RESEARCH PROJECT TITLE:  Visitor Management for Ecotourism Development at Khao Yai National Park, Thailand

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5. Checklist for complete report submission. These sections are to follow this submission form.
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I do hereby certify that all of the above given checks are true.

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Visitor Management for Ecotourism Development at Khao Yai National Park, Thailand

Executive summary
This research describes about visitor management at Khao Yai National Park (KYNP), a World Heritage Site (WHS) and ASEAN Heritage Park (AHP) that receive progressive and fluctuate visitors. The research focus on how KYNP provides quality service to improve visitors’ experience while maintaining management objectives of the park. The research also covers level of visitor satisfaction towards information and service provided, and stakeholder roles to conserve values of the park and how they contribute to visitor management process. The research presents results of observation, interviews to stakeholders and visitors, together with questionnaires that have been conducted inside the park. The data of 210 questionnaires collected from international and domestic visitors at KYNP showed that interpretation regarding all aspects of the park should be improved. Information can effectively increase the awareness of visitors towards wildlife, important environment aspects of the park, and possibly help the park authorities to manage visitor behavior in KYNP. Interesting founding showed that generally known the visit to WHS is generated by its status is not the case of most visitors in KYNP. Most visitors are satisfied with the service provided but other special case of dissatisfaction also found in this research. The research also presents the discussion and strategies towards visitor management at KYNP.

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Background and rationale

Ecotourism has been introduced as part of alternative tourism to respond the negative impact of mass tourism. Inskeep (1991) mentioned that forms of alternative tourism relate to facilities and activities that allow visitors to directly experience and respect the host culture and environment. This alternative tourism, including ecotourism offers the various ways to travel differently than the conventional one such as nature interpretation to educate visitors and active experience for visitors.

Current visitors are becoming more concern on the local people’s welfare, environmental damage, social change and contribution to the place they visit as the impact of their visits. They put more emphasis to reduce negative impact of their visit to the sites and people. Therefore, demand for service and quality of experience is highly concerned by the visitors, and values in the tourism destinations are required to meet visitor’s needs.

Ecotourism, which was introduced in the 1990s, has defined by The International Ecotourism Society (1993), as responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people. Ecotourism is expected to encourage more responsible behavior and social responsibility towards environment and local people.

As part of encouragement effort for tourism, ecotourism has been promoted and introduced for tourism development in Thailand protected areas, including national park (Emphandhu, 2002 in Emphandhu and Chettamart, 2004). A series of National Ecotourism Action Plan 2002 - 2006, management guideline and the Thailand National Ecotourism Policy has been produced by Tourism Authority Thailand (TAT). It has been launched as a framework of ecotourism focusing on conservation and benefits to local communities to support the ecotourism campaign and activities in the country. As part of actively promoting ecotourism and green tourism, in 2011 TAT highlights on strategic plan for promoting more ecotourism products. The initial initiative start from signing agreement of “Declaration of Environment Protection for Sustainable Tourism” among government and private agencies from five provinces: Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima, Chon Buri, and Surat Thani. TAT also provides awareness and promotion materials regarding ecotourism (W. Churugsa, 2010, personal communication).

Ecotourism euphoria has generated a visit to protected areas, particularly to the national park has been growing rapidly as many tour operators in Thailand also promote tour packages to visit national parks. National parks have become primary destinations for nature tourism activities and promotion efforts.

As one component of broader destination management process, tourism destinations should apply an effective visitor management to achieve better service quality, experience and values. McArthur (1993) in Van der Donk (2000) defined visitor management as the
management of visitors in a manner which maximizes the quality of visitor experience while assisting the achievement of the site's overall management objectives.

Visitor management is a means to minimize the impact of visitors in a tourism destination (Mason, 2006). World Tourism Organization (1997) underlined that visitor management is designed to control the numbers and flow of visitors as well as their activities. Visitor flow works by restriction to certain areas, establish pathway through areas, and controlling the time of visits. The important of visitor management also noted by London Development Agency (2009) that highlights effective visitor management will: contribute to the visitor’s understanding and appreciation of the destination; reduce damage to sensitive sites and localities; tackle issues that may be affecting the quality of the visitor experience and the quality of life for local people; attract and disperse visitors within the destination to spread the economic benefits more widely. Visitor management tools such as interpretation to educate visitors (Mason, 2003 in Mason 2006), facilities and promotion are needed to control the visitor behavior in a destination, meanwhile provide service and improve visitor’s experience. Therefore, understanding and implementing an effective visitor management is crucial for ecotourism in conservation area such as national park.

