

Increasing the environmental conditions in heavily used rural areas

Teresa Cristina Magro¹, Silvia Yochie Kataoka² and Gytha van Bentveld³

^{1,2} Forest Department, ESALQ, São Paulo University, Piracicaba, SP, Brazil
e-mail: tecmagro@esalq.usp.br; sykataoka@esalq.usp.br

³ e-mail: Gytha_van_Bentveld@hotmail.com

Permanent protected areas are often the only pristine settings with potential capacity for recreational use in rural properties, despite of the technical recommendations and legal restrictions for using them. The rural district of Brotas in the southeast of Brazil was national pioneer in the development of intensive exploitation of adventurous tourism based on enjoying nature.

The orientation of the use of the boulder-areas of the rural properties took to a new income base for the village and bettered the working opportunities for the local youth. But there is a setback. There are signs that the fast growing flux of tourists in the town is provoking lesser satisfaction for the visitors and causes damage to the natural environment. The village of Brotas therefore has introduced measures to maintain or improve the environmental conditions of the rural properties and one of the forms is monitoring the existing conditions in order to control the impacts to a maximum.

This way, we used indicators on the trails and waterfalls of Brotas in order to discover and evaluate if the set goals for the preservation of vegetation, ground and visitor-satisfaction were reached. The selection of the indicators and the standards for desirable conditions were based on the limits established by Brotas Municipality Council for Tourism – COMTUR. The selection was also based on the possibility that monitoring fieldwork could be carried out by professionals trained by the municipality.