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**SUSTAINABLE HEALTH AND WELLNESS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF
BAN PHON RANG HOT SPRING IN RANONG PROVINCE, THAILAND**

VEERADA SOMPHOCH

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Naresuan University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Science Degree
in International Tourism and Hotel Management
(International Program)**

May 2011

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This thesis entitled “Sustainable Health and Wellness Tourism Development of Ban Phon Rang Hot Spring in Ranong Province, Thailand” submitted by Veerada Somphoch Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in International Tourism and Hotel Management is hereby approved.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved mom and to Mr. Ian Clarke, who are now in heaven but will always be my inspiration.

Veerada Somphoch

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to conduct a survey on the involved community and to study tourism resources audit of Ban Phon Rang (BPR) hot spring destination. A SWOT analysis of BPR hot spring was conducted and recommendations were made for a sustainable development of BPR hot spring to become an international health and wellness tourism destination. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this research in response to the thesis objectives. Two case studies of international health and wellness hot spring destinations were selected to support specific research objectives. The case studies were about the Peninsula hot springs, Mornington in Australia and Guguan hot spring village in Taiwan. Both studies revealed its tourism components through secondary data. For the quantitative survey, there were seven key informants who were representatives from Ranong government and commercial organizations such as Ranong Provincial Office, Public Health Office, Ranong Tourism and Sport Office, Ngao National Park Administrative Officers, Ranong Tourist Business Association. These informants who comprised the sample of the total population were invited for a focus group brainstorming to discuss the SWOT of BPR hot spring and to give recommendation on sustainable development approaches. After this, a set of questionnaire will be developed and implemented in order to study a sample of 400 subjects from Ranong

who act as stakeholder in sustainable health and wellness tourism development which consists of the following groups: 1st group is that of government public organizations in Mueang district, the 2nd group is the private and business enterprise such as hotels, resort, spa, restaurant and shop owner, the 3rd group are the locals who live in nearby community areas of BPR hot spring site in Mueang district and the last group consists of the visitors of BPR hot spring.

In terms of international health and wellness tourism destination, the research found that hot spring or thermal spring with its mineral content plays an important role in history in terms of beliefs. Some successful countries have developed their hot springs, under the environments of health and wellness tourism that included physical, health, business social, psychological and regulatory environments. The result of the SWOT analysis and the questionnaires shows that sustainable health and wellness tourism development of BPR hot spring should be planned appropriately. This should be planned according to its attractiveness such as the mineral hot spring. In terms of health and wellness tourism trends, travelers are seeking different places for new experience. One of these places that they take interest in is the natural attraction which travelers believe that it will be good for their health and wellness.

The recommendations from the sample group towards sustainable tourism development of Ban Phon Rang hot spring that contributed for the vision of Ranong to become an international health and wellness tourism destination which is dominant with natural mineral hot springs. Land used management planning and policy was viewed in environment aspect. For the economic aspect, its strategy was to make Ranong a world destination of health and wellness tourism. This is to contribute to the local community and is more beneficial while the preservation and renovation of cultural heritage places is the effective when it comes to the social aspect. The last but not the least, of the recommendation towards the community participatory aspect was to enhance the moral sense of the local people and induce more awareness to have a secured and safe life.

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