

## 14th Strategy Workshop for the Future of Jeju Tourism

### Sustainable Tourism and Jeju's Inclusive Growth

August 23, 2017

#### ■ Presentation 1: The plan on sustainable Jeju and Jeju National Park

○ Presenter: Kim Tae-Yoon (Senior Researcher, Urban Society Research Department of Jeju Research Institute)

- As we have witnessed limitations to the physical growth of Jeju island, various agendas have been discussed to preserve the natural environment and solve environmental issues such as the introduction of a natural preservation fee to visitors of the island. With the growing number of tourists, it is the time to seek ways to manage the quality of our natural environment.
- In the basic plan for natural preservation of the National Park, the policy direction has been changed from simple preservation of its eco-system to raising the socio-economic value of the park by showing our paradigm shift. Also, the target of the policy now includes not only the visitors but also the residents nearby the park. In this regard, the direction of policies on Jeju National Park is first, the realization of a sustainable pure Jeju where nature and humans may live and prosper together, second, the rise of the value of natural environments and creation of synergistic effects by building a composite management system, and third, building a system for systemic preservation and quality-focused management of the natural environment. Also taking the cases of Uleungdo island and Dokdo island as an example that these islands could not be designated as National Parks due to the objection of residents, we will collect opinions of 60 target towns of Jeju National Park through presentation sessions and public hearings. And then the designation will be reviewed and decided at the National Park Committee.
- The management of natural environment should be done based on the criteria for the management of National Parks. But currently, it's only about the visitors and simple preservation of the landscape. There is a lack of a comprehensive management system for the eco-system and bio-diversity, the current operation cannot preserve the value of Jeju, and it also cannot create good jobs for residents. Also due to various legal problems, the current system can only reserve oreums(오름, volcanic cones of Jeju island), without allowing any compensation for the private land within the oreum. Monitoring has only been done for regions outside of the National Park, so there is no research on the resources which have international values. It is also another paradox.

- The boundary of the Jeju National Park should be set around the area where reservation is highly valuable, points where eco-systems are connected, and areas where marine and land areas meet. As to the nearby regions, areas where local residents think need to be preserved will be the primary focus of preservation.
- As for the decisions of setting up Jeju National Park, the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province will work together in coming up with and carrying out measures for management of the park, sustainable development of environmental preservation, building a basis for premium eco-experience tour programs, providing compensation for the land-owners within the preservation area, and composition of the National Park along with residents.

## ■ Presentation 2: Local society's resource use and vitalization of local tourism

○ Presenter: Kang Mi-Hee (Professor of Research Institute of Agriculture and Life Science, Seoul National University)

- Local tourism means the tour activities that enjoy the nature and culture in a place which is a small city or has rural characteristics. Jeju's local tourism can be referred to as tourism which takes place in Jeju and is beneficial to residents and the environment. Many scholars agree that the success of region-based local tourism lies on its economic sustainability which means that the tourism may bring benefits to all members of the town, community, and the tourism system itself.
- Jeju, where UNESCO World Natural Heritages are located has many sensitive natural resources with its own culture and the negative impact from tourism may have a greater impact. Additionally, we all know that the economic benefits from tourism been distributed among others, and not those in Jeju. Taking Venice as an example, with 25 million tourists yearly visiting a city with a population of 50,000, it is at risk of being listed as an endangered World Cultural Heritage. The Forbidden City of Beijing and the Louvre Museum in Paris are at the risk as they could not control their carrying capacity of tourists. World Heritages attract tourists. But if not managed carefully, excessive numbers of tourists can cause many negative outcomes.
- Now let's take a look at some well-managed cases. Jiuzhaigou in China is also a region with a National Park, World Natural Heritages, a Biosphere Reserve, a National Geopark, and National Tourism Attractions. The region's focus was converted from agriculture and hunting to tourism and now the region's main revenue source is tourism. In the course of conversion and when farmers changed their jobs to tour-related work, the Chinese government built the region's forests and constantly worked on the restoration of the natural landscape. Also, in order to restrict the number of rooms available for

accommodation as a maximum of 45, based on their carrying capacity, the managing authorities directly controlled its booking and payment system.

