

BAI TU LONG

National Park

Detailed Planning For National Park Development Projects

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This newsletter is the fourth of a series that are produced quarterly for distribution both in the National Park and surrounding buffer-zone communes.

The aim of the newsletters is to enable the National Park Authority to provide regular information to the people of Bai Tu Long Bay.



Fishing boats anchored off Minh Chau commune

Ngô Văn Đình
Head of Scientific Dept.
Bai Tu Long National Park

Recently, the People's Committee of Quang Ninh Province sent an official document 906/UB to Bai Tu Long National Park guiding the Park and its Forest Protection Department to carry out detailed planning for a project to develop Bai Tu Long National Park, based on a master plan which was identified by the project. With guidance from the People's Committee, and after being aware of the importance of planning, the Management Board of Bai Tu Long National Park co-ordinated with a number of agencies of specific expertise in order to draft a plan, and estimate the total expenditure.

According to the draft plan, germination gardens will not be built in specific areas, but will be distributed near ranger stations, which creates a favourable condition for the management of the gardens, and care of seedlings. Additionally, it is easy to move small plants as seedlings. A botanic garden will be formed by improving the natural forest on large Tra Ngo island, taking advantage of different terrains, vegetation populations on the spot, salt-marsh vegetation populations, vegetation on rock and soil mountains and in valleys. Based on the current status of natural resources in Bai Tu Long, there have been suggestions to change the area and boundaries of
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Solution to Sustainable Tourism Development in BTLB

*Emma Gardner
Ecotourism consultant
Frontier-Vietnam*

From 15th - 17th September 2003, a tourism-training workshop was held in Bai Tu Long National Park at the People's Committee Building, Cai Rong, Van Don. Prior to the three-day workshop, staff at Frontier-Vietnam completed a tourism assessment of current tourism practices and potential ecotourism developments throughout Bai Tu Long. It was recognised that the area's beauty, integrity, biodiversity and aesthetics were at risk from tourism development.

Tourism is seen as a solution to social problems, but its credibility for solving environmental problems and ensuring social rewards can be questioned. It appears that the development of tourism may not solve past, and current environmental problems of degradation, habitat loss, hunting and logging, but intensify conditions creating severe environmental devastation, hence social degradation. It was therefore, imperative that the concept of the sustainable development of tourism was introduced, as well as adapted and implemented by, Bai Tu Long community members and local developers.

The participants were senior representatives from Bai Tu Long National Park; Van Yen, Quan Lan, Ban Sen and Minh Chau com-



Co Tien cave on Ban Sen island

munes; ATI, Van Hai, Dinh Vang, Van Hai and ITD companies. The participants were introduced to both the principles of the sustainable development of tourism and the impacts of tourism.

“It is hoped that this workshop has paved the way for not only the sustainable development of tourism, but for community partnership and communication”

The three-day workshop began with a number of presentations and group discussions from senior staff

at WWF, FFI, SNV, HIO, FIPI and the Institute for Tourism Development Research. The presentations introduced different types of sustainable tourism development, more specifically ecotourism and community based tourism, impacts of tourism, environmental management, tourism planning, marine and terrestrial biodiversity, sustainable development and, sustainable tourism within Vietnam.

Through group discussions participants agreed that the area of Bai Tu Long has great tourism potential because of its landscape and natural beauty, but that this beauty needs protection from both tourism developments and tourism numbers. The participants had also agreed on a sustainable tourism strategy for Bai Tu Long, agreeing *(continued on page 3)*

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to encourage environmental regeneration and protection alongside economic development and social needs, using ecotourism and community based tourism as precursors for development. Participants suggested zoning tourism development and activities throughout Bai Tu Long, designating the whole of Bai Tu Long National Park's core and buffer zone as an 'activity zone', but within this zone designated sanctuary, wilderness and development zones.

By the second day everybody was

ready for some light-hearted fun and sightseeing. Participants joined in a one-day study tour where everybody enjoyed a little swimming in the clear waters of Minh Chau.

Islands such as Ba Mun and Tra Ngo would be used for environmental education, whilst other Islands such as Ban Sen, Sau Mau and Minh Chau would encourage tourists to participate in walking, educational tours, sailing, swimming and diving; especially in the areas of the park which are regenerating from past logging and hunting practices. Areas, which

are already developed, or are in the process of development, would be encouraged to adopt environmental management techniques throughout the development and operation of their tourism facilities.

It is hoped that this workshop has paved the way for not only the sustainable development of tourism, but for community partnership and communication, which will ensure the environmental protection of Bai Tu Long, and encourage a better quality of life for the local communities for many years to come.

