Feasibility Assessment for Community-based Ecotourism in 5 Sites of the WWF Thailand Freshwater Program

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Introduction

Community-based tourism can play an important role in supporting the objectives of environmental conservation projects by (1) providing alternative incomes for affected communities, (2) by giving the conservation area and conservation activities added value, (3) as an environmental awareness raising tool for local communities and (4) as a public education tool for visitors to the area. For this reason WWF commissioned this feasibility study for ecotourism in 5 important wetlands areas in the Northeast of Thailand. These areas include: The Beung Khong Long Marsh and the Goot Ting Oxbow Lake in Nongkhai Province, the Lower Mun River in Ubol Rachathani Province, the Lower Songkram River in Nakorn Phanom and Nong Harn Lake in Sakorn Nakorn Province.

The feasibility study is divided into 2 parts: a market assessment and a site assessment.

**Market Assessment** - A part of the site assessment is to determine if it is appropriate to market demand. In the case of Northeast Thailand, it was also important to undertake an assessment of the market as there are few ecotourism products in the Northeast and travel by international tourists in the Northeast comprises less 1% of the total Thai market. While a site may be attractive and appropriate for ecotourism, it may not be feasible if there is no market demand. What is the market for community-based ecotourism in the Northeast?

**Site Survey** – The site survey required a visit to each of the selected sites to meet with residents, community leaders, concerned government agencies and to see the propose tourist areas. In assessing the sites for feasibility for community-based tourism, the following factors were taken into consideration:

- strength of community organization,
- support for tourism from local government,
- existing tourism activities,
- diversity of potential activities,
- attractiveness of the site
- and the ease of access.

**Market Assessment**

The Thai domestic tourism market is estimated to be 3 to 4 times larger than the international tourism market. An emerging trend of Thai domestic market is tourists from Bangkok and other urban areas seeking to escape from modern city life to rediscover authentic rural life and culture and to experience natural beauty. These tourists are seeking communities who have preserved a rustic rural atmosphere and still have a traditional rural life. This explains the popularity of traditional heritage market towns of Amphawa and the 100 Year Market.

To better understand how this trend in Thai tourism could be applied for income generation activities in nature conservation areas in the Northeast of Thailand, the author spent several days observing and interviewing tourists and service providers in Ban Wang Nam Mok Homestay, in Sri Chiangmai District of
Nongkhai Province and the new booming tourist destination of Chiang Khan in Loei Province to gain a better understanding the domestic demand for community-based ecotourism products.

Research Sites

**Ban Wang Nam Mok** is a homegrown, awarding winning homestay program which has been in operation for 10 years. The site was chosen for the community’s stated commitment to preserving natural resources and developing occupations for the local people. The main selling points of the program are the community forest, folklore and culture. Its stated purpose is to raise consciousness about preservation of natural resources and local lifestyles to generate income for the community.

The village was first settled around 40 years ago as a logging camp. People from Laos and Udonthani immigrated to the area to work as loggers, to collect forest products, to make charcoal and to grow cassava on the cleared land. As the local water sources dried up the villagers realized that the cause was the clearing of the forest. They established a community forest to protect the watershed. Poverty in the village drove many people to seek employment in Bangkok. One of the main activities of the village was to make brooms from broom grass which grew in degraded forest areas. Few of the youth that left the village for work or education ever returned as there were few career opportunities available for them.

Ten years ago one of the sons of this village, Mr. Thinapob, returned. He soon discovered that his classmates from the university in Bangkok enjoyed the experience of rural village life. They in turn passed the word on and soon there was a steady stream of visitors coming from Bangkok to experience the life of Ban Wang Nam Mok.

In the beginning 3 households were involved in the operation. Today this has grown to 80 families who hold shares in a registered community enterprise with approximately 1,000 visitors per year and a total distribution to the community of 1 million THB per year.

This community enterprise has grown organically from within the community itself. The villages report that the only outside assistance they have received in 10 years of operation of the homestay program is some promotional assistance from TAT.

The main markets for Ban Wang Mok are Bangkok tourists and government sponsored study tour trips. There is also a small number of international visitors. Most of the visitors come independently and learn about the homestay program from the village website or by word of mouth.

**Chiang Khan** is an old trading town on the banks of the Mekong. The historic part of the town consists of well preserved traditional wooden shop houses lining the Mekong River Bank.

The town has been a minor tourist destination for backpackers since the mid 1970's but has only recently experienced sudden tourism boom from Thai tourists in 2009. The locals reported the surge of Thai tourists started around July or August of 2009. They attribute the boom to promotion by TAT, mass media and the website [www.chiangkhan.com](http://www.chiangkhan.com).
Markets for Community-based Ecotourism in the Northeast¹

In 2008, the Thai domestic tourism market, in gross number of tourists, comprised 78% (114 million people) of the total tourism market making it is approximately 3.5 times larger than the international market (33 million).

The Thai domestic tourism market is broken down into 2 main sectors: (1) Tourists and (2) so called study tour participants (นักทัศนาจร). Nationally in 2008 there were just over 100 million domestic tourists and 46 million study tour participants with a total expenditure of 790 million THB. The average expenditure per person per trip was 5,300 THB. Tourism statistics for Thailand are separated in to 7 regions. Bangkok was the region with the largest number of domestic visitors followed by the South with the Northeast as the third largest destination in terms of number of visitors but fifth in the size of expenditures per trip. In terms of expenditure per trip the Northeast is 6th with only to the Central Region having a lower average expenditure per trip per tourist. In terms of international tourists, the Northeast has the lowest number of visitors in this market and lowest expenditure of any of Thailand’s regions with the Northeast comprising only 2% of the international market. Interviews with inbound tour operators² in Bangkok confirm this. While reporting that they have unmet demand, the Northeast is a small market for them. Their clients who want to visit the Northeast are typically return visitors to Thailand looking to visit more authentic or traditional parts of Thailand. Conversely, the Northeast makes up 17% of the Thai domestic tourism market and 23% of the total tourism market in Thailand.

As the purpose of this study was to determine what would be the potential target market for a community-based ecotourism program in the Northeast of Thailand, it became clear that the greatest potential lay within the Thai domestic market. However, without data on market trends and the demand for ecotourism undifferentiated in Thai tourism statistics, the demand for community-based ecotourism products is unknown.

