

September 1, 1999

DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 99-39

SUBJECT: **GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND
MANAGEMENT OF ECOLOGICAL DESTINATIONS IN THE
PHILIPPINES**

In line with the Department's mandate to promote sustainable development, and cognizant of the Philippines' abundance in ecological destinations, the guidelines for Ecological Destinations Development and Management in the Philippines are hereby promulgated as follows.

Section 1. BASIC POLICY

1. It is the policy of the State to ensure sustainable development, management, protection and conservation of country's environment and natural resources for the benefit of the present and future generations;
2. It is likewise the policy of the Government to develop and manage ecological destinations to allow learning through experience, thereby improving the quality of life of our people while maintaining the integrity of the environment; and
3. It is the policy of the Department to establish/create multi-dynamic movement and convenient access to ecological destinations through environmental roads and environmental rest areas.

Section 2. OBJECTIVES

1. To promote environmental awareness through ecological study tours;
2. To allow ecological enthusiasts to use and benefit from environmental intangibles such as the priceless outdoor experience of isolation in nature; and
3. To provide income generating activities to communities with identified ecological destinations

Section 3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. *Ecological Enthusiast* - a person who is interested in natural landscapes or environment.
2. *Environmental Intangibles* - all the benefits derived from ecological sites except those of material value.
3. *Ecological Destination* - a site that shows a unique natural feature(s) of a landscape that benefit people because of its aesthetic, recreational and scientific value.

4. *Environmental Road* - road developed in harmony with nature leading to the ecological destination.
5. *Environmental Rest Area Park* - area with basic amenities such as comfort rooms, coffee shops, lodging rooms along the environmental road.
6. *Cost Recovery Scheme* - plan to recover investment made and earn a reasonable profit.
7. *Ecological User's Fee* - payment received/collected for the use of facilities and basic amenities of the ecological destination and rest area.

Section 4. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This order shall cover the development and management of sites of ecological uniqueness and importance, excluding sites already covered by the ecotourism program, and those areas under the jurisdiction of other government agencies.

Section 5. STRATEGY

Development and management of ecological destination uses the holistic approach. Activities include, among others, development of the site itself, greening and construction/improvement of the access road leading to the identified ecological destination and installation of amenities in rest areas. The development of the site must be environmentally sound, and with minimum disturbances in the area.

Low impact activities should be confined to the periphery of the site. Provision for an effective waste management and disposal shall also be undertaken.

The program shall utilize the in-house investment and marketing expertise of the DENR through the Natural Resources Development Corporation (NRDC). NRDC shall formulate and implement the cost and recovery scheme of this program.

The assessment team specified in Section 8 shall provide the necessary guidelines and formulate specific activities that could be allowed in the area, together with the plan, design and specifications of the infrastructures to be constructed therein.

NRDC shall take charge of the implementation of the plan in coordination with the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) who has jurisdiction over the ecological destination.

Section 6. CRITERIA ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE ECOLOGICAL DESTINATIONS

6.1 Site Selection

The following criteria shall be considered/used in the selection of an ecological destination:

1. The area should have unique natural/endemic features which will provide enjoyment and education to ecological enthusiasts;
2. The area should be accessible;
3. The area has no peace and order problem;
4. The development of ecological destinations must be supported by Local Government Units (LGUs) and accepted by the community affected by such development;
5. The area must not be a natural disaster prone area;
6. The area must be near necessary amenities for the convenience of the ecological enthusiast; and
7. The area must be outside the ancestral domain, reservation, private land or with pending land claim.

6.2 Developmental Activity Considerations

The following criteria shall be considered in planning, development and management of ecological destinations:

1. The activities must be environmentally sound with low impact and with minimum disturbances on the landscape or natural feature of the site;
2. The activities must be ecological, scientific and of educational value;
3. The activities are in accordance with the community's norms and cultural values; and
4. The activities must provide economic and social benefit to the ecological enthusiasts and the community in general.

Section 7. CRITERIA ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ROADS AND REST AREA PARKS (ERAP)

1. The road must lead to an ecological destination;
2. The roadside and site for rest area must not be under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) or other government agencies;
3. Developmental activities along the road must be limited to environmental enhancement, landscape improvement and construction of rest houses, coffee shops and public toilets;
4. The design and type of proposed facilities should be in harmony with the natural settings of the area; and
5. Development of the road should include the establishment of greenbelt areas by planting of endemic trees and other vegetation.

Section 8. IDENTIFICATION OF SITES FOR ECOLOGICAL DESTINATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ROADS AND REST AREA PARKS

DENR Regional Offices shall conduct the pre-selection and identification of the sites for ecological destinations, environmental roads and rest area parks in their respective region.

An assessment team shall validate an identified site as to its suitability as an ecological destination, environmental roads and rest area parks and should prepare the necessary recommendation for the proclamation of the Secretary as such. The team

shall be headed by a representative from the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) and its members shall be composed of the following:

1. Representative from NRDC
2. Representative from Special Concerns Office (SCO)
3. Representative from the Regional Office concerned
4. Representative from the CENRO concerned
5. Representative from the community/ies in the area
6. Representative from concerned government agency/office

Section 9. ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS/PROCEDURES

1. All ecological enthusiasts must pay the ecological user's fee before access is allowed in the identified ecological destinations and rest area;
2. Rate of users' fee shall depend on the target market, the type of destination (ecological uniqueness), the size of the site, and the initial investment, required which will be determined by the assessment team; and
3. Income generated from collected fees shall be administered by NRDC, which shall primarily be used for the maintenance of such destinations/rest area, and a modest amount shall be returned to the community in the form of livelihood activity.

This Order shall take effect immediately.

ANTONIO H. CERILLES
Secretary