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## Evaluation of Koçarlı Adnan Menderes urban forest in terms of the ecotourism

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### Abstract

The aim of this research is to evaluate the natural and ecological features of Kocarli Adnan Menderes Urban Forest with regard to the suitability for ecotourism. Design suggestions will be presented to develop the Urban Forest. Continuity in public transportation will eliminate the problems of access. Kocarli Adnan Menderes Urban Forest is not only a very considerable ecotourism area for people who live in Kocarli and near villages but also for people living in Aydin and other districts. Activities in Kocarli Adnan Menderes Urban Forest ensure social and cultural improvement of the people and economic development of the region.

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### 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy and developing countries are attempting to cash in on this expanding industry in an attempt to boost foreign investment and financial reserves. While conceding that the uncontrolled growth of this industry can result in serious environmental and social problems, the United Nations contends that such negative effects can be controlled and reduced [1].

Tourism is globally sector. As the largest business sector in the world economy, the Travel and Tourism industry is responsible for over 230 million jobs and over 10% of the gross domestic product worldwide. In 2006, Travel and Tourism (consumption, investment, government spending and exports) is expected to grow 4.6% and total US\$6.5 trillion [2].

Tourism in Developing Countries is very important for economical development of them. Tourism is a principle "export" (foreign exchange earner) for 83% of developing countries, and the leading export for 1/3 of poorest countries. For the world's 40 poorest countries, tourism is the second most important source of foreign exchange, after oil [2].

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There are several descriptions about ecotourism. According to the one of the description of the ecotourism, ecotourism is: Ecotourism is "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people." Sometimes it is defined as a sub-category of sustainable tourism or a segment of the larger nature tourism market [3].

Another description comprises the social dimension of the ecotourism. Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. This means that those who implement and participate in ecotourism activities should follow the following ecotourism principles:

In many countries there is a growing understanding of the importance of the natural ecology in urban forests [4].

An urban forest is a forest or a collection of trees that grow within a city, town or a suburb. In a wider sense it may include any kind of woody plant vegetation growing in and around human settlements. In a narrower sense (also called forest park) it describes areas whose ecosystems are inherited from wilderness leftovers or remnants [4].

Urban forests play an important role in ecology of human habitats in many ways: they filter air, water, sunlight, provide shelter to animals and recreational area for people. They moderate local climate, slowing wind and stormwater, and shading homes and businesses to conserve energy. They are critical in cooling the urban heat island effect, thus potentially reducing the number of unhealthy ozone days that plague major cities in peak summer months [4].

## **2. Functions and Values of Urban Forest**

In urban environments, forest functions are frequently related to the human environment. Urban forest functions are thus often oriented toward human outcomes, such as shade, beauty, and privacy.

Urban forests improve air quality, absorb rainwater, improve biodiversity and potentially allow recycling to 20% of waste which is wood-based [5].

Visiting green areas in cities can counteract the stress of city life, renew vital energy and restore attention, and improve medical outcomes [6].

Having regular access to woodland is desirable for schools [7], and indeed Forest kindergartens take children to visit substantial forests every day, whatever the weather. When such children go to primary school, teachers observe a significant improvement in reading, writing, mathematics, social skills and many other areas.

## **3. History of Ecotourism**

The term was first mentioned in the literature by Kenton Miller in 1978 [8]. It was initially used to describe nature-based travel to relatively undisturbed areas with an emphasis on education. However, the concept has developed to a scientifically based approach to the planning, management and development of sustainable tourism products and activities [9].

Ecotourism, responsible tourism, jungle tourism, and sustainable development have become prevalent concepts since the late 1980s, and ecotourism has experienced arguably the fastest growth of all sub-sectors in the tourism industry. The popularity represents a change in tourist perceptions, increased environmental awareness, and a desire to explore natural environments [10]. At times, such changes become as much a statement affirming one's social identity, educational sophistication, and disposable income as it has about preserving the Amazon rainforest or the Caribbean reef for posterity [11].

Beginning in 1990s, ecotourism has been growing 20% - 34% per year. In 2004, ecotourism/nature tourism was growing globally 3 times faster than the tourism industry as a whole [12].

## **4. Characteristics of Ecotourism**

It includes an interpretation/learning experience, is delivered to small groups by small-scale businesses, and stresses local ownership, particularly for rural people. Ecotourism provides local benefits -

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