This research examined the visitor management at Khao Yai National Park (KYNP) that receive progressive and fluctuate visitors. KYNP has been visited by 821,793 visitors in 2009, intensively increased over 64% since 2006 (KYNP Research Division, 2010). The research focus on how KYNP provides quality service to improve the experience of visitors while maintaining management objectives of the park in conservation. The component of research also covers level of visitor satisfaction towards information and service provided, and stakeholder roles to conserve values of the park as contribution for visitor management process. The research presents results of observation and survey series carried out at KYNP, interviews to key stakeholders and visitors, together with questionnaires that have been conducted inside the park. This is followed by a discussion and strategies.

Objective of research

The objective of this study is to understand how visitor management developed in KYNP, how park authorities deal with visitor management issues and develop visitor management strategies to improve service and experience of visitors, and how stakeholders play their roles to conserve park’s values.

Research methodology

This study employed three methods, including observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Surveys for observation was conducted to achieve outputs 1 and 3, interview to stakeholders
was carried out to achieve outputs 1 and 3, questionnaire and further interview was conducted to achieve output 1 and 2.

Five visits were conducted during this study to observe several key attractions in the park within August 2010 to January 2011. First visit (25-26 Aug 2010), that was carried out as preliminary assessment and observation to understand KYNP and the surrounding area. Second visit (25-30 Sept 2010) was to conduct assessment on surrounding environment of the park, facilities, infrastructure, physical condition of the area, and all service provided: accommodation, food and beverage service, supporting facilities (toilet, park agent for night safari tour and accommodation) and promotion activities. This visit was also to observe visitors’ activity pattern (waterfalls, nature trails, trekking activities, night safaris and camping). During this visit, tourism activities outside the park have also been assessed to get impression on activities in the surrounding area. The interview has also been conducted to tours agents, accommodations and restaurant business outside the park. In this visits, the nature trails of km 33 – Nong Pak Chi observation tower have also been assessed in collaboration with park’s staff, and assessment to Kong Kaew Nature trail. Third visit (22-25 Oct 2010) was carried out as follow up assessment to the previous visit (2nd site visit) in KYNP and the try-out questionnaire to get impression whether the respondents can easily understand the questions. For 20 tested-questionnaires and follow-up discussion has been conducted, for Thai and international visitors in the same proportion. Based on their input, questionnaire was modified to achieve the outputs. The questions were developed from various researches related satisfaction level, visitor management, and based on observation in the park and interview with the stakeholders towards visitors’ activities (weekenders and long weekenders, week day visitors), domestic and international visitors’ activity pattern. Fourth visit (25 Nov-4 Dec 2010) was to collect the data by disseminating the questionnaire and conducted follow up discussions/interview to selected visitors. Final assessment to attractions, interpretation materials, and service in the park was also carried out. In this visit, the assessment via tour package tried-out to nature trail km 33 – Nong Pak Chi tower (with different route to the previous assessment) and assessment to nature trail of Pha Kluay May Camp Site – Heo Suwat waterfall were also conducted. The time of fourth visit has been selected carefully to obtain the dynamic and various data. Week days visitors, week end visitors and long weekend visitors were met to get idea about the profile and travel pattern within the park. Fifth visit (28-29 Jan 2011) was conducted as final observation to the area and activities during the low tourism season.

In-depth Interviews to obtain an overview of stakeholders’ roles, activities and programmes as well as all aspects related to visitor management in KYNP, were carried out from August 2010 to February 2011 to DNP, RFD, UNESCO Bangkok, FREELAND foundation, CSR team of PTT Exploration and Production Public (PTTEP), Tourism Authority Thailand (TAT),
ASEAN Center for Biodiversity Manila Office (via email), National Parks Association for Thailand (NPAT), Thai Ecotourism and Adventure Association (TEATA), KYNP staff: superintendent of the park, Research Division, visitor center and accommodation reservation office, Welfare office, park rangers, camping sites staff, food and beverage center, tour operators in Bangkok selling KYNP tour packages, tour operator staff/guides from Pak Chong (Greenleaf, Khao Yai Garden), and guides from Bangkok and Pattaya also interviewed in the park.

