A Management Issue for Ecotourism in Taiwan’s Forests:  
To Determine or to Manage the Tourism Carrying Capacity?  

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In Taiwan, the idea of ecotourism emerged in the 1980s when Taiwan’s national parks began to provide educational tours and interpretation services for visitors. Since then, ecotourism has been a popular term for marketing tourism in national parks, forest stations, natural reserves and rural areas in Taiwan. The “Ecotourism White Paper” for Taiwan was completed by the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) in 2004, in an attempt to provide more environmentally sound guidelines for ecotourism management. One of its key management strategies is to determine a “tourism carrying capacity” for each destination to prevent its environment form degradation. Some ecotourism destinations have been carrying out this type of management strategy, or example, Fu-Shan Arboretum in I-lan. However, here raises an old debate of whether or not a carrying capacity for an ecosystem is calculable, because of the complexity of an ecosystem, not to mention those uncertainty problems involved. This paper will explore some strategies for dealing with the above issue for ecotourism in forest ecosystem; and it will also intend to propose a feasible approach that can be used to assist in managing an ecotourism destination in Taiwan’s forests.  

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