

## **On Sustainable Development of Ecotourism ---Taking western Liaoning Province as Example**

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**Abstract.** Constructing an ecotourism system with the features of western Liaoning is a perspective issue. Analyzes the developing environment of world ecological tourism and the successful experiences of developing ecotourism in foreign countries. Taking eastern Liaoning as an research example, through investigating the resource advantages, influencing factors, and current situation, the thesis puts forward some concrete measures for the development of ecotourism in western Liaoning.

Under the crisis of living environment that the beings are up against, following the awakening of persons' environmental consciousness, the Green Movement and Green Consumption sweep across the globe. As a kind of green tourist consumption, ecotourism evoked worldwide repercussions once it was raised. By now, the ecotourism has gone through for 30 years or so since it was born. However, almost all the countries in the world, both developed countries and developing countries, take ecotourism as an industry to develop. In China, due to the slogans of Sustainable Development Strategy and Developing a Circular Economy, the tourism industry as one of pillar industries of Chinese economic development, generates a new mainstay of tourist economy, ecotourism.

As a special form of travel in conventional tourism industry, ecotourism comes into being due to the negative effects of tourism industry on the environment. In ecotourism, the travelers can appreciate the beautiful scenery and wild life while enjoying the cultural heritage in a relatively primordial and natural area. In this way, it means "returning to the nature", and there are more and more travelers who are willing to go and see the natural beauties instead of the city views and seaside scenery. It focuses on the development of natural landscape, whereas what it really means is that it is a high-level travel serving as an instructional activity, in which we should learn from and protect the nature.

### **Significance in Developing Ecotourism in Western Liaoning Province**

As a basis in social and economic development, the sustainable development of ecological environment concerns itself with the quality of life and the future existence of human beings and development of the society. Although China is a nation with rich tourism resources, which has offered excellent natural resources and cultural basis, compared with those countries with relatively long history of Ecotourism development, Eco-tourism in China has just begun, which is facing a lot of challenges. As far as western Liaoning Province is concerned, there are unique characteristics and advantages in its ecotourism, whose resources are rich and whose surroundings are good. It is, therefore, of significance making use of the advantages to combine ecotourism with conventional travel to develop sight-seeing tourism and leisurely holiday tourism by focusing on the ecotourism which helps people to better know and appreciate the nature.

**Considerable Economic Benefit from Ecotourism.** Eco-tourism is a media bridging the subject and object in the system of ecotourism, which plays a role of pushing the ecotourism development in terms of supplying, organizing and facilitating. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the international tourism features leisurely holiday travel, which focuses on ecotourism. According to the investigative report about Chinese people's consciousness on ecological environment issued by National Forestry Administration, people are looking forward to a good and natural ecological environment, for, in the poll on the "indispensable things for the ideal life", they prefer "clean air, green land, flowers, grass,

clear rivers, and trees" to "cars, high buildings, super-highways, and modern factories", which shows that quality environment is beneficial to social economy. If, in western Liaoning Province, advantage is taken of its local geographical position and its rich natural resources to develop its ecotourism to meet the needs of travelers, a large number of tourists will be attracted, a considerable amount of money will be made for the local economy, and more career opportunities will be offered to the unemployed, so as to stimulate the development of the local economy.

**Substantial Environmental Benefit from Ecotourism.** The goal of ecotourism is to realize sustainable development, which is the core difference compared with traditional mass tourism. With the accelerating development of tourism industry and the surge of a large number of tourists, great pressure is put on the tourism resources and ecological environment in western Liaoning Province, resulting in the destruction of beautiful scenery, pollution of the surroundings, the diminishing of wild life, and the changes in the social and local customs, which is felt by the travelers in one way or another. In Panjin's "Red Beach Natural Reserve", for example, there are 236 species of birds living in the reeds and wetland, most famous of which are red-crowned cranes and black-beaked gulls that are watched from pre-set platforms in the reserve. In addition, from the mid-summer to November each year, people love to tour the area nearby the estuary in the region of Shuangtai, where the vegetation of common seepweed herb covers an area of 26 km in length and 1 km in width, making it becoming red as fire and hence the "Red Beach". However, for recent years, such views are almost nowhere to find in this area due to the lack of scientific management, which is pitiful for the travelers.