Research results

The questionnaire for International visitors was in English for international visitors and Thai language for domestic visitors, consist of 210 questionnaires have been disseminated with the composition of 75 questionnaires designated to international visitors and 125 for Thai visitors. Based on the data gathered from DNP and Research Division KYNP have shown that average composition of international and domestic visitors were 75 %: 25%. That became the basis in determining number of questionnaire for this research. Ten questionnaires were not completely filled out, therefore only 200 questionnaires were analyzed. For 60% of respondents, both Thai and foreigners were involved in follow-up discussions after they filled the questionnaires. The questionnaires were divided into three parts: the profile of visitors, questions regarding visitor management, and Likert scale questions to find out visitors’ satisfaction level.

The places selected for data collection have been identified based on previous visits, interview and observations in order to obtain wide and broader range of respondents. The questionnaire handed out to respondents at (1) accommodation: Camping ground, Surasawadhi Zone 3 and Thanarat Zone; (2) Attractions: Visitor center, Heuw Suwat waterfall, Nong Pak Chi Observation tower, km 33 nature trail, camping ground of Pha Klua Mai and Lam Ta Khong and (3) Food and Beverage service: Park’s canteen in front of visitor center. In order to avoid the bias of data, the respondents were selected based on the number of group and places of data taken. As an illustration, only one as representative of the couple respondents who was asked to fill the questionnaire; 2 respondents were selected from group of 10 people and up to 5 respondents from group of 30 people and more to fill the questionnaire. Focus was also given to individual visitors and tour groups. This section will discuss all aspects of the park followed by the result of questionnaire and interview.

Since establishment in 1962, the park has gained its popularity and started receiving 41,000 visitors in 1966, then 140,699 in 1976, and 713,893 in 1990. Number of visit in the park was more than one million visitors in 1991(Grey et. al., 1994; TDRI, 1995). The slight decline of visitation in subsequent years related to government decision to close major facilities at KYNP including golf course, Tourism Authority Thailand’s resort and restaurant. The visitors
considered the park closed by that time (Grey et. al., 1994; S. Chettamart, 2011, personal communication). The park then offered accommodation in 1993 and number of visit increased within following years until 1998, when the park received over one million visitors, repeating previous history in 1991(Grey et. al., 1994; TDRI, 1995). Since then, visitation number in the park fluctuated concerning major incidents in the world, Asia and within the country of Thailand. Nevertheless, until September during 2010 KYNP has generated 514,890 visitors to the park (Research Division KYNP, 2010).

Based on observation and interview, in term of activity, there is no major difference between domestic and foreigners. Both domestic and foreigners enjoy hiking, birdwatching, bicycling, night safari, visit waterfalls, view points and observation tower. Most domestic visitors come with big group of friends, school, company, family or couple and alone. Foreigners comprise small family (up to 4 persons), small group (2 - 4 persons), couple or alone. Arranged-tours from Bangkok generally offer “elephant trek” with the elephants from a resort outside of KYNP, visit view point, and waterfall.

KYNP peak season period are during January, July, October, November, and December within a year. From October to January is winter time in Thailand when the park has cooler weather, and Thailand calendar blesses with numerous holidays and traditional celebrations. July is school short term break in Thailand and summer vacation seasons in Europe, USA and Canada that contribute most visitor holiday departures to Thailand. The highest visited time for the park is during New Year holiday.

During December 2010, The Director General of DNP has launched new regulation (effectively on 29 December 2010) on prohibition of possessing and selling alcoholic drinks within the park (DNP, 2010) and created more conducive environment for visitors at camping sites (N. Chuanchuen, 2011, personal communication).

United Nation of World Tourism Organization (2007) highlighted to determine visitor management, it is important to identify who (visitors) visit what (attractions) and what they do and spend. According to experience dealing with tourism projects, assessment to the tours provided, attractions and its interpretation materials are also vital aspect to be carried out. Investigation of these featured was obtained via questionnaire and observation.