To better understand the trends in Thai tourism regarding village tourism, conservation tourism and tourism in nature, the two sites described above, Ban Wang Nam Mok and Chiang Khan were chosen for a rapid survey. Ban Wang Nam Mok was chosen as it represented a successful community-based ecotourism model linked to conservation in the Northeast. And Chiang Khan was chosen as it represents new trends in Thai domestic tourism in the Northeast.

Methodology

Data was obtained from focus group interviews with tourists as they were encountered in the destinations at their leisure. The groups were chosen at random. As the tourists were in situ, group members would often come and go from the interviews and frequently defer to the opinion of a lead member of their group. In total there were 9 focus group interviews comprising a total over 53 individuals. Given the small size of the sample and the nature of the interviews, statistical analysis is not possible. The interviews are only suggestive of the type of tourists, the demand and the motivations for

¹ Statistics from the Thai Ministry of Tourism and Sport. Data from 2008 has not yet been certified.
² Exotissimo, East-West Siam and Buffalo Tours
tourists in these two destinations. Further research would need to be conducted to confirm or refute the results of these interviews.

In addition to the focus group interviews, for four consecutive days a transect walk was conducted between the hours 4 – 6 PM in the main tourism area between Chiang Khan Soi 5 and Soi 20 with the purpose of counting the number of vehicles visiting from each province.

Results

Demographics

One way to discover where the tourists live is to look at vehicle license plates to see where the vehicles are registered. From the data collected from 429 vehicles between 28 – 31 Dec ’09 in the main tourist section of the town, clearly the majority (60%) of the visitors are from the Greater Bangkok Metropolitan area.

Of the focus groups, 7 described themselves as Bangkok residents while the remaining two reported Pathumthani and Chumporn as their home. Pathumthani is near Bangkok while Chumporn is in the South.
Three of the groups identify themselves as primarily business people, two groups described themselves as architects, the other three groups as teachers, engineers and skilled construction workers. Four groups placed themselves primarily in the 20 – 30 year old age bracket, two groups in the 30-40 year range and 3 groups in the 40 – 50 year range. One of the 40 -50 year groups with 24 members was a multi-generational family group with several siblings and spouses traveling with grandparents and children.

The group sizes ranges 2 – 4 persons in 6 groups, 7 persons in 2 and 1 group of 24 people.

**Mode and duration of travel**
All of the interviewees were traveling independently with 6 groups using public transport (bus), one rented vehicles (the large family group) and two other groups drove private cars.

The majority of the groups would be traveling for 7 – 10 ten days before returning home with two groups only traveling 3 days and one group more than 10 days. Most would be overnighting in Chiang Khan for 2 – 3 nights with only one group staying longer than 6 nights.

Eight of the groups reported that they would visit at least one destination during their trip with several groups stating that they would visit more than one destination. Three groups visited National Parks (Phu Luang, Phu Reua, Khao Kaw National Parks), two groups named destinations in the north and the other groups named destinations in Laos or in Thailand’s Northeast such as Vientiane, Nongkhai and Khon Kaen.

**Motivations for Travel**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for choosing this destination</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural atmosphere</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old houses and authentic lifestyle</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See the Mekong River</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Forest temples</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Destination</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the responses in the table one can surmise that the tourists are seeking a new destination which is peaceful, has natural beauty and preserves an authentic rural lifestyle. Certainly the draw of Chiang Khan is the old preserved wooden shop houses bordering the Mekong River coupled with a traditional lifestyle free of the trappings of modern consumerism. Several of the respondents mentioned they enjoyed the fact that Chiang Khan does not have a 7-11 convenience store. Some even suggested that Chiang Khan should prevent 7-11 from opening in Chiang Khan.

Two reasons were given when asked why they were traveling at this time: (1) availability of a long holiday, (2) desire to experience cold weather. For Bangkokians and Southerners, who seldom have relief for the heat, the cool temperatures of the North and Northeast are a drawing in the cold season.
The table directly below represents the activities that the focus group interviewees listed when asked what they did when during their stay in Chiang Khan. The second table are the activities that the author overheard tourists discussing or observed tourists participating in during the 4 days of the survey.

Photography was certainly a very important activity among the tourists observed with a high percent possessing high value, high quality hobby camera equipment. Examples of their photography can been viewed on the links: (1) [http://www.chiangkhan.com/photo/photo/search?q=khan](http://www.chiangkhan.com/photo/photo/search?q=khan) and (2) [http://www.chiangkhan.com/video](http://www.chiangkhan.com/video).

Another very common activity for a large number of the tourists was bike riding. Riding as a group they will tour the city and neighboring villages. Interesting to note is that the bicycles for rent are not modern mountain bikes but rather restored vintage one speed bicycles. This is in keeping with the romantic desire of the tourist to recapture an ambience of a bygone life style.

### Activities of the Tourists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stated Activities during visit</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature Sightseeing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing Local life</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Recreation (walking/riding bicycles)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Merit</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the Local Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the History</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring local Food</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Friends/Relatives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestay</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Local People</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Observed Activities of the Tourists

- Photography & Videography
- Fog filled valleys
- River Views
- Sunsets
- Old town street scenes
- Old wooden shop houses
- Local residents
- Friends and family participating in activities
- Merit making
- Worship
- Shopping
- Ride bicycles
- Ride motorcycles
- Writing messages on shop walls
- Writing postcards
- Participate in the New Year Festivities
- Eat local food
- Relax at riverside restaurants
- Massage
- Sightseeing at the fresh market
- Village sightseeing
- Visit natural attractions
- Visit Mekong River Rapids
- View mist filled valleys from hill tops
- Walk along the river bank
Merit making and Buddha worship are activities which clearly differentiates Thai domestic tourists from the international market. Many of the people interviewed stated not only had they made merit during their trip but that they did it every day and often stopped at temples along the way to pay homage to the Buddha. Several people also mentioned that during their trip they planned spend some time at a forest monastery for meditation practice.

In addition to viewing nature and traditional architecture, the majority of people interviewed mentioned that they wanted to learn more about the area and the life of the people living here. However, other than riding bikes through the villages there did not seem to be many activities developed designed to give the tourists an insight into local life and culture. One of group tourists described how they went to visit a nearby Black Thai village but there was not really much to see. The author rode a motorcycle to the village and discovered that the villagers had built a “cultural center”. But it was not well maintained and there was no one to greet guests. A panel describing the history of the Black Thai in Thailand was hidden behind a row of looms.

