Tourism, Community Resilience and Cultural Ecosystem Services in Taiwan

Prof. Alan Lew
Northern Arizona University, USA

Prof. Alan Lew is the founder and editor of the journal *Tourism Geographies*. He is a leading scholar in tourism geography and has published extensively in this area. His main research field is East/South-East Asia.

This lecture will look into the connection between ecotourism and community resilience in Taiwan from the example of coastal wetlands. Coastal wetlands are often targeted as key ecosystems for conservation, including both protection and rehabilitation, because of the wealth of ecosystem services that they have been shown to provide. Also, wetlands can hold a broad iconic image for tourists, if only because of their size and subsequent prominence in the landscape. However, in practice they perform more as a niche specialty product for bird watchers and recreational fishing enthusiasts. As such, the direct economic benefits of wetland tourism is often modest. The research findings show that from ecosystem services and community resilience perspectives, wetland conservation can contribute significantly to local community wellbeing through the development of local education and skill capacities, local pride and sense of place, and environmentally sensitive changes in attitude and behavior.