



## **Alternative Tourism in Wonosalam**

*I Dewa Gde Satrya*

Tourism Study Program, School of Tourism, University of Ciputra Surabaya

Corresponding E-mail Address: [dewa.gde@ciputra.ac.id](mailto:dewa.gde@ciputra.ac.id)

### **ABSTRACT**

Alternative tourism and ecotourism find their relevance in changing travel patterns in the next normal era. Both enable tourism trips that have a positive impact on the growth of the quality of life of tourists and hosts, as well as the quality of the environment and cultural conservation that are the destinations of travel. Ecotourism is a way for alternative tourism to be increasingly recognized and become the answer, when tourist travel turns to a small scale, considering the capacity of tourist destinations and the welfare of local communities. This article is based on qualitative data obtained through interviews and in-depth observations related to the implementation of alternative tourism managed by local communities as well as Forest Conservation Groups in ecotourism destinations in Mendiro Hamlet, Panglungan Village, Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency, East Java Province. Wonosalam is not only known for its durian commodities but has many springs, conservation forests, and Biodiversity Parks. The purpose of this study is to describe the implementation of alternative tourism in Wonosalam. This study concludes that the concept of alternative tourism finds its relevance to ecotourism practices in Wonosalam through observation of springs, jungle tracking, river crossings, birdwatching which is done on a small scale, and the attraction of tourist villages located on the border of conservation forests. The ownership and management of this tourist village are entirely local.

**KEY WORDS:** Alternative tourism; ecotourism; conservation; tracking; bird watching; village tourism; community-based tourism; biodiversity.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Based on the Manila Declaration in 1980, one of which says tourism should not ignore social problems. This is one of the crucial roles of the tourism sector is to improve the quality of life as also stated in the World Tourism Code of Ethics.

First, tourism aims to build mutual understanding and mutual respect among the population and society. Secondly, tourism is a means to improve the quality of life. Third, tourism is part of

sustainable development. Fourth, tourism is a user and contributor to cultural heritage preservation. Fifth, tourism is a profitable activity for the country and the recipient community of tourists. Sixth, the obligations of tourism stakeholders. Seventh, basic rights of travel. Eighth, freedom of movement for tourists. Ninth, the workers' rights in the tourism industry. Tenth, implementation of the code of ethics. Former Tourism Minister I Gede Ardika also stated similarly, that tourism can improve the life quality by studying other tangible and intangible cultures of the nation, including studying local life-changing policies.

The ten idealisms were adopted in Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism. Related to the improvement of life quality, soft skill ownership is believed to be a significant part that will help every individual succeed in his life. Values and skills that are part of soft skills become a tool for individuals to able to improve their quality of life. The mechanism of values cultivation and soft skill ownership training through tourism activities, particularly to travel in ecotourism villages, will be identified through this research.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed travel behavior, from mass to small scale, outdoor activities are increasingly in demand. The Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Sandiaga Uno stated, that the future of Indonesia's tourist destinations and attractions leads to the concept of nature tourism, ecotourism, wellness tourism, and adventure tourism (NEWA). The role of of young people is needed to promote Indonesia as a world ecotourism center (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021).

Ecotourism is generally located in rural areas. Therefore, among these travel options, ecotourism, which is a special attraction for tourist villages, has the opportunity to attract tourists. Regarding village tourism, UNWTO has expressed concern and support





through World Tourism Day 2020, with a focus on Tourism and Rural Development.

Most ecotourism destinations are rural-based (Satrya, 2020). In addition to ecotourism, as stated by Menparekras above, tourism activities to improve health and nature tourism, in general, are also increasingly in demand. The ecotourism travel pattern emphasizes the depth of meaning and benefits of travel because it is reminiscent of the implementation of alternative tourism (Godfrey, 1993); (Weaver, 2005); (Jovicic, 2016); (Prince & Ioannides, 2017) (Rijal et al.2020).

Mass tourism often destroys the preservation of nature and culture, but it is undeniable that large quantities of tourist trips are needed to have multiple impacts on people's welfare and tax revenue, and community income.

Ijen Crater, for example, limits the number of visitors per day (Husdinariyanto, 2022). Visitor restrictions are an important start for the implementation of health protocols in every ecotourism destination because from there a visit registration system can be arranged, travel routes that provide physical distancing between visitors, and increase the value of traveling to appreciate and be grateful for the universe and all its elements.

