

Tourism Teachers Hold Ecotourism Hospitality Training Workshop in Southern Thailand



The two-day event at Anurak Community Lodge gave valuable training in conservation and tourism hospitality to local service providers in Khao Sok National Park area

Workshop with a view: The Spirit of Hospitality training underway at Anurak Community Lodge in southern Thailand [Download these images and this press release in Word and Text format at <https://app.box.com/s/znkaimzugiy9d5r5wx7lokdz4mn4lhgd>]

A leading Bangkok university delivered a series of hospitality skill building workshops to local tourism service providers in the ecotourism front line at Khao Sok national park, southern Thailand, 24-25 June.

The workshop was conducted by Assumption University's Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management. The event, which took place at Anurak Community Lodge, was sponsored by YAANA Ventures, a Bangkok based sustainable tourism investor.

Twenty-two tour guides, front office personnel, housekeepers, waiters and back of house staff, all from local villages, and employed at Anurak, benefited from two days of "Spirit of Hospitality" training, which was led by project coordinator Dr Scott Smith from the university.

YAANA Ventures' founder, Willem Niemeijer, said of the training: "Khao Sok boasts some of Thailand's most stunning scenery and is home to incredible biodiversity. We therefore share the responsibility to ensure tourism is developed in a sustainable way, showing that it can make a positive contribution to conservation that involves and benefits the local community."

Ahead of the workshop, Dr Smith prepared a service audit and worked with management and staff to develop a training program to meet the needs of the lodge. Most guests are visitors from Europe, the United States and Singapore. They typically want informed, zero-impact nature activities such as forest hiking and kayaking in the park. When back at the lodge they appreciate local Thai food and ambience in the Hornbill restaurant, which offers a dramatic view of the karst mountain landscape.

"Our objective was to identify opportunities to exceed customers' expectations and create positive memory-making moments for all guests visiting Anurak Community Lodge," said Dr Smith.

Anurak means "to conserve" in Thai language. Accordingly, Anurak Lodge operates as an eco-friendly retreat with 18 comfortable bungalow-style rooms. The lodge is a jump off point for tours and activities in Khao Sok National Park and to the nearby Cheow Lan Lake, one of the most visually stunning and bio-diverse areas in South Thailand.

Established in 1980, Khao Sok National Park conserves 739 square kilometres of forested hills in Surat Thani Province. The rainforest of Khao Sok National Park is one of the oldest in the world.

Anurak Community Lodge opened its doors in 2015 and is designed, built and operated sustainably.

The lodge doesn't use plastic water bottles. It is replacing mono-culture palm oil trees in its grounds with indigenous plant and tree species. Anurak Community Lodge is currently being assessed by a leading international environmental standards accrediting agency. An announcement will be made soon.

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About Anurak Community Lodge

Anurak Lodge is an eco-friendly lodge with 18 comfortable rooms in bungalow-style located between Khao Sok and Khlong Phanom national parks. The location was chosen for its serenity and remoteness. There are no other resorts, hotels, restaurants and convenience stores within walking distance. The lodge, which opened in 2015, is for nature lovers. There are no televisions in the rooms and restaurant. The owners made a conscious decision not to have a swimming pool. The lodge is a jump off point for tours and activities into Khao Sok National Park and to the nearby Cheow Lan Lake, one of the most stunning areas in South Thailand. Further information: <https://anuraklodge.com/anurak-lodge/>

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