Regarding food and evening entertainment, it was interesting to note as compared to other Thai tourist destinations, that there was no karaoke available in the main tourist area nor did there seem to be a lot of alcohol consumption. Many of the tourists, when asked what the town should do to better manage tourism, stated that they should not allow karaoke establishments to open in the tourist area. In fact, all of the people interviewed said that the town should not allow anything at all to change. Chiang Khan needed to protect the look and feel of the town and prevent development.
Regarding, alcohol consumption it was observed, during the New Year celebration, that people sat on mats in the park and watch the performances and soon after midnight the crowd dispersed as early the next morning was a large merit making ceremony (บินฑบาตร). The Mayor of the town was overheard to comment on the fact that since they had to get up early very few people were drinking and staying up late this year.

There were two curious exceptions to the expected tourist activities. From observation at the border post and boat pier very few people seemed to be taking boat trips or crossing to the Lao town of Sanakham. As Chiang Khan is a local border crossing for Thai and Lao nationals, one would think crossing to look at the more traditional lifestyle of the Lao villages on the other side would be of interest. Several tourists mentioned that the trouble and cost of using a border pass was a prohibiting factor as well as that there were no organized activities for the tourists other than walking through the market. Regarding taking boat trips on the Mekong the tourists said that the price of the boats was too expensive.

### Information Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information for Chiang Khan</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidebook</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Agent</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai Tourism Authority</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviewees response about where they got their travel information for Chiang Khan revealed that there had been several TV shows promoting travel to Chiang Khan in the preceding months. Most of the people first heard about Chiang Khan from friends or the TV and then looked for information on the internet. The most common websites cited were [www.chiangkhan.com](http://www.chiangkhan.com) and [www.pantip.com](http://www.pantip.com) (click Blue Planet). These websites are web boards where individuals relate their travel experiences, share advice and upload their photos.

### Prior Tourism Destinations

The majority of the groups had visited other heritage community destinations such Amphawa, the 100 Year Market and Pai in Mae Hong Son Province. Several mentioned that destinations like Chiang Khan are their preferred type of destinations. A few mentioned that they purposely visited Chiang Khan at that time as they were sure that it would become overdeveloped like Pai. Two groups mentioned having previously participated in a community-based tourism program.

### Willingness to Pay

Seven of the groups stated that they pay an average of 600 – 1000 THB per day per head inclusive of meals, entertainment and accommodation. The other two reported and expenditure of around 500 THB or less. All groups said that they will be willing to pay more if they knew that they were benefitting local communities and businesses.

As evidence of this, Ban Wang Nam Mok charged 790 THB for two meals, evening entertainment and accommodation. The group interviewed in the village stated that this was more than they would normally pay but that they were happy to pay it as they could see that it would help the community.
Interest in Community-based Tourism

All but one group expressed interest in participating in a community-based tourism program. Only two groups said that they had prior experience with community-based tourism. Most said that they would stay 2 – 3 nights with one group saying they could stay a week. In the following list are some of the elements that they would expect from a community-based tourism program:

- trekking,
- nature walk,
- homestay,
- agricultural work,
- rituals/ceremony,
- getting to know the villagers,
- village life,
- making handicrafts,
- tasting and cooking local food.

Conclusions

This study shows that in Thailand’s Northeast the primary group of tourists interested in the culture and nature of the region are overwhelmingly Thai domestic tourists. By arrivals and expenditure international tourists are not a large tourism market in the Northeast.

Among Thai domestic tourists there exists a market of urban Thai, primarily Bangkokians, who are seeking areas in the Northeast where they can experience traditional culture in a natural setting. This group desires that such areas be preserved as cultural and natural heritage sites and are willing to contribute to efforts to do so. The size of this market is not known but it does appear to be an emerging trend in Thai domestic tourism.

This group is internet savvy sourcing most of their travel information from the advice of other travelers on web boards. They travel independently. They are willing to travel far to find what they want and to remote locations. This is evidenced by the fact that Chiang Khan is an overnight bus trip from Bangkok or 10 – 12 hour drive.

Similarly, a case could be made that the drawing power of authenticity takes priority over convenience and stunning landscapes. Ban Wang Nam Mok, located 6 kilometers off the main highway west of the Nongkhai district town of Sri Chiang Mai, is not particularly picturesque. It is not located close to any major tourism arteries or attractions; and the forest, while pleasant, is fairly young forest recovering from the logging of the previous decades. It would seem that the charm of Ban Wang Nam Mok is in its people, their way of life and their efforts to conserve their culture and natural surroundings.

For the development of community-based tourism in the Northeast’s wetland areas the Thai domestic tourism market holds the greatest potential. This market has a demonstrated interest in the region, expressing values in common with the goals of community-based tourism and travels independently meaning potentially less lead time in bringing new community-based tourism products online. Likewise,
this market is not likely to be as sensitive to the impacts of politics, economics and epidemics as we have seen the international market to be in recent years. Further advantages of this market is the ease with which the communities will have in communicating with their guests as well as the guests comfort with the food and accommodation.

Site Assessments and Analysis

Methodology

Given the time constraints of the project staff and the fact that the study was a preliminary assessment, the study used rapid assessment techniques:

- Focus group interviews with community groups
- Discussions with Sub-district Organization Administration (SAO) officials
- Examination of the 3 year SAO plan for inclusion of tourism activities and tourism development
- Physical site inspections
- Observation of current tourism activities

The nature of a rapid appraisal means that it is not possible to meet and speak with all parties involved nor to do a thorough assessment of the situation. In Beung Khong Long, Goot Ting, the Songkram River and Nong Harn, the consultant was able to meet with at least one official from one SAO, one village group, one local education official and to see the major tourism sites of the area. In two sites, Beung Khong Long and Goot Ting, the author was able to meet with several of the above mentioned groups and officials. In only one site, Khong Chiam, the author was not able to meet formally with any village groups or local officials, but was able to tour the area and interview locals and observe tourism in the area.

The feasibility assessment of the above mentioned sites took place in late January and early February 2010.

In addition to site visits, the author reviewed the available literature available for each site both in Thai and English. For a list of this documents refer to the bibliography.

The Survey Sites

This report explores the feasibility of implementing a community-based ecotourism in Beung Khong Long, Goot Ting, the Songkram River, Nong Harn and Kong Chiam. All of the sites are located in the Mekong Basin. With exception of Nong Harn, the sites are within 30 kms of the Mekong River.
The Survey of Beung Khong Long

1 Beung Khong Long sits between 4 other natural attractions: Phu Tok, Phu Wua, The Mekong River and Phu Lanka.
Beung Khong Long is along lake (11km x 1.5 km) located on a major Asian flyways for migratory birds and is also home to many year round residents as well. Beung Khong Long has been designated a RAMSAR Site, the 12th in Thailand, in part for its importance to migratory birds as well as for its broad bio-diversity. Under WWF’s Community Management of Wetlands in Thailand and the Mekong River Basin Program several community managed conservation zones have been established which involve community members and organizations in protecting, studying and managing the wetland.

