public participation in ecotourism management was at the medium level, and examination in all four aspects proved to be at the medium level. Factors affecting public participation in ecotourism included age, profession, understanding about ecotourism, vested interests from ecotourism management, faith in the community leader, and social groupings.

Recommendations:

Promotion of ecotourism in Kret Island should involve increased support for public participation in the community's various activities. The community leader, local administration units, and involved agencies must provide more knowledge about

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ecotourism management and clearly point out how it would benefit families and the community. Increased social grouping efforts should be encouraged, especially youth groups. The public should be encouraged to express their opinion and plan tourism development efforts. There should also be efforts to involve the public in activities such as campaigns to clean up the community, traffic campaigns, limiting motorcycle riding in the community, and limiting stray dogs through spaying, for example. The public should also be more involved in taking care of the community's public property as well.