

Tourist's Perception toward Implementation of Eco-Friendly Cleansers at Campsites in Khao Yai National Park, Thailand

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Abstract—Khao Yai National Park is the First National Park in Thailand and approximately 800,000 tourists visited Khao Yai yearly. This study aimed to identify the perception of tourists in Khao Yai National Park according to the implementation of eco-friendly cleansers along their leisure in the campsites. Due to tourist's activities in the park were affected on quality of environment; especially on water resource. Therefore, eco-friendly cleansers were used in campsites for tourists and restaurants during high tourist season. The results indicated positive effects of environmental friendly cleansers on water quality in Lam Ta Khong River, as well as the tourist's perception on eco-friendly cleansers.

Keywords—Eco-friendly cleansers, Campsite, Khao Yai National Park.

I. INTRODUCTION

KHAO YAI NATIONAL PARK (KYNP) was declared as the first national park in Thailand since 1962 covering an area approximately 2,168 square kilometers in Northeastern part of Thailand. In 2005, KYNP was designated as a part of Dongphrayayen - Khao Yai Forest Complex [1]. KYNP contains substantial and important tropical forest ecosystems, and created origin of Lam Ta Khong River which is situated through campsites and other recreation areas. More than 2,500 species of flora, 605 species of fauna, 112 species of mammal, 392 species of birds, and 209 species of amphibian and reptile have been recorded at KYNP [2].

According to many magnificent factors, KYNP became the popular destination for many both domestic and international tourists. In addition, the convenient transportation makes tourists easily to visit KYNP around the year for various activities such as trekking, bird watching, and camping. Therefore, some effects has been appeared in term of destruction of natural resources management and tourist numbers are over the limited of carrying capacity during high tourist season, and facilities inadequate. Especially, impact of tourist activities can lead the degradation of natural resource, loss spontaneity if without appropriate management plan.

In 2012, over 800,000 visitors visited KYNP and among this average 25% stayed overnight which was the highest number of tourists among 148 national park in Thailand [2]. The major tourist activities are focused on nature study, hiking, bird watching, and camping. At present, KYNP has 2

campsites, Lam Ta Khong and Pha Kluay Mai and both of these are located closed to Lam Ta Khong River (Fig. 1). From the study of carrying capacity of KYNP, a number of tourists limited to 600 persons per night. Whereas Pha Kluay Mai Campsite can support tourist's carrying capacity up to 800 persons per night.

Many researchers have been mentioned regarding with impact of camping activities on ecosystem which are including vegetation disturbance, composition change and loss of cover; loss of organic litter and exposure, compaction, and erosion of soil; damage and loss of shrubs and trees; pollution of water resources; and disturbance to wildlife [3]. Nowadays, the most component of cleansing products contain chemical ingredients which are difficult to degrade in natural environment. For example, LAS (Linear Alkyl Benzene Sulfonate) is dangerous to many species in water and left in the ecosystem for a long time [4]. Especially, it can be enhance destruction of biological processes and affects of organism functional in ecosystem. Thus, the implement of environmental friendly cleansers such as dish washer, detergent, liquid soap for tourist and restaurants at all campsites will be the methodology to decrease impact of chemical contamination to ecosystem especially in protected area.

In this study, one of the prominent eco-campsite procedures was applied in Lam Ta Khong and Pha Kluay Mai Campsites of KYNP by enhancing eco-friendly cleansers for tourists, restaurants and staff accommodation along Lam Ta Khong River and evaluated tourist attitude and perception according to this mitigation.

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The results presented that tourist prepared their own cleansers when they traveled to the national park such as soap, shampoo follow by dish washer. In the tourist's opinion, soap and dish washer created high environmental impact on the natural environment.

In case that the national park plan to sale or promote eco-friendly cleansers products, the suitable ones should be shampoo and dish washers. 98 percent of tourists were happy to use eco-friendly cleansers prepared by the national park.

If they have to pay some offset according to save the environment, the optimum rate should between 10-20 baht. Therefore, this issue can be proposed in future management plan for the national park and other protected area in Thailand.

IV. CONCLUSION

As long as wastewater from campsites, canteen and toilets are discharged directly to the environment without wastewater treatment system. To reduce the environmental impact to fragile protected area, usage of chemical cleansers should be avoided. Thus, the environmental friendly cleanser was provided to KYNP staff and tourist during high tourist season.

Eco-friendly cleansers received good attitude from staff and tourists. They used the product instead of their own cleanser during their stay in the park. Therefore, this implementation was able to reduce some severe environmental impacts to national park and nearby ecosystem during high tourist season. Moreover, the mitigation can also apply to other national parks in order to initiate tourist's environmental awareness for ecotourism development.

From entire study, enhanced eco-friendly cleanser to the park can solve some environment impacts from tourist activities. However, the other issues should be consideration such as limitation of camp site and car park, water shortage, and waste management. To solve such problems, the integration of environmental techniques should be applied and investigated in the study area. Baseline information on carrying capacity, solid waste management, water consumption, and eco-camping site were also recommended for further study [5].

The recommendations for ecotourism development in KYNP such as: avoid using toxic chemical and encourage tourist and staff to use environmental cleansers where possible. In order to increase the number of tourists at camping site, the proper wastewater treatment system should be implemented. Lastly, to achieve the long term of ecotourism development, KYNP needs to continue developing and monitoring tourism situation and its impacts as well as enhancing tourist awareness of their impacts on pristine environment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This project was supported by National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT). Special thanks extend to the staffs of Khao Yai National Park, many tourists and students, who provide important information, help and concern to this work.

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