

Information, Awareness and Education at Cananéia-Iguape Coastal System (Brazil)*

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Introduction

Since 1980 the BIOMA – Information and Educational Center on Tropical Coastal Wetland – has been researching and collecting data concerning various issues of the mangrove ecosystem such as: physiographic features, structure and functions, economical evaluation, conservation, tourism, among others.

Aims

The present paper points out BIOMA's role in the capacity building program for monitors towards the tourism sector; dissemination of information to tourist agencies and local public service's teachers.

The Cananéia-Iguape Coastal System

The Cananéia-Iguape Coastal System is located in the south of São Paulo State's, dominated by mangrove ecosystem known among tourists and local community as an valuable landscape unit. Fishing is the most significant economic activity, although tourism contribution is increasing over the last years (Cunha-Lignon *et al.* 2000). In spite of the overlapping of three legally established protected areas, the region is under pressure due to intensive mass tourism (unplanned), threaten by dredging proposal aiming the development of the hydrological potential, construction of port infra-structures, highways re-designing, and population settlement.

First Actions

Tourism and conservation information is being transferred to environmental monitors by means of capacity building training courses. Interactive presentation has also been adopted at local public schools. Banners are being designed in which the local tourism activity characteristics are described and their linkage to negative impacts on the environment. Those banners are being fixed in strategic sites (such as museums and tourism agencies).

In partnership with planners and the staff of the Ilha do Cardoso State Park, researches have been conducted aiming to investigate the consequence of tourists overstepping in mangrove areas.

The relationship with state level environmental agencies is undertaken through technical consulting and analysis aiming to develop guidelines toward the region's economical development.

Future Actions and Discussion

Cultural and ecological concerns are important although conservation demands to be considered taking into account the region's political and economical context.

Tourism agencies should take part in the Action Plan as partners. A great number of students and tourists visit the region, however few tourism agencies work in accordance with protected areas constraints and limits. Awareness of negative tourism impacts and alternative solutions should be released to environmental NGOs whom exert influence upon the tourism agencies.

It is urgent to show clearly that Cananéia-Iguape Coastal System conservation can drive to mid and long term benefits. Considered benefits can be local fishing sustainability, ecotourism, equal access to resources, social conflicts reduction, maintenance of ecosystem functions as well as cultural and spiritual values related to coastal wetlands (Ramsar Convention Bureau, 2000).

Bibliographic References

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