Based on the 200 respondents, 57 % was male and 43 % was female. The couple and family respondents often gave the man filled the questionnaire. Solo international woman traveler also appeared as respondents and came as a woman group. For the age breakdown, a slightly high number (28%) shown in the over 41 age group. Lower to this proportion, for Thai visitors, slightly high number also shown in the 21 – 25 and 31 – 35 age groups, both for 29 %. Compared to international visitors that has presented high portion in the 26 – 30 age group (also for 29 %). In term of education, 55 % of Thai respondents were undergraduate level while 46% of International visitors were graduate level The fact has presented “a change” from
what widely known as one of most visitors characteristics who consume ecotourism trip are well educated (Patterson, 2007). Based on further interview to visitors, 7 cases have shown that European visitors did camping and didn’t join to the guide trekking tour for the reason of saving their budget. Over 89 % of international respondents visited KYNP for the first time, compared to 77 % repeat domestic visitors. Bangkok residents represented 48 % of respondents of domestic visitors, followed by Nakhon Ratchasima (11%) and respondents from other provinces throughout Thailand. For international visitors, European respondents dominated with 79 %.

There were two proportions length of stay for international respondents, day visit respondents (44%) and 2 - 4 nights staying inside the park (36%). Day visit respondents were coming as part of tour package, and longer duration staying were more birdwatchers and trekkers who wanted to discover more nature trails and wildlife in the park. Domestic visitors had day visit (36%) and 1 night (32%) staying in the park. Most of the respondents in this group were weekenders and campers. Over 80 % domestic visitors were coming with their private car, and bus was a way for 28 % of International visitors to reach KYNP. Over 30 % of international visitors had tour van facility as a service of tour package they bought. Guide book remains a means for international visitors (37%) to know about KYNP. For domestic visitors, word of mouth from friends, family or relatives continued as a way to recognize about the park. Domestic visitors also know about the park from TV programme and text book from their school (over 17 % respondents).

Interestingly, the WHS status of the park wasn’t part of motivation for 44 % of international and 38 % of domestic visitors. This was highest proportion answer for both visitors. Shackley (2006) has assumed that standard visitors’ motivation to visit WHS either by interest of culture and love of nature is not necessarily the case. Visitors to WHS can be motivated by simple motivation as adventure or a social setting function. The international visitors indicated they didn’t know the park has that status (21 % of respondents), and 8 % informed they didn’t care with the status of the park. Twenty five (25) % of domestic visitors represented the reason that they didn’t care with the status of the park, and 10% indicated they didn’t know the park has that status. However, 28 % of domestic visitors and 27 % of international visitors showed WHS status has driven their visit to the park. If this indication is compared to the source of information for International visitors, that 37 % used guidebook as source of information, KYNP has been informed as a WHS in most used guidebook visitors at KYNP (Lonely Planet).

Based on further interview conducted to the visitors, the most important aspects for their visit was to do activities to have experience in the park. The questions in questionnaire about the reason to visit KYNP and activities the visitors do are opened to more than one response. Therefore, the visitor has chosen Wildlife (62 respondents), Outdoor activities (41
resp.) and scenery/landscape (54 resp.) were the most important reasons for international visitors came to the park. Scenery/landscape (95 resp.), weather condition (91 resp.) and tranquility of the park (61 resp.) were reasons for the domestic visitors. They felt KYNP as “an escape” of daily routine. There were difference activities taken during the visit of International and domestic visitors in the park. Trekking at nature trail was carried out by 60 visitors, wildlife watching (57 resp.) and visit waterfalls (56 resp.) were the major activities for international visitors in KYNP. While domestic visitors enjoyed more a walk to waterfalls (80 resp.), visit the view points (59 resp.), and sightseeing by car (55 resp.). Other favorite activity for domestic visitors where their visit to the park was only for camping also represented in high proportion (48 resp.). Most of both international and domestic visitors came to visitor center before starting their visit. Tour package from tour operators often started their trip by coming to visitor center. The interesting information received from domestic visitors as they considered visitor center at KYNP as a museum, because the way of information presented and appearance of building. According to Mason and Kuo (2006) a staffed visitor center plays a major role in visitor management at tourism destinations. Providing information and assistances as well as interpretation delivered are several basic functions. Based on interview to international and domestic visitors, visitor center is important aspect of the park that needs improvement in term of interpretation and the way information presented.