Quan Lan Sea Turtle Specimen Displayed at Quang Ninh Museum

Pham Xuan Phuong
Scientific Dept. Officer
Bai Tu Long National Park

Recently, the Science and Technique Department of Bai Tu Long National Park carried out a study of a specimen of sea turtle which is being kept and displayed at Quang Ninh Museum in Ha Long city. It is a specimen of a female sea turtle which was received in 1999. The area where the specimen was collected is Quan Lan island in Van Don district of Quang Ninh province. When alive, the specimen weighed 110 kilos. The size of the specimen in the dry state is about 90 cm long, and 70 cm wide.

The specimen has some special features on its shell and head. There are five pairs of costal scuta on its shell. Of the pairs, the rear pair of scuta is much smaller than the other four front pairs. On its forehead there is a pair of scales, and two central pairs of

scales on its head. Nevertheless, its claws and marginal scuta on its plastron have not been identified. The number of scuta on its shell and the number of scales on its head show some differences if compared to the classification key made by Nguyen Truong Giang.

“It is a specimen of a female sea turtle which was received in 1999.

The area where the specimen was collected is Quan Lan island in Van Don district of Quang Ninh province.”

Based on the number of costal scuta, the specimen could be a loggerhead sea turtle *Caretta caretta*. The specimen could be a green sea turtle *Chelonia mydas* if based on the number of scales on

its head.

Based on some reference documents and information gathered from field surveys carried out in communities by local people living near Bai Tu Long Bay, some local people have been able to classify sea turtle species by counting numbers of scuta on turtles' carapaces. They base identification on the number of the scuta to name sea turtles such as 'sea turtle of 13 scuta'.

The Science and Technology Department thinks that in Bai Tu Long Bay there exists sea turtles with less than 13 scuta each, and predict that the sea turtles are the individuals which were crossbred between the green turtle *Chelonia mydas* and the loggerhead turtle *Caretta caretta*. Therefore, the department suggests that specialists should carry out proper analyses scientifically in order to identify these hybrid turtles.

Training Workshop on Marine Conservation at Con Dao National Park



Ngo Van Dinh

*Head of Scientific Dept
Bai Tu Long National Park*

Bai Tu Long National Park is newly established with staff and managers who specialize in forestry. Therefore, there is a shortage of knowledge on conservation. Being aware of the importance of further training, the Management Board of the Park actively attend training sessions on conservation. With support from the WWF and IUCN, the Park's Management Board and officers attended two training courses in Con Dao and Hun Mun, and have gained much practical knowledge on managing marine conservation and marine biodiversity.

Up until now, conservation at Con Dao National Park has gained many satisfactory results,

Participants at the marine conservation training workshop

and is considered to be a typical "sample" in terms of implementing conservation activities in accordance with a guideline of close coordination between the Management Board of Con Dao National Park and local authorities.

"The knowledge that was gained from the training sessions has contributed to increasing effectiveness of management activities"

A number of documents on principles and regulations on local marine ecology conservation activities were distributed by the two national parks in order to be used as models. The documents impact by educating local people how to properly conserve precious natural resources which are

currently being over-exploited. On the other hand, projects to conserve local marine ecologies have been effective thanks to active, self-reliant methods of implementation. The method highlights that conservation should be implemented in any situation, and that the effects of conservation should be a motivation to persuade various partners to promote cooperation in order to achieve expected results.

The knowledge gained from the training sessions has contributed to increasing management effectiveness, and guiding marine conservation activities in Bai Tu Long. As a result, the ability to carry out conservation projects by officers in charge of conservation management at Bai Tu Long National Park has been improved, which helps further develop the Park.

Project to Lease Forest Environment at BTLNP

*Nguyen Dinh Ung
Head of Conservation Dept.
Bai Tu Long National Park*

Through field studies, researchers realize that people's demands for relaxation and rest have a tendency towards getting closer to nature. The fact is that an increasing number of visitors choose eco-tourism, expressing a desire to get to know more intensively about life and the current status of life and nature.

Recently, under the guidance by the People's Committee of Quang Ninh Province and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Bai Tu Long National Park developed a pilot project to use the environment of the special use forest as a location to develop eco-tourism. The project aims to take advantage of the strong points of tourism, and help people get more access and extensive awareness of the environment, which can promptly bring clear results.