By exploiting ecotourism, more ecological scenery will be created in beautiful surroundings, and the consciousness of the public will be aroused to protect the eco-environment. Meanwhile, the profit from the exploited ecotourism can be re-invested into the protection of the ecological environment, thus forming a beneficial cycle, which promotes the improvement of the ecological environment in western Liaoning Province, the effective protection of completeness of its ecological system and of the variety of its wild life, and the sustainable development of its tourism industry by raising the quality of its ecological environment and by stimulating the construction of its ecological system.

## **Problems Concerning Ecotourism in Western Liaoning Province**

**Various Natural Scenery with Inadequate Exploitation.** In western Liaoning Province, there is a variety of natural scenery, including the mountains, the rivers, the inner sea, and the islands. There are hills and mountains in its northern and western area, in which some scenic spots have been developed, including Yiwulü Mountain in Beizhen County, Fenghuang Mountain in Chaoyang City, North Putuo Hill in Jinzhou City, and Cuiyan Hill in Linghai County. In particular, the Yiwulü Mountain in Beizhen County and its nearby scenic spot Qingyan Temple are becoming more and more popular for the recent years, where there were far more than 10,000 visits per day during the "May Day Holiday" in 2004. But there are still some mountains to be exploited, such as the Daqing Mountain (1,224 meters above the sea level) belonging to part of the Yanshan Ranges, and the Dahei Mountain (1,140 meters above the sea level). The two mountains are the highest ones in western Liaoning Province, which are both located in Jianchang County, Chaoyang City. They are beautiful in appearance with thick vegetation and little human activities, making them capable of being developed into tourism destinations; however, there are little human landscapes to go with them, making them somewhat inadequate for the tourism industry.

Viewed from the perspective of natural scenery, western Liaoning Province is advantageous in its geographical position: There is one of the inner seas of China in its east and hills and mountains in its inland area. Due to the lack of scientific management in the course of its exploitation, some scenic spots lack harmony between its natural scenery and human landscapes. On a certain beach, for example, there is a very beautiful natural landscape, but a nasty sculpture is erected there, making it unmatched to the beach.

**Various Natural Reserves with Obscure Brand-names.** Ecotourism depends much on the natural reserves, whose exploitation and development are closely related to ecotourism. The main

natural reserves in western Liaoning Province include Liaoning Province's Yiwulv Mountain Natural Reserve, Shuangtai Estuary Natural Reserve, Xiaoling River's Chinese Soft-shelled Turtle Provincial Level Natural Reserve, Jinzhou City-level Jingang Hill Fossil Animals and Plants Natural Reserve.

In addition to the above natural reserves, in western Liaoning Province there are also other reserves, such as Sunjiadian County-level Natural Reserve, Pishangou County-level Natural Reserve, and Jianping's Tiger Cave County-level Natural Reserve, all of which are located in Chaoyang City and are designed for the protection of their natural ecological system, forestry ecological system and the wild animals and plants. The various natural reserves in western Liaoning Province make a basis for the development of ecological travel, but they are not so popular with the travelers due to the inadequate capital and publicity, and the obscure brand-names.

### **Countermeasures for Exploitation of Ecotourism in Western Liaoning Province**

**To Create a Clear Brand-name in Combination with Local Features.** Characteristic cultural resource is the basis for a tourist destination to build the brand, such as the regional cultural characteristics of the traditional folk festivals, performances, skills, ancient buildings, historic district and relics. They play an essential role in promoting the development of tourism. These characteristic cultural resources are also brand resources. In the context of the development of integration, cultural heritage has become an important cultural capital for the local development of cultural industries and tourism industry. It becomes the regional competitiveness and brand advantage. Many tourist destinations have recognized the importance of building a distinctive culture and creating a cultural tourism brand for their sustainable development. To build cultural tourism brands thus become an important strategy for them.

Only by creating a clear brand-name can today's tourism industry be winners in the competitive market. Ecotourism travel becomes a natural tendency in today's world with the rapid development of tourism industry, the higher consumption level and the changes in people's attitudes toward life. In a period when a nation-wide ecological travel is conducted, a travel brand-name with one's own characteristics can be competitive in attracting the tourists.

