

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

CBRM Database

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Case Study Name:	Ecotourism and Community Development: Case Studies from Hainan, China		
Author:	Mike Stone & Geoffrey Wall		
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Region:	Eastern Asia		
Country:	China		
Ecosystem Type:	Coastal Marine		
Social Characteristics:	Community Bordering Protected Area		
Scale of Study:	Protected Area		
Resource Type:	Tourism/Ecotourism		
Type of Initiative:	Community Initiative		
Community- Based Work:	Development Planning		
Keywords:	China, Community development, Ecotourism, Parks, Tourism		
Summary:	The connections between people, parks, and tourism have received significant attention in recent years,		

recognizing the potential for mutually beneficial relationships. Ecotourism has been promoted and widely adopted as a strategy for funding conservation initiatives, while at the same time contributing to the socioeconomic development of host communities and providing for quality tourism experiences. Parks are among the most common ecotourism destinations. Employing interviews, observations and secondary sources, this study assesses the current status of ecotourism at two protected areas in Hainan, China, where it is being promoted as a strategy for balancing regional economic growth and conservation objectives. Through an evaluation of the existing tourism–park–community relationships, opportunities and constraints are identified. Ecotourism development was found to be at an early stage at both study sites. Socioeconomic benefits for the local communities have been limited and tourism activity has not contributed revenues towards conservation to date. Community residents, nevertheless, generally support conservation and are optimistic that tourism growth will yield benefits. In light of the study findings and the salient literature, planning direction is offered with the intention of enhancing the capacity of ecotourism to generate benefits for both communities and the parks, and thus contribute to the sustainable development of the region more generally. Lessons derived have broad applicability for ecotourism destinations elsewhere.