According to the project, the enterprise that leases the forest environment of Bai Tu Long National Park is the Dinh Vang Company which will use the forest environment as a location to carry out eco-tourism activities and pay a specific amount of money as fees to Bai Tu Long National Park. Bai Tu Long National Park will make a specific plan to effectively spend these funds on protecting the forest, local marine areas, and natural resources in the Park, and coordinate with environmental education projects focussing on local



Ba Mun island could become an important eco-tourism site

people. In addition, various forms of popularizing the image of the Park to enhance the awareness of visitors and local communities will also be carried out. Moreover, the project will support the conservation and sustainable development of Bai Tu Long National Park.

“The project aims to take advantage of the strong points of tourism, and help people get more access and extensive awareness of the environment”

It can be seen that the project is a judicious policy because through eco-tourism development, visitors

have the opportunity to enjoy fresh air and beautiful natural landscapes. Additionally, visitors can enhance their knowledge and awareness of in order to help protect precious natural resources of the country.

In the future, the combination of eco-tourism with community education, enhancing visitors and local people's awareness of the environment will probably be a new, effective and popular measure to protect natural resources. The use of a part of the special use forest for implementing eco-tourism contributes to promoting tourism activities, satisfying human demands for rest and relaxation and helping visitors as well as local people understand life in the open air and the importance of protecting nature and the existing precious natural properties.

Quan Lan Today



Quan Lan beach



Quan Lan harbour

*Quoc Duyet
Quan Lan
Peoples'Committee*

Located in the southern peninsula of Van Hai, which is 50 kilometres from Ha Long city, Quan Lan commune has been famous for a long time for its beautiful and imposing natural scenery with a coastline of dozens of kilometres long, underwater and emerging rock along its entire length. It is notable that Quan Lan commune has been much changed. In the 1980s and at the beginning of 1990s, many households in the commune moved to the mainland so that their children could have



Quan Lan commune village Center

sufficient schooling, and have access to the national electricity grid. Nevertheless, for recent years, the number of people leaving the commune has become much smaller. At present, Quan Lan commune consists of 723 households with about 4,000 residents. Fortunately, the lives of local people have considerably improved, and the number of poor households has decreased from 25% in 2002 to 18%. Their main income is gained from traditional jobs such as shipping, fishing, and exploitation of sea worms. In order to motivate local households to improve their incomes, the Quan Lan Commune Women's Union helps them borrow capital. In addition, while taking advantage of the beautiful nature of Quan Lan, local authorities carry out preferential policies in order to attract projects to develop tourism, which helps create more jobs for local people.

Moreover, the cultural lives of the local people and local infrastructure have been improved; village

roads and lanes have been upgraded, and a new health care clinic and school have been built. Apart from that, local public security is ensured.

It can be said that what Quan Lan commune has gained is owed to the

proper policies and guidance from provincial, district and commune authorities, and that a prosperous local economy, better cultural life, and stable local security and defence are prerequisites of development.



Ecotourism site on Quan Lan beach

Environmental Education in Van Don District

Nguyen Thi Thu Ha
Department of Education
and Training

Everybody has a desire to live in a healthy environment and enjoy the good things that are bestowed by nature. Nevertheless, the endowments of nature will not remain forever if they are over-exploited or developed.

Nature has endowed Van Don district with wonderful natural landscapes which include Minh Chau, Quan Lan and Ngoc Vung biches with fine sand, blue sea and forest and the beautiful Bai Dai tourism area. The beauty of Van Don island district will become dreamlike when the construction of Van Don bridge is completed. Additionally, nature has donated considerable aquatic resources to the people of Van Don, which has helped stabilize their lives. Therefore, the local people understand the importance of the protection and preservation



Environmental education lesson at Van Yen school

of the environment.

With the approval and wholehearted support of the Van Don District People's Committee in 2002, Bai Tu Long Bay Biodiversity Awareness

Project, which is implemented by Frontier – Vietnam in coordination with the Education Department of Van Don District and Bai Tu Long National Park, launched a pilot environmental education program (EE program) focused on pupils at grade six in Bai Tu Long national park's five buffer zone communes; Ha Long, Van Yen, Ban Sen, Minh Chau, and Quan Lan. With great efforts made by local teachers and leaders of the Education Department of Van Don District and two project officers, the first publication of a textbook on EE for children at grade six has been successful. Eight lessons included in the textbook were scientifically compiled with vivid

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Group discussion in an EE lesson at Dai Xuyen school

Training Workshop on Conservation of Sea Turtles



Ngo Van Dinh

*Head of Scientific Dept
Bai Tu Long National Park*

Sea turtles are an interesting part of the marine ecosystem. Sea turtles not only provide economic value as they serve as natural materials, but also serve as study objects for scientists. Nevertheless, human activities with various objectives have caused big threats to the turtles. Consequently, six of the seven sea turtle species in Vietnam have become globally endangered.