On April 22, the world celebrates Earth Day. The essence of this important warning is to maintain the balance of human behavior for the sake of the preservation and sustainability of the earth. In Indonesia, the tradition of 'Alms of the Earth' is a sign of a rite of respect for the earth. Not limited to rituals, the balance of human behavior towards the earth is also interpreted or found in the existence of water. Therefore, a concrete form of respect for the earth can be found in the practice of using and conserving water.

The United Nations invites all human beings to realize the importance of clean water and manage sustainable sources of clean water. In 2022, the big issue of water is formulated under the theme "Leaving No One Behind". The previous year, respect for the earth and water was formulated in a theme, "Water and Sustainable Development", "Water and Jobs", "Wastewater", and "Nature-based Solution for Water".

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Just to mention two examples of villages that have successfully practiced respect for the earth, particularly by conserving water for social welfare through an ecotourism-based tourism village approach: Pujon Kidul Village in Malang and Ponggok Village in Klaten, Central Java. For the two residents in this village, as well as in the villages in general, water is everything. The available treasures are so abundant in the universe, which supports and even changes life towards independence and prosperity.

Why should tourism villages be developed? First, the most important indicator of the progress of the tourism sector in addition to state income through state foreign exchange is an increase in the level of welfare and quality of life of the community, especially in suburban areas and around tourist objects and attractions. Most of the objects and tourist attractions are in rural areas. Therefore, it is very ironic when the target of foreign tourist visits and foreign exchange earnings as well as domestic tourist spending grows only in certain areas.

Moreover, the tourism objectives mandated by Law Number 10 of 2009 emphasize the noble nature of tourism to increase economic growth, improve people's welfare, eradicate poverty, overcome unemployment, preserve nature, the environment, and resources, promote culture, raise the image of the nation, foster love for the homeland, strengthen national identity and unity, and strengthen the friendship between nations. Without improving the economy of rural communities, the progress of tourism feels porous and does not touch the essence of life for most of our society.

Second, along with the changing trends of world tourists, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism is increasingly moving towards quality tourism, where local customs and the environment must be respected. In contrast to





quality tourism, tourism in the Kuta area, Bali, has recently been increasingly inviting unrest due to the actions of foreign tourists who often cause trouble and do not respect local customs and religious values. There are even allegations that they feel superior as foreigners over residents.

As the antithesis of such tourism practices, growth in the quality and quantity of tourist villages is a necessity. 5 aspects are used as parameters to assess the potential for developing a tourist village, namely originality, authenticity, uniqueness, rarity, and wholeness. Where, residents and all aspects of village life inherent in them, are sovereign and respected by tourists.

Third, it is in rural areas that our tourism has the competitiveness and product authenticity that is not owned by tourist destinations in other countries. The concept of wealth-created tourism works in real terms by reflecting itself as a nation that is not complacent with inherited wealth tourism (historical buildings, dances, arts, temples, etc.), but explores new tourist villages that are innovative, competitive, and feasible sell.

In this realm, included in the development of tourist villages is agrotourism, which generally consists of agriculture plantations, food crops and horticulture, fisheries, and animal husbandry. Agrotourism is an integral part of rural tourism. Agrotourism can be grouped into ecotourism, namely tourism activities that do not damage or pollute nature to admire and enjoy the beauty of nature, wild animals, or plants in their natural environment, and as a means of education. Based on its nature, agro-tourism can be classified into two. First, natural open space agrotourism is located in areas where these activities are carried out directly by local farming communities following their daily lives. People carry out their activities according to what they usually do without any arrangement from other parties. Second, artificial open space agro-tourism, where this agro-tourism area can be designed in specific areas but has not been controlled or touched by the community (Satrya, 2022).

Wealth-created tourism through respect for the earth by developing tourist villages is not as difficult and expensive as creating new tourist destinations. The daily lifestyle of rural

communities has become the main attraction, it's just a matter of how to package and market it.

The increasing awareness of tourists, residents, and other stakeholders about the negative impacts of mass tourism has led to the emergence of a new type of tourism, known as 'alternative tourism' or 'special interest tourism'. Alternative tourism emerged in the early 1980s as part of an adaptation platform. The term is structured to cover products and activities that are considered more appropriate than conventional mass tourism. Therefore, alternative tourism is often considered an initial form of engagement with the idea of sustainable tourism.