Western Liaoning Province is advantageous in its geographical position: There is one of the inner seas of China in its east and hills and mountains in its inland area, and hence a variety of natural scenery, which impresses the travelers with its primordial landscapes and scenic grandeur. The more than 200-kilometer long coastline owned by Huludao City, for example, is equal to a "golden coastline", which is rich in soft sand, quiet breeze, little waves, blue sky, and green sea. Another case in point is the scenery in Xingcheng City, which is a combination of ancient city, beach, hot spring, fairy island, and forestry as well as fantastic historic stories and legends. In addition, Xincheng borders Beijing City, Tianjin City, Tangshan City, and other two big cities in Liaoning Province, which is to make it into a national level tourism city in the world. Even the backwardness of Fuxin City and Chaoyang City is really worth to be converted to a kind of ecotourism resource to attract the tourists, for, according to the theory of comparison, the negative things in a conventional sense do not mean that they are worthless, and in tourism industry, differences may generate values, which can be seen, for example in the exploitation of Daqinggou in Fuxin City, where there are no high mountains, no vast forests, and no big rivers, but which is visited as an oasis in the desert, making it become a new resort for the travelers.

**To Make Out a Developmental Plan for Every Kind of Ecotourism Resource.** The overall requirement for the development of eco-tourism is protection first and development second. The development principles that must be adhered to are; the principle of overall coordination; Ecological principle; principle of fairness; principle of knowledge; principle of broad participation. Break down the old concept, introduce the idea of sustainable development, establish a correct view of resources, industry and values, establish a completely new concept system, and form a concept expression that conforms to their respective identities and focuses on each of them at the four levels of the main body of ecotourism, namely, the decision making level, the management level, tourists and local residents.

Ecotourism does not mean a simple return to the nature, but a special tourism in which the ecological environment is made use of to develop tourism industry and this kind of tourism is then made use of to protect the surroundings. Therefore, it is necessary to make out a strategic plan to develop the natural reserves, and to design blueprints for every kind of ecotourism resource. According to the survey made to more than 100 national level and provincial level natural reserves by China's Human and Biosphere National Committee, the tourism as regards the natural reserves still mainly belongs to conventional tourism due to the lack of real understanding of ecotourism and of basic needs for exploitation of eco-travel in the reserves, and due to backwardness in the training and management of ecotourism professionals. In view of this, related governments and research organizations should make out the developmental strategies and guidelines for the ecotourism in western Liaoning Province, the countermeasures to develop its ecotourism, and plans for every kind of ecotourism resource in the natural reserve.

**To Strengthen Publicity of Ecotourism in Western Liaoning Province by Establishing Its Tourism-spreading System.** We should focus on resources management, planning management and operation management. Since the fulfillment of each system is made with the help of decision-making, so it is vital to establish scientific decision-making system. Education is an inner incentive for ecotourism development, the environment awareness and right understanding of ecology ecotourism professionals has direct impact on the service quality and tourists behavior. It is necessary to strengthen the publicity of ecotourism concept. Science and technology is the first productive force, which can also be used as the technological support for ecotourism. In order to solve the problem of negative impact on environment by tourism, legal measurements are necessarily to be carried out. Another effective strategy is to make innovate development modules, which is completely different from traditional way of tourism development. In addition, Ecotourism System should be adopted in order to meet the international challenge. In the process of ecotourism development, environmental ethic should also be stressed.

Ecotourism does not have a greater influence in China than in other countries, and the public know little about its implication, significance and its difference with the conventional travel. So, it is necessary to launch a publicity campaign in the region around the natural reserves on ecotourism and environmental protection among government officials, developers, tourism managerial staff and tourism employees, the staff in the reserves, local residents, and the citizens, so that a group of quality professionals in ecotourism will be trained to work in this field. The ecotourism service center is to be set up for the travelers to resort to before entering the reserve to know better its natural conditions, managerial measures, and the ecotourism scenic spots and routes. In the Center, the tourists may get to know something about ecotourism through samples, pictures, films, videos, books and pamphlets, so that they will raise their consciousness on ecology, nature, and environmental protection, thus making eco-travel a bridge of harmony between human and nature.

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