Bai Tu Long National Park is a protected natural area which is considered to be a distribution area of some rare and precious species of sea turtles. In order to implement a sea turtle conservation program step by step which

Mr. Pham Tuan Hung-Vice director, giving a presentation

is within an overall plan, on the 9th of July 2003, the Management Board of the Park held a training workshop on conservation of sea turtles which was generously supported by Frontier – Vietnam.

Participants at the workshop were staff and forest rangers working at the Park, and representatives of the Van Don District Fishery Department, a local agency which has much experience in managing marine areas. The content of the workshop focuses on some points such as status of sea turtles in the world and Vietnam, and information about sea turtles in Bai Tu Long Bay; general biology on sea turtles; action to be taken by Bai Tu Long National Park in the future in order to protect sea turtles.

The training workshop finished with the satisfaction of park staff and rangers. Most participants think that

the content of the workshop is useful because it is the first time the Park has held a workshop on conservation of sea turtles, and the workshop equips the Park's staff with some basic knowledge on sea turtles. In the coming months, the park needs to carry out monitoring of the nesting of sea turtles at the park in order to achieve scientific records in terms of conservation and implementing advocacy activities in order to enhance awareness of conserving sea turtles for local communities in communes located in the buffer zone.

The Organizing Board believes that although the results which have been gained are not considerable, the workshop is an initial step in the conservation of sea turtles at Bai Tu Long National Park.

Exploitation of Sea Worms in Van Don

Extract from “Văn hoá dân gian làng Vân” written by Nguyễn Quang Vinh

Sea worms are called after Chinese words for worms in sand. At present, the worms are commonly called “sea worms”.

Sea worms look like earthworms. Immediately after being caught, they look pinkish. When brought home, the sea worms are washed, pierced along the bodies with small sticks with pointed heads, and are turned inside out. After that, the worms are washed again, which makes the worms look white. The worms are then dripped and dried. The sea worms are dried, and turn into a yellow colour. It is a fact that there used to be a great volume of sea worms in Minh Chau, Quan Lan, and Ngoc Vung.

There are two ways to cook sea worms. The first is to fry fresh sea worms with some capsicum and garlic. The second is to dry sea worms before frying them, or cooking dried sea worms with some vegetable soup. Before cooking dried worms, it is necessary to remove a tiny part of each sea worm that contains a little sand inside because the washing process cannot remove all sand in the bodies of sea worms.

Catching sea worms requires speed and stealth because they live 20 cm to 30 cm under the ground. When discovering the noise of humans or animals of other species,

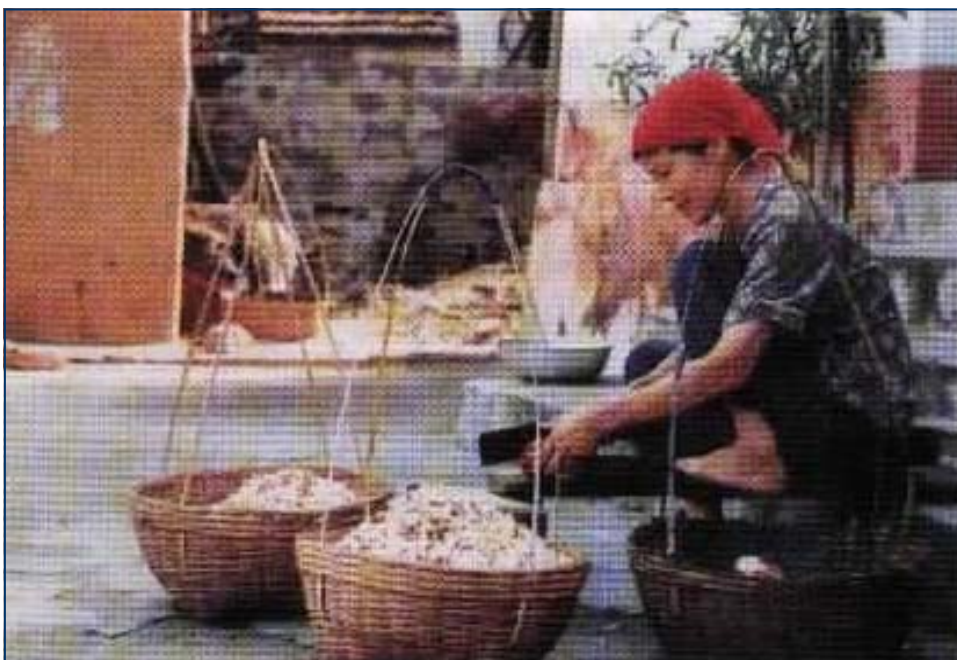


Collecting sea worms is a complicated business

sea worms rapidly creep deep into the ground. Nests of sea worms can be discovered by finding the places where they eat and the direction which they can run away to. Then it is necessary to dig in order to stop the worms from escaping.