Alternative tourism is in the realm of culture. Initially, cultural tourism was an alternative form of tourism (Jovicic, 2016). The emergence of cultural tourism as an alternative or special interest tourism has been initiated by demand segments of highly educated and high-status tourists, who spend large sums of money on bookings to cater to their highly refined tourism needs. Cultural tourism as an alternative form of tourism in the late twentieth century, through a process of transformation, acquired certain characteristics of mass tourism. But today's cultural tourism can be classified more as mass tourism than alternative tourism (Smith, 2001). For example, the high number of tourists, the increasing number of tourist packages, the market power of international tour operators, and the increasing pressure on the physical and socio-cultural environment, are some of the distinctive characteristics of mass tourism, which cultural tourism initially did not have.

Jafari (2001) attributes this changing tourism trend to the 'adaptation platforms' that emerged in the early 1980s, articulating proposals and models aimed at enhancing the positive effects of tourism on the environment and livelihoods of local people. In that context, cultural tourism as an alternative form of tourism that was originally a response to mass tourism implies travel with the primary purpose of discovering and learning more about historical and interesting monuments and places.

The formulation of the research problem is how to implement alternative tourism in Wonosalam? The purpose of this paper is to describe the implementation of alternative tourism in





Wonosalam which is the focus of research, experiencing several problems. Namely, theft of endangered birds, logging of wild trees, river pollution, and the transfer of land ownership to people outside the region. Their presence adjacent to protected forests is very important in maintaining the sustainability of forests, springs, and rivers. Tourism development with ecotourism principles is a creative way out for residents to empower themselves and provide livelihoods for residents who care about forest conservation.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. According to Sugiyono (2013) & Neuman (2013), qualitative research is research using a naturalistic approach aimed at exploring the phenomena faced by research subjects, such as behavior, motivation, perception, and other actions directly. The research location is Mendiro Hamlet, Panglungan Village, Wonosalam District, Jombang Regency, East Java Province. Data collection techniques were carried out by interviewing and observing sources who had been designated as informants in the hope of obtaining more complex results. In this study, sampling will be carried out using purposive sampling in which the resource persons or informants will be selected based on the criteria determined by the researcher. The selected resource persons are members of KEPUH (Forest Conservation Group) Mendiro Hamlet who have credibility as decision-makers and are directly involved in the operation of ecotourism villages. This study uses two sources of data, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is carried out by interviewing and observing the sources and research objects to obtain the required information. Secondary data is done by obtaining data through various library sources such as books, and research journals.

## RESULT & DISCUSSION

Based on the above background, the purpose of creating an ecotourism village in Mendiro Hamlet, Panglungan Village, and Wonosalam District is to provide benefits to local communities for forest sustainability. But on the other hand, forest tourism, springs, and river cruising, which are the main attractions of Mendiro Hamlet, are not among the types and

mainstream tourism products that tourists are interested in today. Precisely herein lies the purity of alternative tourism to be implemented with ecotourism packaging and tourist villages.

Assistance in the development of tourism packages, institutions and human resources has been carried out (Satrya, Kaihatu, & Pranata, 2018); (Satrya, Kaihatu, & Pranata, 2019b). In the early stages, the initiative and motivation of all components of society, ranging from young people, elders, women's and women's groups, regional leaders, as well as the government at the village level, have the same commitment to advancing the village through ecotourism. Millennial market trials to try products developed by residents with assistance have been carried out (Satrya, Kaihatu, & Pranata, 2017); (Satrya, Kaihatu, & Pranata, 2019a). Products produced by residents enter the criteria for alternative tourism that are worthy of being introduced to tourists, industry, and academic circles.

The springs located in Jombang, East Java Province totaled 198 springs and spread over 13 districts. Each of these springs is found, to have different characteristics such as springs that emerged from cracks of the rocks. Several springs that indicate ecological conditions around the spring that is in the location of many privately owned land were damaged by the activities of the felling of trees around the spring. While springs are located in the protected area the conditions are still awake. The problems in Wonosalam are summarized in the following six aspects: 1) The changing of the function of protected Forest; 2) The illegal hunting of bird/animals; 3) Wood/bamboo theft; 4) River pollution; 5) Illegal logging in the springs area; 6) 50% of the land owned by outsiders Wonosalam (Satrya, 2016).

