Attitudes of visitors and local stakeholders toward introducing the new visitor restriction programs in a brown bear habitat in Japan

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Effectiveness of Visitor Management

- Managers introduce some visitor restrictive management actions to reduce inappropriate use levels and behaviors.
- Visitor numbers, the length of stay, restricting specific activities and information supply and education.
- Effectiveness of such programs is evaluated by the conditions of resources and the response of visitors and stakeholders.

- It is impossible to introduce and promote visitor allocations without understanding and support by visitors and local stakeholders.
Closure of Trails

May: Open 15, Partly closed 10, All closed 5
Jun: Open 10, Partly closed 10, All closed 10
Jul: Open 5, Partly closed 25, All closed 20
Aug: Open 5, Partly closed 25, All closed 20
Sep: Open 25, Partly closed 10, All closed 5

Bear in forest, trail signs visible.

Man in uniform with walking stick, forest background.
Introducing process of the new program

1995

I

Governmental agencies

Ideas to prevent bear contacts

Local stakeholders

2002

II

World Natural Heritage registration

IUCN request

External support

Ecotourism promotion

Natural Park Law revision for visitor restriction

2007

III

Monitoring data

Visitor Restriction Program

2011

Intensive discussions
New management system
Registration desk at Field House
Lecture before hiking
Guided tour with licensed guide
Different perspectives among stakeholders

Before
- Local stakeholders
  - Less information
  - Left behind decisions
  - Uncertain goal

Managers, Officials
- Objective data
- Rational explanation

Feeling of anxiety

During discussion
- Accident with bears will be critical matter for tourism.

Reducing visitor risk
- As the land and trail managers, accident with bears must never happen.

After
- 2011
  - Introducing the new program

Positive opinion
- Good risk management system
- Incomplete system

Less attachment

Commendable program
- Good reputation from visitors
Acceptance of the new program

- Tour attendees in 2010
- Nonattendees in 2010
- Summer and fall visitors in 2010
- Tour attendees in 2011
- Nonattendees in 2011
- Summer and Fall visitors in 2011

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
Overall satisfaction of visitors

- Tour attendees in 2010
- Nonattendees in 2010
- Summer and fall visitors in 2010
- Tour attendees in 2011
- Nonattendees in 2011
- Lecture attendees in 2011
- Summer and fall visitors in 2011

Legend:
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Moderate
- Less Satisfied
- Not at all
Conclusion

• Local stakeholders’ acceptance
• Visitors’ acceptance and satisfaction
• Further monitoring needs

For collaboration
• Common stake
• Long term discussion
• External stimulus and support
• Scientific data
• Local stakeholders’ enthusiasm
Thank you for your attention

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