- Japan's Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes, the World Natural Heritage, is a case that the region created an active tourism business under the slogan of "happy residents can bring happiness to tourists" by utilizing the characteristics of wild and remote forests. The region thoroughly analyzed its tourism market and improved accessibility in on and offline channels. Also, while the region improves the quality of tour products and services, the local governments have solved language issues by hiring foreign staff members to provide language-help services, built a composite management system, and developed a decision-making system which is operated with the engagement of local residents.
- When we look cases above, we can see that only with good resources can the tour destination develop. Maintaining reservations as a principle, visions and strategies need to be set equally considering residents' engagement and economic benefits' of their generation. The public organization has to handle what the private sector cannot. Its role should be the tour products' quality control and standard, support for improvement, and building a sustainable tourism system which includes preparing greater acceptance such as improved accessibility, or installing facilities for tourists' comforts.
- Now we will take a look at the case of Jeju's local tourism. As for the Eco-Tourism Zone of Harye 1 ri and 2 ri, the residents' income has not increased. But with active engagement of residents, from young children to elderly citizens, the village's decision-making as well as the community solidarity has grown stronger which is attributable to tourism. In the case of Seonheul 1 ri, it is a very impressive story that the village's community is talking about the sustainability of Jeju and the earth. The village could have a new perspective and insight toward the future generation and Jeju island in relation to the environment, humans, the village, and the visitors while being engaged in local tourism. In conclusion, the success of sustainable local tourism depends on the direction and efforts to share the community's value and development with residents, policy support, happy residents, happy tourists, and sustainable tourism.

## ■ DISCUSSION

○ Kim Nam-Jo (Tourism Professor, Hanyang University)

- Currently Korean natural resources' global competitiveness ranking is 80th out of 140 countries and the main reason is that the per capita area of the National Park is quite small. In this regard, I think the designation of Jeju National Park is quite outstanding. Jeju is a Special Self-Governing Province, so I think the region doesn't need to apply

the existing designation rule to the National Park. Rather, it would be desirable to make and apply its own designation to the National Park.

- In the case of Yellowstone National Park in the U.S., accommodation facilities are allowed within the park while preserving its natural resources. As to the Acadia National Park in the eastern U.S., towns of the region are contained within the park when it was first designated as a National park. So, the space for the National Park and the residents is not clearly divided. In this case, depending on the interpretation of “Sustainability”, the boundary and the use of National Park can vary. To seek sustainability, co-existence with local residents are the point that we have to consider. To designate Jeju National Park, Jeju’s own model should be developed.
- When National Parks were first designated in the 1960s, residents tended to enlarge the boundary of the park. Now, at a time when people want to wield their right to their own property, there are severe conflicts on the restriction of such rights to the area within the National Park. Accordingly, before designating an area as a National Park, clear and concise information on the pros and cons of the designation shall be given to the residents. And through sufficient communication with the residents, possible conflicts should be prevented.
- It seems that now is the time when issues of gentrification, tourism-phobia, and resentments of residents toward tour activities began to appear. To minimize the negative socio-cultural phenomenon due to tourism, the designation of Jeju National Park needs to be done with comprehensive view points encouraging the participation of local residents.

○ Hwang Myung-Gyu (Head of Bukhansan Mountain National Park Management Office)

- The original purpose of designating a National Park is on public use, rather than reservation. The parks were designated in order to promote the use by the public protecting the natural landscape from becoming private property. With the designation, tourists may use the park as a tourist attraction while residents may earn economic and environmental benefits from well-preserved natural resources. I’m very positive about the designation of Jeju National Park because it will ensure the sustainability of the region’s environmental resources and currently no practical management is being done for the natural heritages of Halla Mountain, its middle mountainous areas, oreums, and coastal areas. To solve the conflicts incurred with nearby villages and private properties, contemplation on the region’s authenticity, and the villages’ identity should come first. When the National Park Good Town projects were carried out, the purpose was not on the regional economic boost.
- In other words, when we seek ways for fair distribution of benefits to the residents and improvements on the quality of their life, such as conflict management programs for residents, we will be able to determine the answers of the inclusive growth of

Jeju.