Most of the international visitors (45%) have taken the nature trails without guide. They informed that the park staff at visitor center encouraged them to walk alone to the marked nature trails. Language barrier remains an issue since most park rangers have limited English as indicated by park research division staff (B. Panklang, 2010, personal communication). Based on observation, these nature trails were informed in English and Thai language at the visitor center, promoted on map provided by KYNP and guidebook. The visitors who have undertaken walk to nature trails without guide/ranger stated that they found it easy to walk alone (74%), as well as feel safe and convenience to walk without guide/ranger. However, most of international visitors (70%) found insufficient signage and information along the route. Based on further interview, some of them had disorientation and expressed the need for more information in English about the site.

In term of consumption in the park, there was a little difference between international and domestic visitor response. Purchasing anything from the park (any kind of souvenirs) was not interest of the international visitors, with over 95 % revealed no for the responses. However, 64 % bought food and beverage in the park’s canteen. Domestic visitors had the interest to purchase the souvenirs from the park with 45 % gave the positive responses. Consuming food and beverage also interested domestic visitors to do in the park (75%). The most visited restaurants in KYNP were restaurant in front of visitor center, Heo Suwat, and Lam Tha Kong camping ground.
KYNP continues attract the attention of 94 % domestic visitors to return. While 49 % of international visitor revealed they don’t know about returning to the KYNP.

Visitor satisfaction level has been done to observe visitor’s expectation and opinion towards service and experience quality in KYNP. Satisfaction’s level of international and domestic visitors in the park shown in the Likert scale questionnaires and follow up discussion to selected visitors. The visitors were asked to rate the service and experience immediately during and post-visit in KYNP.

Uysal (2003) stated that monitoring visitors’ satisfaction with facilities, programs and services is significant aspects in maintaining a sustained and successful business or work. Satisfied tourists tend to transmit their positive experience to others and to repeat their visit (Alen et.al., 2007; Operman, 2000 in Daud et.al, 2009). There are two factors grouping in measuring satisfaction consist of expressive indicators and instrumental indicators in which the theoretical distinction developed by Noe (1987) as indicated in Uysal (1999). Furthermore, Uysal (1999) mentioned in his research the example components of instrumental factors (interpretation i.e. personnel to explain things and give information; and facilities i.e. restaurant, parking, restroom, camping site, signage, accommodation) and expressive factors (i.e. trails for hiking and biking, activities of environmental programme).

The result of questionnaire and interview showed that opinion of international visitors who used public transport was divided into 3 kinds of responses, good (16%), fair (19%), and poor (15%). The respondents have different perspective about public transport, those who gave responses fair and good didn’t mind to take series of transport to take them to the park’s gate and then did hitchhike. Those who respond poor found that it is impractical to walk from one to another site in the park, as the distance of most attractions is not within walking distance. However, most of the visitors should walk at least 45 minutes to one hour to reach the nearest attraction i.e. from Lam Tha Khong to Heo Suwat waterfall. For domestic visitors, 40 % responded don’t know about public transport to the park. This is understandable as most domestic visitors used private car to reach KYNP as informed earlier.

Twenty eight % (28%) of international visitors found signboard to get around in the park was good, although 27 % didn’t pay attention to the signboard inside the park because they have guide and driver who took them around. For domestic visitors, 55 % had response good for the signboard to get around while other 33 % inform fair. Domestic visitors had indicated that the signboards fairly shade, unattractive and should be repaired.

In the case of information provided at visitor center (displays and brochures), 46 % domestic visitors represented it as fair, they suggest to display information in more interesting way, simple term and explanation which make the parents able to transfer to their children about basic environmental and ecosystem information. However, 42 % visitors felt that
provided information was good. The same proportion for the response from international
visitors that 28% said the information provided was good, 21% fair, and 15% was poor.

Interesting fact found in term of information signboards along nature trails. About 47%
domestic visitors consider it as good, and 39% fair. The response was gathered from the
visitors who took the short walk to nature trail less than one km behind visitor center where the
visitors only found one signboard to inform the track. While 32% of the international visitors
considered all interpretation along the nature trail was poor. Respondents informed that case of
disorientation along the trails possibly occurred and signboards of information in English to
inform about the significance and wildlife in the area were necessary. Both international and
domestic visitors found limited essential information about the park.