A tool to dig sea worms is a garden

iron spade with a sharp and thin blade which helps dig the ground quickly. The spade has an iron circle which allows a small pole of 1.6 m to 2 m to be fixed on to it. A basket made from bamboo or other plants is needed to carry the sea worms.



A local woman prepares sea worms for consumption

Poetry Corner

The Environment

Bạn ơi tôi kể chuyện này
Cạnh nhà tôi ở ngày ngày diễn ra
Vệ sinh đường phố ấy mà
Chẳng ai ý thức dẫm ra bẩn đường
Trong nhà bàn, ghế, tủ, giường
Sân nhà lát gạch thay giường miến chê
Trước nhà thì lại bẩn ghê
Một đống rác thải ai bê hè đường
Thôi thì ruồi muỗi chán chường
Lại đến lũ chuột tìm đường mon men
Người đi người lại bon chen
Tiện tay rác bẩn vút thêm cho đầy



Vệ sinh đường phố ngày nay
Môi trường ô nhiễm điều này đúng thôi
“Sida” bệnh “sars” đến rồi
Làm sao ta phải kịp thời phòng ngay
Vệ sinh đường phố hàng ngày
Mọi người ý thức sạch ngay thôi mà
Môi trường sinh thái tỉnh ta
Là điểm du lịch khách ta khách ngoài
Lại thêm du lịch Bãi Dài
Bái Tử Long đó nằm ngoài biển khơi
Muốn mời du khách tới chơi
Môi trường xanh sạch bạn ơi giữ gìn

Nguyễn Hồng Thu- Class 6D
Hạ Long Middle School
Vân Đồn District

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functional sub-regions, which helps to facilitate proper measures in order to increase the possibility of restoring the forest ecology in the Park. Based on these suggestions, a proportion of the strictly protected sub-area including small Tra Ngo and the soil mountain of large Tra Ngo, which is mentioned in the master plan, will be added to an ecology-

restoring sub-area. Some new data, such as area of mangrove forest in Thung Ang Cai De, will be added to a map of local forest resources.

In terms of detailed planning for the local marine area, due to a shortage of data on marine resources within the Park, it is necessary to carry out detailed surveys in order to gain data on marine biodiversity, and make a proposal to develop a project to zone conservation areas such as seagrass cover in eastern Hon Chin, coral

reefs in eastern Ba Mun and Hon Vanh, and abalone in eastern Ba Mun all of which have high biodiversity values.

The detailed planning for Bai Tu Long National Park is under development, and its quality depends upon many factors. Nevertheless, we believe that this planning is the result of collective efforts and brainpower, and will be like a useful guidebook to the development of Bai Tu Long National Park.

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pictures and words in accordance with the regulated renovation of textbooks for pupils at grade six. Therefore, the course is easy to teach and the lessons are easy for pupils to understand. For a year, the EE program in the five communes of the buffer zone has gained encouraging results which are worthy of efforts made by the program practitioners. Indeed, local pupils are very delighted with the lessons on EE. Thus, initial results of the program have been recorded after being implemented as an experiment in the communes. At present, the pupils have become aware of leaving litter, and understand how to properly treat litter. As a result, their school playgrounds and classrooms are kept clean; trees are cared for; and water is used in an economical and hygienic way. According to a plan, in the school-year of 2003 – 2004, the EE program will be carried out on a large scale, focusing on pu-



Binh Dan Commune school, Van Don district

pils at grade six in the whole district, which includes 13 schools with almost 1000 students. In order to assess results of the EE program and carry out intensive advocacy activities among local communities, the Education Department will organize a district-level contest to learn about the environment and carry out advocacy activities on EE (the contest is planned to be held in May 2004) which is supported by Frontier – Vietnam in coordination with Bai Tu Long National Park.

As EE practitioners, we understand that implementing EE is responsibility of not only a single person but the entire community and society. Although it is not easy to gain expected achievements, we will do our best in order to make a contribution to educating future citizens of Van Don to preserve and develop precious properties which nature has endowed so that our green planet will stay green forever and ever.

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Contact: Tel: 033 874 855

Email: btlb@netnam.vn - **Website:** www.baitulongnp.com