Community Organization

One village in each of the 3 subdistricts bordering the lake was visited. These villages were Ban Charoensook, Ban Don Sawan and Ban Sok Pho. Each of the villages had successful community groups with well defined roles and responsibilities. Examples of the types of community groups includes: bio-fertilizer production, fishermen’s association, mat weaving, brown rice production, savings, and broom weaving among others. According to the reports of the villagers, the groups are functioning and productive. In the case of bio-fertilizer group in Ban Chareonsook, it was exceeding expectations showing a large profit after only 10 months of operation.

The existence of a large number of functioning, productive community groups is an indicator of strong community leadership and organization.

Another indication of strong community participation was seen at Ban Charoensook School where the teachers and community have cooperated to create a local curriculum centered around the conservation of the wetland.

Community Awareness of the Potential of Tourism

Out of the 3 villages visited above, only one village group, Ban Don Sawan, said that they had never considered establishing some kind tourism activity in the village. However, the persons interviewed in this village only came from one family and were, therefore, not representative of the whole community.

Members of the other two villages have a vision for what tourism could look like in their community. They had considered tourism as a possible income generating activity for their community. They could describe tourism activities that could be included in a tourism program. This included such things as homestay, boat trip with fishermen, cooking with villagers, trips to area tourism site and so on.

Existing Tourism Activities in the Area

There is a variety tourism sites in the area. These include waterfalls, the Phu Wua Wildlife Sanctuary, Phu Lanka National Park, the Phu Tok Forest Temple as well as Bueng Khong Long. The main concentration of tourism on Bueng Khong Long is in Ban Khamsomboon.

Ban Khamsomboon has an area with a solid shore and a sandy bottom which allows for easy access and is appropriate for swimming in the water. The Beung Khong Long District Administration estimates that
between the months of March – June that there may be between 5,000 – 10,000 tourists on the weekends and holidays. The main interest of the tourists in Ban Khamsoomoon is to spend time socializing over food and drink with friends and family in the estimated 200 bamboo shelters lining the shore. Besides food and drink other sources of enjoyment are water scooters, banana boats, floating in inner-tubes, and speed boat trips on the lake.

Local Government Support

The local government recognizes the importance of tourism to the local economy, its impact on the wetland as well as the potential for tourism in promoting conservation. The Beung Khong Long SAO has several components in their 3 year plan relating to tourism, the most significant of which is paragraph 7.7.2, which states: **Promote participatory planning in the solving of tourism issues and the development of tourism.** Additional evidence of the SAO’s support of tourism development is the infrastructure built at Ban Khamsoomoon (e.g. walkways, pier, toilet). Further evidence of the recognition of Beung Khong Long as a tourism destination is a situational analysis of tourism prepared by the Beung Khong Long District Office of Local Administration (แหล่งท่องเที่ยวบึงโขงหลงจังหวัดหนองคาย, ที่ทำการปกครองอำเภอบึงโขงหลง, 2550?).

Attractiveness

Attractiveness is measured by three criteria: natural landscape, rural atmosphere, and local culture. Given the rapid nature of the study, this is purely a subjective assessment by the author.

Beung Khong Long receives top marks in all of these categories. Bordering Bueng Khong Long are several forested locations with sweeping views of the nearby Phu Wua and Phu Lanka mountains. There is an
abundance of bird life and attractive plant life on the water. There is no urbanization. Even the district town of Bueng Khong Long retains a rural village-like atmosphere. The local villages are clearly proud of their cultural heritage and are keeping it alive.

4 Abundant Bird Life

5 Diversity of plant life

6 Rural Lifestyle

7 Rich cultural heritage

Diversity of Activities

Out of the 5 sites visited for this survey Beung Khong Long probably has greatest diversity of activities and sites for tourism. The Beung Khong Long wetland is situated at the geographic center of several natural small mountains, namely: Phu Tok, Phu Wua and Phu Lanka. It is also about 14 kilometers from the Mekong River. This creates a visually interesting landscape for tourists to explore.

1. **Beung Khong Long** – the attractions of Beung Khong Long are many: diverse plant life, bird life, the inter-relationship between the communities and the lake, cultural significance, beautiful natural landscape and recreational activities. Beung Khong Long is a designated No Hunting Area. The No Hunting Area
offices are situated in a remnant of the old forest. There is a developed nature trail with bird observations view points.

2. **Phu Tok** – is an important Buddhist pilgrimage and meditation site 20 kms northwest of Beung Khong Long. It’s unusual location on a butte with wooden walkways on cliff faces, meditation huts and views of the surrounding area make it especially attractive.

3. **Phu Wua Wildlife Sanctuary** – is a mountain complex 15 kms to the north of Beung Khong Long home to one of that last herds of wild elephants in Thailand’s Northeast. There is already a small trekking and homestay program in the Wildlife Sanctuary.

4. **Phu Lanka National Park** – straddles the border between Nongkhai and Nakorn Phanom about 10 kms from Beung Khong Long. This one of Thailand’s newest national parks. It is known for its numerous waterfalls as well as a trekking route to a stupa on the top of the mountain.

5. **Water Falls** - In addition to the waterfalls in Phu Lanka National Park there are also numerous waterfalls bordering the Phu Wua Wildlife Sanctuary among other in the close vicinity.

6. **Forest Temples** – besides Phu Tok many villages in the area host forest temples. One of these temples, Forest Temple Don Mo Thong, sits on the shores of Bueng Khong Long in Ban Kok Krasae. In addition to locations for seasons of meditation, they are also islands of forest conservation. Tourists are interested in spending time in meditation as well as appreciating the forests in these temples.
7. **The Mekong River** – the river lies 15 kilometers to the Northeast of Beung Khong Long. The Mekong is a legendary river with mythical creatures, a river of tremendous conservation importance as well as a river with great natural beauty sustaining the communities along its banks.