For international visitors, 30% don’t know about the information signboard. This could
be explained with the fact that most respondents coming with tour package from Pak Chong
that didn’t include the visit to viewpoint at their package. Other 32% find the information was
good. Opinion of international visitor about observation tower was divided into difference view
that 27 % considered it was good and 46% don’t know about it. Regarding the fact that within
the most visited observation tower “Nong Pak Chi”, the visitors didn’t realize about
interpretation provided regarding wildlife around the tower. Presence of the information boards
was considered as a nonexistence. The same case also occurred within waterfalls site. For
about 42% considered they don’t know the presence of any information signboards within the
waterfall sites.

For domestic visitors, information signboards at viewpoint and waterfalls were
considered good for 51% respondents and 46% at both sites. Information boards at
observation tower were considered fair for 36% respondents and 18% interestingly showed
they don’t know about it.

The domestic visitors felt cleanliness of toilet was fair (42%) and good (36%). While
32% international visitor considered the toilet as good. Different with domestic visitors,
international visitors more used toilets at visitor center and restaurant in front of visitor center.
While domestic visitors used the toilets at tourism attractions as camping sites, waterfalls
which provide different condition.

Numerous stakeholders involved in ecotourism development and initiatives in KYNP
include government, and also stakeholders at international level, regional, national
(associations and Non-Government Organization) and private sector (tour operators and
accommodation). Most stakeholders participate on promoting and increase awareness about
KYNP.

The Royal Forest Department (RFD) was established in 1896, introducing the
management of forest activity in term of economic benefits for people. Following approval of
The National Park Act in 1961, which authorize the creation and protection of national parks,
the section under RFD to administer this act then changed into the National Park Division in 1972. There was a restructuration reform in 2002 within Thailand government, RFD into three department and 75 offices: Royal Forest Department (RFD), Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP), Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMC), and 75 Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Offices across the country, and currently under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (RFD, 2009).

While RFD is in charge to manage forest resources in non protected areas, Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) is responsible for managing protected areas. Khao Yai National Park, is under Prachin Buri Protected Area Regional Office 1 and Nakhon Ratchasima Protected Area Regional Office 7 (DNP, 2006). Khao Yai National Park management structure consists of superintendent, working together with Resources Conservation Section, Recreation and Communication Section, Administrative Section, and Academic Section. KYNP has eight management areas with 21 ranger units (Research Division KYNP, 2010).

Tourism Authority Thailand (TAT) has major role to promote tourism destination and products, including in KYNP. TAT national office has close collaboration with TAT provincial offices to achieve the goal. TAT has set a policy which leads to the operational level to promote “Green Tourism” throughout the country. TAT put special attention to promote KYNP as World Heritage Site. During 2010, TAT has carried out media familiarization trip to local and foreign journalists to explore tourism products and services in Nakhon Ratchasima province including KYNP.; and published tourist guidebook of Nakhon Ratchasima and include information about KYNP (W. Churugsa, S. Naipongsri, R. Charuchet, K. Bura., 2010, personal communication).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has primary concern regarding protection of KYNP as part of World Heritage site DPKY-FC. UNESCO Bangkok manages programmes in the Asia-Pacific region and in the cluster of the “Mekong” countries - Thailand, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Singapore, Viet Nam and Cambodia. However, UNESCO Bangkok is Asia Pacific Regional Bureau for Education which focuses and promotes programmes on education and culture. Therefore, KYNP environment issues attract limited attention.

ASEAN Center for Biodiversity (ACB) is an intergovernmental organization of ASEAN that facilitates cooperation among ASEAN Member States (AMS) on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, especially in ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHP). ACB serves as Secretariat of an AHP Committee that has role to plan activities for AHP. ACB provides inputs in term of policy making to AMS concerning AHPs. ACB programmes include workshops and trainings to improve capacities of AHP staff for effective management, as well as assistance in public awareness, data management and networking activities. ACB has conducted a Joint
Research Project to publish "Manual for Establishing Interpretive Signs in Nature Trails for Ecotourism", "Capacity Building for Terrestrial AHP Evaluation Effectiveness in 4 AHPs in Thailand", and conducted workshop on Communication and Community Relations in collaboration with DNP in KYNP. ACB also has join project with DNP and FREELAND Foundation to conduct trainings on law enforcement in KYNP (Uriarte, Dr. Monina, 2011, personal communication).

