

The Ecological Footprint of Tourism in Jalapão/TO/Brazil

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Abstract : The development of tourism causes negative impacts on the environment. It is in this context, through the Ecological Footprint (EF) method that this study aimed to characterize the impacts of ecotourism on the community of Mateiros, Jalapão, Brazil. The EF, which consisted in its original a method to construct a land use matrix, considering some major categories of human consumption such as food, housing, transportation, consumer goods and services, and six other categories from the main land use which are divided into the topics: land use, degraded environment, gardens, fertile land, pasture and forests protected by the government. The main objective of this index is to calculate the land area required for the production and maintenance of goods and services consumed by a community. The field research was conducted throughout the year of 2014 until July 2015. After the calculations of each category, these components were added according to the presented method in order to determine the annual EF of the tourism sector in Mateiros. The results show that the EF resulting from tourism in Mateiros is 2,194.22 hectares of land required for tourism activities in the region. The EF of tourism was considered high, nevertheless, if it is added the total of hectares needed annually for tourism activities, the result found would be 2,194.22 hectares needed to absorb the CO₂ emissions generated in the region directly from the tourism sector.

Keywords : sustainable tourism, tourism ecological footprint, Jalapão/TO/Brazil

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