**Access**

The remote location of Beung Khong Long in the northeastern most part and in the eastern most part of Nongkhai Province makes it difficult to access. There is no direct public transport from any of the surrounding provincial seats. Nongkhai is around 2 hours away by car. However, the roads are good. There are long distance buses between Ban Paeng, Nakorn Phanom and Bangkok passing through Beung Khong Long several times a day. It is a 12 hour bus trip to and from Bangkok. This does make it feasible for tourists to come directly from Bangkok.
The Survey of Goot Ting

Goot Ting is located in Beung Khan District of Nongkhai Province. Just as Beung Khong Long, this oxbow lake is located along a major Asian Flyway and has only recently been designated a RAMSAR Site. Under WWF’s Community Management of Wetlands in Thailand and the Mekong River Basin Program several community managed conservation zones have been established which involve community members and organizations in protecting, studying and managing the wetland. The WWF project here has closed.

Community Organization

Residents of three villages, Ban Trakrai, Ban Nonsomboon and Ban Na Kham were interviewed. The villages all have organized producer groups and associations. However, it did not appear to be as many groups as encountered Beung Khong Long. Khun Chaiya, the accompanying WWF staff member, attributed this to the fact that the area around Goot Ting is more urbanized and people concentrate on their own personal activities and do not as much time for community groups.

The two groups met in Ban Na Kham and in Ban Trakrai described themselves as effective and cohesive. Ban Na Kham had samples of their products to show.

In addition to visiting villages, the author also visited 7 schools in the area (Non Somboon Community School, Pho Thong School, Na Kham School, Non Vang Yiam...
School, Non Sa School, Tha Plu School and Ban Trakrai School). The schools were very active in creating local curricula which included local wisdom. The schools are engaged with the communities and use the community as a learning resource for the students.

**Community Awareness of Tourism**

From the interviews of community members there is not much awareness that their communities have potential for tourism. None of the villagers interviewed had ever considered an important economic activity for their community. The only exception to this is Ban Trakrai, which has a sacred, historical temple.

**Existing Tourism Activities**

The only tourism activities encountered in the area had to do with sacred temples, as mentioned above, forest temples, and remnants of old boats removed from the wetland. There were few signs of a tourism industry. There were no souvenir stands and few hotels or resorts. The tourism in the area seemed very small scale and local.

**Community Participation in Tourism**

Ban Non Somboon mentioned that they sometime took tourists for boat trips on the lake. The villagers in Ban Trakrai were only passively involved through the visitors to their temple. Other than these two instances, it would appear that there is minimal community participation in tourism.

**Local Government Support**

The only SAO contacted was the Nonsomboon SAO. The deputy mayor indicated that they did not have any activities to support tourism and this was confirm by examination of the SAO’s 3 Year Plan.

**Attractiveness**

The Goot Ting Oxbox lake itself is very attractive. However, the landscape surrounding the lake has been intensively developed. There is a highway running on the north, west and south sides of the lake –
highways 212, 222. Highway 222 is being enlarged to a 4 lane highway. These highways detract from the rural nature. Only when we went off the highway to Ban Non Vang Yiam could a more traditional rural atmosphere be found.

**Diversity of Activities**

The area around Goot Ting does not have a lot of variety of activities of interest to tourist. The main focus is on the lake and activities on it as well as some important temples in the area.

**Access**

Goot Ting is easily accessed by either two highways running to the north and south of the oxbow lake. The main district town, Beung Khan, has frequent bus service to neighboring provinces in the Northeast as well as to Bangkok.
The Survey of the Songkram River

The Songkram River is an important river in the upper Northeast starting in Udonthani Province and flowing through three provinces until emptying into the Mekong River in Nakorn Phanom Province. The Songkram River is unique in that the level of the river is at the same level as the Mekong 40+ kilometers upstream. In the rainy season large areas upstream from the mouth become and inland lake as the level of the Mekong rises. This seasonal inland lake is an important breeding area of migratory fish from the Mekong. The ecology of the area is unique as well as how the local population has adapted to seasonal flooding.

Community Organization

For the survey visit to the Songkram River, the author was able to meet with the Songkram Environmental Protection Group in Si Songkram District, which consisted of members from 9 villages. There was also one SAO worker and two teachers present. It is not possible to determine the strengths of individual communities represented. But based on the turn out and the interest of this group, one can say that the Environmental Protection Group is active and the membership is enthusiastic.

Tha Uten District is also a potential tourism destination to be included in WWF’s project, but the author was not able to meet with any community members from that district.

Community Awareness of Tourism

The members of the Songkram Environmental Protection Group were able to provide a detailed inventory of potential tourism sites. They were able to discuss the value and potential of their communities and natural resources in relation to tourism. In addition to naming potential tourism sites, the members also spoke about food, forest products, and handicrafts items from the area as being potential tourism products.
They were also aware of the tourism activities in the neighboring district, Tha Uthen, and some of the problems associated with the tourism there.

**Existing Tourism Activities**

The majority of the tourism activities in the area are concentrated around the mouth of the Songkram River, where it meets the Mekong River. At the point the different colored waters of the two rivers converge in Chaiburi, the site is called the “River of Two Colors”. Reportedly there several restaurants, karaoke bars and accommodations here.

In Si Songkram District tourism is limited to a few student groups, study tour groups and some researchers visiting the area. The main activity of the tourists is to take a boat trip on the river.

**Community Participation in Tourism**

The small amount of tourism that does occur in the area is serviced by the local communities.

As Chaiburi, in Tha Uthen District was not visited, it is not possible to report on the participation of communities at that site. From descriptions given, there is probably no conscious effort spread the benefits of tourism to local communities. It probably is very similar to the type of tourism in Khong Chiam (see below for discussion).

**Local Government Support**

At the provincial level both the Tourism Authority of Thailand Office and the Tourism and Sports Office reported that there were no immediate plans to support or develop tourism in the Songkram River area.

The one SAO official present at the meeting was not sure if there were any plans in the local government to support tourism develop.
Attractiveness

As a natural attraction, the Songkram River is very scenic and interesting due to its unique ecological and geographical features. The area is very rural with the majority of the people living from the abundance that the river provides. Cultural the area is diverse with several different Tai subgroups and one Mon-Khmer group living in the area. The members of the group displayed pride and awareness of their cultural heritage.