○ Kim Nam-Jin (Vice Director General, Jeju Tourism Organization)

- The benefits of the residents such as earnings from the expansion of Jeju National Park should be considered. In the case of the Young-do Rock of Jeju city, Nakcheon, Namwon Shinheung 2 ri, and Seogwipo Yereh Village, the community-focused tour products have created repeated visits of tourists and to make such programs more sustainable, the Jeju Tourism Association paid the cost of distribution and promotion and helped the business. In the course of selling the village's products on an online website, the village converted the sales channel from social commerce to the Association's website drastically cutting the sales commission expenditure. It earned very positive feedback from both the village residents and tourists. For the revenue allocation, following the village's own rule rather than the Association's engagement was the most effective.

○ Hong Yong-Cheol (Representative of Jeju Environmental Participation Solidarity)

- I think a kind of barrier which may protect town communities from changes driven by external factors such as the designation of a World Natural Heritage or National Park is needed. In reality, we have witnessed the inflow of commercial facilities and services after being designated as a World Natural Heritage and the following collapse of the town's community. As efforts to prevent such a phenomenon, the town of Seonheul 1 ri and 2 ri decided to establish their social co-operative.
- Under the circumstance that we cannot be free from the legal system for natural resource's use and reservation, the issue of private property would not be easily solved. In Jeju, many private properties are owned by non-Jeju residents. Even for the land whose development is impossible, there can be many objections against the designation. Accordingly, we need to seek ways to avoid aggressive expansion of the boundary of the Jeju National Park.

○ Koh Sun-Young (Head of Research and Study Center, Jeju Tourism Organization)

- Regarding local tourism, the Jeju Tourism Organization has created a new model for local tourism through projects like Eco Party on eco-tourism or Song-Dang food truck. When we carry out local projects, we face issues on the consistency and continuity of the project which is caused by changes of the local leaders. Also, I've witnessed many cases of problem-causing projects driven by government whose focus is on the administrative convenience. We need to build a system which allows a village to solve the issues of the residents' through engagement or exclusion and income distribution. In many cases of local tourism, conflicts stem from revenue being generated through

local tourism especially at a town where the level of engagement from residents and the community was low. At Seonheul-ri, centered on the community, the village leaders have led in the establishment of its own operation system and this case clearly shows that the capability of community leaders is critical to the success of local tourism.

○ Presenter: Kang Mi-Hee (Professor of the Research Institute of Agriculture and Life Science, Seoul National University)

- What is important is to make efforts to improve the quality of tours in Jeju. Under the slogan that “Jeju is safe because it is ~”, there should be efforts to improve the quality of its natural landscape and other resources such as earning certifications on its landscape. It should not just be promotional marketing that “Jeju is nice”. Its focus should be on Jeju as a tourism destination whose sustainability is ensured by international certification and management can be conducted by the quality control efforts of the government and public organizations.

○ Presenter: Kim Tae-Yoon (Senior Researcher, Urban Society Research Department of Jeju Research Institute)

- Plans to designate Jeju National Park will be carried out gradually over time. The collected opinions from residents at the first stage is the most important data in drawing our bigger picture. Reflecting on many opinions from today’s panels, we will move forward to build the plan of Jeju National Park which has Jeju’s unique model and reflects Jeju’s own characteristics.

- Jeju Tourism Organization is proactively suggesting various policy solutions to provide measures to solve pending issues in this regional society.
- We would like to come up with more reasonable and forward-looking alternative solutions that can be made based on the results of this workshop in order to contribute to the increased quality of life for Jeju residents and to the region's development.



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