

BUILDING A COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM WISATA DESA WAY KAMBAS IN BRAJA HARJOSARI: AN INDIRECT TOOL FOR WILDLIFE MITIGATION CONFLICT IN WAY KAMBAS NATIONAL PARK

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Abstract

Way Kambas National Park is facing human-wildlife conflict due to most of its borderline with settlement areas. Braja Harjosari, one of 37 villages next to the national park, has agricultural damage and economy lost due to wildlife conflict especially sumatran elephant. Braja Harjosari has great landscapes including river, swamp and traditional agriculture; diverse culture and unique social daily life. Indirect approach for wildlife conflict mitigation has been done by exploration and empowerment of its natural potential resources for community based ecotourism program, called Wisata Desa Way Kambas. With the close accompaniment, the ecotourism program gives great alternative income for the local people in Braja Harjosari. This alternative creative economy may serve human-elephant conflict mitigation, and may play an important role for gradually changing local people negative perception on sumatran elephant.

Keywords: Conflict mitigation, sumatran elephant, Braja Harjosari, Wisata Desa Way Kambas, ecotourism

1. Introduction

Wildlife-human conflict has been a problem in conservation areas (Lamarque, 2008; Zubiri and Switzer, 2001) and sumatran elephant *Elephas maximus sumatranus*, is one of them. Way Kambas National Park (WKNP) which is home for this great mammal, has a unique characteristic, most of its borderline is directly next to the settlements. There are 34 villages next to WKNP. This unique character has both positive and negative impacts. Illegal logging, poaching and burning are problems faced by WKNP. Due to their direct contact with WKNP, disturbance of wildlife entry, especially elephant, to the settlement areas has significant negative impact. It includes the lost and ruin of traditional plantation such as corn, banana, palm oil, and padi field. Conflict mitigation has been done and is still on, and local people's economical lost is unavoidable.

There are approximately 200–250 elephants with around 75 individuals involved in wildlife-human conflicts. WRU (WCS-TNWK) (2013) estimated ± 314 Elephant Human Conflicts (EHC) between October 2013 - September 2014, based on

community report, patrol and direct monitoring/visit. The highest EHC is between December 2013 - March 2014, rainy season, related to local people's planting pattern surrounding Way Kambas National Park. Lost and damage of 17 villages include highest damage on crops (corn, padi and cassava) (76.73 %), with the highest cassava (63.21 %) (WCS-TNWK, 2013).

The most frequent conflicts were on December - March, May-June, and August. In general, less damage was on crop area (16.23%) and the number of standing crop (58,37 %) (including banana, coconut, rubber), but the number of crops species (10,71 %), from 25 to 31 different species between October 2013 - September 2014. Due to the EHC, losing local people conservation support becomes a problem in WKNP. Conflict mitigation has been done to minimize the damage and the wildlife population decrease.

Local people and their local wisdom are a high potential resource for conservation. Of 34 villages, Braja Harjosari, included Dusun 7 and Dusun 8, has a great potential richness natural,

social, culture. Braja Harjosari has a high natural landscape (river, swamp, padi field, traditional plantation, garden) as well as social livelihood and culture. Having this diversity can be advantages as the base of economy building, such as ecotourism.

Wisata desa Way Kambas, a traditional ecotourism program, is a choice for indirect EHC. Ecotourism is natural resources use based program. Ecotourism challenges were on benefit share and accessibility (Butarbutar dan Soemarno, 2013). The recognition on potential local resources of buffer villages is important in developing creative economy innovation based ecotourism program as indirect approach for EHC.

Dusun 7 and Dusun 8 are two of eight dusun, sub area, in Braja Harjosari, East Lampung. Of 1075 ha area, the largest area is padi field (437 ha), crops (260 ha) and vegetable field (147 ha). Of 1477 families, with 5231 community members, mainly famers. Braja Harjosari has landscape diversity such as open area, river, swamp, plantation as well as culture and local wisdom (Profil Desa Braja Harjosari, 2012).

Monthly income is 1-5 million/month (Suhada 2015, Pers. Comm.). Dusun 7 has Balinese community with its special religious and cultural back ground and local wisdom. Fish pond, guava plantation owned by individuals, house gardenings, poultry, traditional farming, as well as Balinese and Javanese cultures are the local richness.

The building of traditional ecotourism has been done in conflict areas (Chaoprayoon and Panyadee, 2013). Wisata Desa Way Kambas, is an indirect approach on wildlife mitigation conflict in WKNP and Braja Harjosari is one potential buffer village to start with survey its local richness, training and companionment.

2. Results and Discussions

Training and companionment to develop the program was done in raising awariness of ecotourism product based on its local richness is shown by the capability of local people in selling service product for their ecotourism program, including homestay and their daily livelihood (Pusiran and Xiao, 2013), guava and corn plantation, padi field, traditional market (Figure 1). Survey and group discussion were conducted, especially with Wisata Desa team of Braja Harjosari.



Figure 1. Community based ecotourism of Braja Harjosari, Wisata Desa Way Kambas, homestay survey in Dusun 8 and local wisdom story telling by Pak Mangku, Dusun 7.

Their willingness in strengthening its agriculture, farming, social and culture for ecotourism services showed by their increasing the variety of crop such as water melon, building of fish karamba along the river. Tourists both local and overseas are coming and enjoy Braja Harjosari beauty (Figure 2). Improving local ecotourism skill, organization and community based earning was also done by attending the meeting with local government, NGOs, comparative visit to local

business like Nuwono Tasya Guest House and Pusat Oleh-Oleh Khas Lampung Askha Jaya in Bandar Lampung (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Tourists visit in Braja Harjosari, enjoying grilled corn and experiencing padi planting.



Figure 3. Improving local ecotourism skill, organization and community based earning through group discussion, attending the local government meeting, comparative study to Pusat oleh-oleh khas Lampung Askha Jaya and Nuwono Tasya guest house.

Perception transfer for wildlife was indirectly delivered during the program. One of the tourists visit, during the dinner in “bakar ikan” grilled fish package, the visitors shared their dinner with local people and rangers who deterred the coming elephant group in adjacent village. Planting program was also introduced to show their support on WKNP reforestation. In their visit to Elephant Training Center, introducing the captive elephants and their well being gave a new perspective for both tourist and local people (Figure 4).

Using Wisata Desa Way Kambas program as an indirect approach for conflict mitigation is another way to support wildlife conservation as well as the livelihood of local people in adjacent conservation area. Conservation awareness also

can be applied, more respect to local wisdom and local well being.



Figure 4. Perception transfer for wildlife as indirect support for mitigation conflict and conservation education

4. Conclusion

Wisata Desa Way Kambas in Braja Harjosari is raising awareness of ecotourism product, strengthening its agriculture, farming, social and culture for ecotourism services, improving local ecotourism skill, organization and community based earning and encouraging perception transfer for wildlife.

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