Diversity of Activities

As mentioned the member of the Environmental Protection Group were able to identify sites and products which would be of interest. Unlike in Beung Khong Long, all of the activities here focus on the river and the surrounding communities. Following is a list of sites and activities that the members identified:

- Ban Haad Paeng, monkeys in the scared forest, worm mounds and woven birds nest
- Ban Yang Noi – Old Forest Temple with an ancient temple.
- Ban Haad Guan – school has an environmental conservation area, herbal medicine garden
- Ban Ba – bio-fertilizer, environmental curriculum in school
- Ban Tha Khlong – fish conservation zone
- Ban Ka – Buddhist museum and forest temple
- The River of Two Colors at Chaiburi – at the confluence of the Songkram River and the Mekong the river is two colors
- Wat Sri Woeng Chai – Old forest temple
- Ban Don Daeng – Nong Sai Wang – Future Ramsar Site, Wat Khan Sang Pue – has fish, birds, wild pigs, floating islands, water buffaloes eating grass, and monkeys
- Haad Goot Doe – Sand snails, swimming
- Ban Tha Baw – Community forest, fish products, bio-fertilizers, tourist boat
- Inland Lake in the rainy season
- Food made from forest products
Access

The area is similar to Beung Khong Long in its ease of access. Chaiburi is easily reached by bus from Bangkok and is on a major highway. Si Songkram District does have bus service to Nakorn Phanom and to Sakorn Nakorn.

The Survey of Nong Harn

18 Satellite Photo of Nong Harn with GPS points of sites visited.
Nong Harn Lake covers an area of 125.2 km² and is the largest natural lake of northeast Thailand. The provincial capital of Sakron Nakorn sits on the Northwest shore of the lake. The lake has tremendous cultural and historical importance with ruins dating back to the Khmer Empire. The lake is also very important economically as a fishery. Modern efforts to regulate and raise the level of the lake have had serious impacts on the ecology of the lake. Local citizens groups and government officials recognize the problems and are working to find solutions.

Community Organization

As there was only one day to drive around the lake, the author was only able to visit one village, Ban Tha Wat, which is a village that has started a community-based tourism program with the assistance of Rajaphat University. The meeting with the village was informal. But it was easy to see that this village had strong leadership and was well organized to receive visitors.

Community Awareness of Tourism

As mentioned the only community approached was Ban Tha Wat which already has a community tourism program. As no other community groups were spoken to it is difficult to say to what extent other communities around Nong Harn are aware or interested in tourism.

Existing Tourism Activities

The circumference of Nong Harn is quite large including both urban and rural areas. In town of Sakorn Nakorn remnants of the Khmer ruins are preserved, in particular the bathing pools. In another site, a park with a zoo and rafts had been developed. The site has now all but been abandoned but still has the potential to be a nature center or something similar. Near the town Tha Rae, there is an “Ecotourism Park”, which is neglected and vandalized.

Ban Tha Wat, located on the southern end of the lake, has been developing a community-based tourism program around their life-style, their history (there is an archaeological site) and Nong Harn Lake. The villages have established their own conservation zone. They take visitors out for excursions on the lake with fishermen as part of their program. The program has been underway for about 2 years. To date they have received close to 1,000 visitors.

Community Participation in Tourism

This was difficult to assess given the limited time. The author was only able to meet residents of one village. Ban Tha Wat, the village with the tourism program, clearly was participating in tourism activities.
Local Government Support

The Provincial Office of Tourism and Sport has established a committee for community-based tourism for the province. This office intends to use the lessons learned from Ban Tha Wat to help other communities around Nong Harn to establish community tourism programs.

In the Ban Baen SAO, the officials there could name several sites which had tourism potential. They brought the author to one sacred forest site with springs. Also included in the Ban Baen SAO's 3 year plan are several action points regarding tourism.

Sakorn Nakorn’s Rajaphat University has a program in tourism. Aj. Wanita Panich, a professor at the university, teaches sustainable tourism. She was the person who worked with Ban Tha Wat to set up their community tourism program.

Attractiveness

Nong Harn is a large and important ecosystem in this part of Thailand. Around the shores of the lake are a diversity of people’s: Catholic communities, Yaw, fishermen, farmers, etc. There is also a strong link with the both historical and pre-historical eras. Nong Harn has been supporting human civilization for a long time.

The story of the human impact on the lake in modern times is a very interesting story of what happened when an ecosystem is altered. Similarly, the story of how people are trying to mitigate, adjust and adapt to the consequences is also a fascinating story of human problem solving.

Diversity of Activities

Beyond the shores of Nong Harn, Sakorn Nakorn abounds with sacred temples, ancient Khmer sites as well as Phu Pan National Park 24 kilometers from the city. Its forested mountains contain waterfalls and caves.
Access

As Nong Harn is located near the provincial center of Sakorn Nakorn, the area is easily accessible by road, bus and airplane. There is a local airport with some commercial service.

The Survey of Kong Chiam
Khong Chiam (or Khong Jiam) is the district at the mouth of the Mun River on the Mekong in Ubol Rachathani Province. Upstream from the mouth is the Mun River Dam. On the south bank is the Keang Tana National Park. The Mun River played a very important part in the traditional cultural and economic life of the lower Northeast until the river was dammed in 1994.

The 5.5 kilometers from the Mun River dam to the mouth are numerous sacred and cultural sites. This area is also an important spawning area for fish. Khong Chiam is also a major tourism destination for Thai domestic tourists who come to see the national park and the convergence of the two rivers, which they name the River of Two Colors.

However, the area has been a site of great conflict between local residents and central government agencies. The dam has deprived fishermen of their livelihood and the national park has conflicting interests to the communities residing inside and on the boundaries of the park.

Community Organization

Given the sensitive situation in the area and as the author did not have any official introduction to local leaders, no attempt was made to contact local communities.

However, considering the strength of local communities, it was observed that the villages have been able to organize themselves in historic opposition to the government. It must be assumed that the communities do have a strong local organization. Additionally, it was observed in Ban Vang Beuk that the village has several community enterprises which would indicate a strong community organization.

Community Awareness of Tourism

Similarly, it is difficult to assess to what extent villagers are aware of the potential benefits or impacts of tourism. However, an official did point out that one village inside the Kaeng Tana National Park had attempted to set up a horse riding association.

Existing Tourism Activities

Tourism is an important economic activity in the town of Khong Chiam. Khong Chiam has 15+ small scale resorts or guest houses, numerous restaurants lining the banks of the Mekong as well as souvenir stands.

During the author’s visit to Khong Chiam, most of tourists were bus tour groups of school children, study tours or local groups from the Northeast. Only a small number of independent tourists from outside region were observed. No foreign tourists were seen during the two days. However, to determine the profile of tourists in Khong Chiam a much more rigorous study needs to be undertaken.
Community Participation in Tourism

From observation it did not appear that local communities were involved in tourism in any significant way. Most of the owners of tourist related businesses were individuals.