PTT Exploration and Production Public Company Limited (PTTEP) is a national petroleum exploration and production company that provides a petroleum supply to Thailand. PTTEP, through its CSR projects, has focus on quality of life improvement and environmental conservation. PTTEP, in collaboration with Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plants Conservation (DNP), has actively promoted World Heritage sites of Thailand including KYNP. They published “Thai Heritage World Heritage”, series of booklet, brochures, posters, and support research of Hornbill & Tiger in the park. Since January 2011, PTTEP in collaboration with DNP improve nature trails in KYNP e.g. Pha Diao Dai view point, km 33 – Nong Pak Chi, and Kong Kaew as well as renovate visitor center and equipped with e-library, new souvenir shop and interactive media (A. Vorradhama-Pinich., 2010, personal communication).

The Thai Ecotourism and Adventure Association (TEATA) established in 1997, is the national body for ecotourism and adventure industry in Thailand. TEATA is Bangkok based non-profit organization with 65 members from all over Thailand. Though TEATA open its door for tour operators, eco resorts, academics, eco-adventure magazine and tourism groups, majority of current members are tour operators selling ecotour packages. They are officially supported by TAT and chartered by government. TEATA has conducted training to the youth and 50 ecotourism guides who take the tour group to KYNP and Hua Khakeng. These trained guides are now in the process of obtaining license from government. TEATA is also actively promoting volunteer tourism to the youth to participate in awareness programme for the visitors at KYNP. The awareness actions carry out every New Year, comprise showing the impact of feeding the wildlife, garbage collection and “love the nature” action through performance to visitors (N. Chuanchuen, 2011, personal communication).

National Parks Association of Thailand (NPAT) founded in 2009 by a group of academics and practitioners in conservation and management of national parks and wildlife. NPAT is an NGO aims to support management of national parks and protected areas in Thailand based on acceptable knowledge and principles. Besides engaging national park managers in Thailand, NPAT is now actively promoting volunteer tourism at KYNP, seminars and workshops in protected areas (S. Chettamart., 2011, personal communication).

FREELAND is an international environmental and human rights organization focus on environmental awareness, law enforcement, capacity building and community outreach to stop wildlife trafficking and protect critical ecosystem. FREELAND has carried out “Surviving
Together” programme at KYNP through training on patrol and enforcement technique to the rangers. Other programme currently on going is community outreach of organic mushroom cultivation to villages around Dong Phayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex (T. Redford., 2010, personal communication).

Based on observation, Greenleaf tour and Khao Yai Garden are tour operators among others in Pak Chong area, who provide accommodation and run daily tours to the park. As majority of the market is foreigners, the tour offers comprise hiking through nature trail, birdwatching and other wildlife watching at KYNP. Most of tours attempt to satisfy customers by seeing wildlife with minimal scientific explanation, as information given based on experience of the guides. All the tours stop at visitor center, then take hiking route at km 33 – Nong Pak Chi Observation tower, visit Heo Suwat and try a good fortune to spot elephants in the park. Private sectors can be used as ambassador of KYNP to educate visitors and increase their satisfaction and experience. They can also participate on promoting KYNP through their websites.

Conclusions and recommendations

- **Education towards visitors with integrated and comprehensive basic knowledge on environmental issues at KYNP** is basic essential element to improve. Interpretation signboards contains short information about the impact with shocking pictures of wildlife would be more effective than long serious paragraph prohibited the visitors towards negative actions to wildlife and environment.

- **Integrated Promotion** by (1) Encouraging weekday and day visit to KYNP: Weekday and day visit will distribute the flow of visitors in the park. (2) The intensive promotion to visit KYNP via brochures at targeted/major tourism attractions i.e. Khao San Road, Saphan Thaksin BTS Station where the tour operators and tourist information centers are lining, and Palio-Pak Chong.

- **Capacity building** by (1) providing English and interpretation to rangers to be guide for visitors, key staff at visitor center, research division, accommodation service, and at the gate; (2) improving the accommodation service via internet by training of integrated accommodation reservation system.

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