

**PUSAT SUMBER
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**ALTERNATIVE CONSTRUCTION
IN THE SENSITIVE NATURE SITE**

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ABSTRACT

In the past, the human populations living adjacent to forest areas in the tropics have been regarded as the first line of attack. Their exclusion was seen as the answer: creating a park or reserve and leaving it solely as a preserve for wildlife. However, attempts to exclude local people from these areas and prevent exploitation have proved futile and disastrous in the long term. When people's very survival is entwined with harvesting natural resources, even the most draconian legislation tends to be flouted.

The principles are simple. Conservation needs to be linked to improving the standards of living for local people, while at the same time reducing the pressure places on their environment. By becoming aware that their very existence is inextricably linked to the quality and integrity of their environment, local people have the strongest possible incentive to help ensure that its conservation is as success.

Ecotourism is seen as a vital piece in this jigsaw. The recreational use of protected areas creates employment for the local people and increase revenue for the community. It also, importantly, fosters an increased pride in local resources, and engenders the feeling that forests and wildlife are very special and worth preserving.

This is not to say that ecotourism is a panacea for sensitive environmental difficulties. It is not. However, *there is every reason to believe that ecotourism has a vital role to play in the conservation of the forest biological riches.*