Local Government Support

Again it was not possible to determine to what extent local government was supporting the development of tourism. It was only observed that there was construction of small scale infrastructure, i.e. walks ways and view points.

On the other hand, trails inside the national park were neglected and not well marked. Tourist information was not available and if it was not very informative. This gave the feeling that there was little concern about the quality of the tourists’ experience.

Attractiveness

The attractiveness of the Lower Mun River comes not so much from its natural beauty, which it definitely has, but for its cultural, social, economic and environmental importance. Thai domestic tourism frequently focuses on unique or unusual natural features. In the case of Khong Chiam this is the so called “River of Two Colors”, the confluence of the Mun and Mekong Rivers.
Also the negative reputation and the conflict surrounding the dam could also certainly be pull factors for people visiting the area.

**Diversity of Activities**

Ubol Rachathani Province has a number of popular tourist attractions. Some of the more famous sites are with 30 kilometers of Khong Chain. These include the Pha Taem petroglyphs, the Sam Phan Bok sandstone formations, waterfalls as well as a famous gong making village.

**Access**

Kong Chiam is easily accessed from the Ubol Rachathani by local bus as well as by long distances buses direct from Bangkok. As Khong Chiam sits in a corner against the Lao-Thai border, there is little traffic passing through Khong Chiam onto other places.

**Feasibility for Community-based Tourism and Recommendations**

The viability for tourism in each of the sites has been determined, in part, by giving each site a ranking for each of the parameters examined. As this is a rapid assessment, the assessment should only be considered as a preliminary indicator of each site’s potential. Further study should be conducted should a decision be made to use tourism as a conservation tool or as a source of alternate income.

The highest possible score is 24. Due to the unique circumstances of each site, a simple ranking exercise can only point toward feasibility. The question of is not whether is it feasibility or not but to what extent is it feasible and how is it feasible. For the author’s views on this, there is discussion following each ranking matrix.
Beung Khong Long

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bueng Khong Long</th>
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Score out 24: 19

Discussion

The area around Beung Khong Long has good potential for the development of a community-based tourism program. The area offers a remote rural location with some direct access to Bangkok. It has preserved to some degree its traditional culture. Vibrant communities groups are expressing interest in pursuing the development of tourism. The area is scenic and located close to other unique and interesting tourism sites such as Phu Tok, the Mekong River, Phu Lanka National Park and Phu Wua Wildlife Sanctuary. While there is some limited tourism in Ban Khamsomboon of Beung Khong Long with negative impacts, the negative social impacts seem to be limited to that village.

Recommendations:

Community-based tourism:

Focus on developing a thematic community-based tourism program around Beung Khong Long. This will achieve the dual objectives of creating alternative income and raising public awareness. The program should focus on the importance of the wetland to the lives of the area communities. It should include the following themes:

1. the life of the villagers on Beung Khong Long,
2. the life of the villagers in the fields,
3. the life of the villagers in the village.

Included into each of these themes should be information and activities regarding:

- human history,
- natural history,
- culture,
• traditions,
• modern life and current issues,
• livelihoods,
• the eco-system,
• the current state of the ecosystem,
• community wetland management, and
• community uses for the wetland resources.

Each program should include an activity, like reforestation, where the tourist feels that they are actively contributing the conservation of the ecosystem.

The tourism program could take the form of a living museum with a village led tour program and homestay. It could be a combination of a one day, two or three day program.

Accommodation could take the form of a homestay or of village-based lodges. Many areas of the shore line have very scenic views of the wetland, which would be ideal for a small ecotourism lodge. A lodge could be built in the community forest in Ban Kok Krasae offering a truly natural setting. This would be very attractive for bird watchers.

The proximity of other significant tourism sites offers opportunities to vary the program and for visitors to extend their stay. This also places the Beung Khong Long experience into a larger conservation, cultural and geographic context.

This program should initially focus on Thai domestic tourists who are looking for an authentic rural experience in the Northeast with elements of soft adventure, moderate physical exercise, and personal contact with local people. One selling point is that the tourists’ stay will benefit both local community and the environment.

**Improve the Existing Tourism Practices**

Most tourists do not intentionally want to harm the environment. If they are given guidance and how to be a responsible tourist, most tourists will take advantage of the opportunity.

WWF should engage the Ban Khamsomboon community, the SAO and the local businesses in developing a code for responsible tourism practices. This could include:

• ecotourism certification program
• a tourist information center with environmental education information
• opportunities to advertise community-based tourism projects
• offer short tours of Bueng Khong Long by local village guides
• opportunities for tourist to contribute to conservation efforts
Goot Ting

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Discussion

The results of the assessment show the low awareness of tourism as a form of alternative income. Neither the local government nor the community members have any vision for developing tourism in their area. The more urbanized nature of the communities around Goot Ting make it less appealing as a tourist destination.

While Goot Ting may not be appropriate for a community-based tourism program focusing on recreation, the real value of Goot Ting is as a place for environmental education.

Recommendation:

Establish and environmental education camp and center. This could take the form of a week long program for school groups or for students during school break. Members of the area communities could be used as resource persons and provide many of the services and lead the activities.
The Songkram River

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Score out of 24: 18

Discussion

The Songkram River is unique in that it flows backwards during the rainy season. This fits into the category of unusual natural phenomena which attracts Thai tourists. Furthermore, the issues surrounding the water levels and human impacts on the ecology of the Mekong should help draw more people interesting in learning about these issues to the Songkram River as the impact can clearly be seen.

Recommendations

Community-based Tourism

The Songkram River should follow the same general recommendations as outlined for Beung Khong Long above both for community-based tourism and for existing tourism activities.

What the Songkram River offers that the other sites do not is the chance to travel along the river by boat from one village to the other. One, two and three day program could be developed where villages host and guide visitors through the region exploring the life, culture and environment of the Songkram River from the inland lake to the Mekong River.

Improve the Existing Tourism Practices

Similar to the recommendations for Beung Khong Long, the existing tourism businesses could be encourage to adopt for responsible tourism practices. A tourist information center at the mouth of the Songkram would present a great opportunity for public education about the ecosystems of the Mekong and the Songkram Rivers as well as efforts to adapt to the changes in the ecosystem.
Nong Harn

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Score out of 24: 23

Discussion

Nong Harn received the highest score of all of the sites. Nong harn differs from the other sites in that conservation-linked community-based tourism is being actively promoted by the local government and the capacity to develop community-based tourism is present locally. Community awareness regarding the tourism potential of Nong Harn is well developed. Nong Harn is also the easily accessible of all the sites surveyed. The existence of a well supported and successful community-tourism program is also promising, should WWF want to support activities in this area.

The municipality and the Tha Rae should undertake a study to learn why the two parks developed failed.

Recommendations

Nong Harn is the second largest fresh water body in Thailand. As the area is large, more study will need to be done on which areas would be most appropriate more community-based tourism. Any efforts to develop community-based tourism in Nong Harn should be done in collaboration with the Office of Tourism and Sports Community Tourism committee and with Rajaphat University.

A similar thematic approach to community-based tourism should be followed as recommended for Beung Khong Long and the Songkram River.

Existing Tourism Sites

All of resources and energy have been expended to develop the two failed parks in the municipality and in Tha Rae. A study should be undertaken how to best utilized these sites to create awareness about the conservation of Nong Harn. The study could start with an examination of who would like to use these parks and what they would like to see them. The park in the municipality would be appropriate for an environmental education center.
Regarding existing tourism activities a similar approach as was suggested for Beung Khong Long could be used. But more study would need to be done on what kind of existing tourism activities are there and what their impact is.

### Kong Chiam

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**Score out of 24:** 20

### Discussion

Khong Chiam is the most complex and sensitive of the sites visited. There is bitter conflict between the local communities and the government authorities over the dam as well as the management of the resources in the Kaeng Tana National Park.

Tourism is an important part of the local economy. Local communities increased participation in tourism might help to mitigate some of the conflict. Participation in tourism could make the communities partners in responsibly managing natural resources, if a strong link is made between tourism and conservation. Tourism also presents an opportunity to educate the broader public about the issues surrounding the Mun River.

Khong Chiam is not only the confluence of the Mekong River, it is also an important cultural site dating from pre-historic times. In the 5.5 kilometers from the dam to the confluence there are numerous sacred sites. There are many stories that can be told about this short stretch of river.

### Recommendation:

Without more in depth study of tourism and the tourism market in Khong Chiam, it would not be possible to make specific recommendations. But without a doubt, tourism is a powerful economy force in Khong Chiam and serious efforts should be made to increase communities’ participation in it as well as to utilize it as a tool for conservation education.

The quality and variety of souvenirs sold in Khong Chiam could be increased. Some work on the value chain could be done to increase the income of local residents from the sale of local products and food.
Following are some ideas for potential tourism activities:

- Guided tours by local residents to important historical and sacred sites.
- Merit making/worship at important site
- Work with villagers to develop walking trails and programs in the National Park and use locals as guides.
- Environmental information center at the Mekong confluence
Appendix A: List of Persons Contacted

**Tourism Organizations, Tourism Professionals and Tour Operators**

- Mason Florence, Executive Director, Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office
- Zimbo Boonrattana, Professor of Tourism, Mahidol University
- Joe Cummings, Travel Writer
- Bruce Hancock, Managing Director of Asian Oasis
- Peter Richards, Community-based Tourism Institute
- Mr. Nipanpong, Owner TKT Ecotour, Trekkingthai.com
- Saichalee Varnapruk, Retired TAT Advisor
- Hamish Keith, General Manager, Exotissimo
- Anne Cruickshanks, Group Product Manager, Exotissimo
- Soontarut Wattanahongsiri, Product Manager, Exotissimo
- Thierry Rodet, General Manager, East West Siam
- Raymond Müller, Sales & Marketing Manager, East West Siam
- Nick Ascot, consultant, Buffalo Tours
- Graham Harper, Buffalo Tours

**Beung Khong Long**

- Daraporn Chankote, SAO Planning officer, Beung Kohng Long SAO
- Ubol Prahonetap, Mayor Ban Dong Sao, Amphur Seka
- Supakid Budta, Vice Mayor, Nonsomoon SAO, Amphur Beung kan
- Dir. Wisatsak Wisatwohan, Phu Lanka Nat’l Park

**Ban Charoensuk**

- Thong, Fertilizer group
- Galee, Fishermen’s groups
- Nang Saeng, Headman/mat weaving group
- Bupha, Brown Rice production group
- Shampooonut, Savings Group
- Nai Bekongdee, savings group
- Padit Prommachan, SAO council member

**Ban Don Sawan**

- President of the Broom Making group

**Ban Sok Pho**

- Amphai Reunsombat
- Kanita Faichatyon
- Samote Neunsai
- Ramphai Kote pim
- Prasitchai Saengsawang

**Ban Wang Nam Mawk Homestay**

- Thinapob Suphanta, President of the Ban Wang Nam Mok Homestay

**Beungkhan**

- Supakid Budta, Vice Mayor, Nonsomoon SAO, Amphur Beung kan
**Ban Na Kham**

Songkraan Ongawn – President
Gee Jinda – Women’s Group
Lampan Cheuyan – Public Relations
Toom Mee
Promlin Supone
Sompong Traitin – treasurer
Pikunlathboon Bohnawm
Supot Aphai – secretary
Khampi Jinda – women’s group
Somchai Prommalin

**Nakorn Phanom**

Adisak (Toto) Huadkantat, Nakorn Phanom Tourism & Sport Department
Tharin Panthuman, Sriphanom Tour
Wichukorn Kularpsri – Nakorn Phanom TAT Director

**Songkram River Conservation Group**

Udon Nonchan, Ban Thabaw, Asst. Headman
Chalieow Ksaemsin, Ban Thabaw
Waraporn Thisatchan, Ban Uan
Chomsi Pasom, Ban Uan
Darunee Singkaek, Ban Yang-ngoii, Asst. Headman
Nikon Bupusiri Ban Yang-ngoii, Asst. Headman

**Sakorn Nakorn**

Aj. Sopsan – Dept. of Anthropology Rajaphat University Sakorn Nakorn
Aj. Wanita Panich, Dept. of Anthropology Rajaphat University Sakorn Nakorn
Mr. Surasak Noikhamyan, Dir. of Dept. of Public Relations
Mayor Suphot Pailai, Ban Baen SAO
Administrator Suphat, Ban Baen SAO
Chaman Dahpsipai, Headman of Ban Tha Wat
Mongkol Dainaodong, Deputy Headman of Ban Tha Wat
Phonganan Chanprai, Dir of Tourism and Sport, Sakorn Nakorn Province

**Nongkhai**

Chanyuth Hankhampa, Dir. of Tourism and Sport Nongkhai Province.
Appendix B: Bibliography

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