The purpose of ecotourism management in Wonosalam is to improve the community's economy by sustainably using natural resources through the development of biodiversity-based ecotourism villages, conservation, education, and community development.

Community involvement in protecting the forest is very important because it is the community that interacts in the forest every day with various emotional and economic ties contained in it. The development of the use of conservation areas through environmental services from ecosystems at springs encourages





the Jombang Regency Environmental Service to assist Wonosalam ecotourism, with the Participation-Based Spring and Forest Protection Program. The activities carried out include monitoring of springs, bio-monitoring learning, reforestation, and observation of biodiversity, including hornbills and Javanese eagles. This initiative has been running for 3 years and has provided tangible benefits for the environmental and social sustainability of the community. In terms of environmental sustainability, with 70 hectares of total land that has been conserved, water sources are maintained and can be utilized by 575 families with sufficient discharge despite the dry season, habitats and ecosystems of animals with protected statuses such as monkeys, hornbills, and Javan eagles are maintained and become frequent. appear. With the increase in water catchment areas, the frequency of floods and landslides decreases. In addition, the air quality is also very good, which is indicated by the low level of ARI. There have been 20,000 trees planted since the beginning of conservation and 3,850 planted in 3 years of participatory innovation with visitors, with 5 spring locations that have been successfully protected. From the socio-economic side of the community, as of 2019, there have been 120 families involved in the program, with 1,550 people visiting and an economic income of Rp. 23.75 million. This spring and forest conservation program in 2019 has been replicated by 3 groups (Jombang Regency Environmental Service, 2017).

Dernoi (1981) states alternative tourism is a form of tourism in which the client receives accommodation in the host's house. Alternative tourism appears to offer a wide range of social and economic opportunities, especially for developing countries, as well as "a means of providing a taste of a foreign country at a low cost". The availability of homestays that are integrated with residents' residences and homestays that are specially built in an area owned by residents, is a form of residents' sincerity to welcome tourists.

The advantages of alternative tourism, among others, are (a) For individuals or families. This particular form of tourism, namely tourist accommodation (certain types) in the homes of residents, distributes income directly to families. (b) For local communities, it will generate direct income for community members, improve housing standards, help prevent

environmental damage, and avoid large public expenditures on infrastructure. (c) For the host country, it will greatly contribute to the country's efforts to maintain the maximum possible income from tourism. Alternative tourism helps prevent social tensions (local vs tourist) as well as preserve local traditions (physical, behavioral). (d) For international relations, alternative tourism can help promote international/interregional/intercultural understanding (Dernoi, 1981).

These benefits are evident in reality. Foreign ecotourist guests who have visited Mendiro Hamlet come from various professions, including environmental researchers, moviemakers, and social activists. Their presence reflects the potential that exists in Mendiro Hamlet. Residents are used to receiving foreign guests with English communication guided by a translator, making interaction easier, both while in the village and when exploring the forest.

To become a worthy tourist destination, tourist villages cannot be compared with other destinations that have the strength of capital and networks. With its uniqueness, the tourist village has its market share and uniqueness. Five characteristics that are used as parameters to assess the potential for developing a tourist village are originality, authenticity, uniqueness, rarity, and wholeness. The setting of the Dancer Village can be seen from these five aspects, although mystical and haunted stories in an area (place storytelling) are not easy to get a broad market response. However, the spirit maintains authenticity and the four distinctive elements deserve appreciation. The creativity of residents and related stakeholders is needed to package, manage, market, and sell a village with the power of place storytelling (Bassano et al., 2019).

Mckee & Gerace (2018) state, that marketers who master storytelling techniques will plant and harvest lasting gifts as they create the future. Shoppers today are more interested in engaging story formats, just as people have always been attracted to stories. Storytelling is also a marketing opportunity as a substitute for consumer saturation with advertising. Producers must be able to attract public attention not only with ordinary stories but must be impressive and able to produce action, story listeners must be immediately compelled to buy





what is presented in the story. Tourism destination marketing is no exception. Storynomics is nothing but a marketing method using storytelling methods about the background of an object or tourist attraction in destinations around us.

In early August 2019 in Jakarta, Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs Luhut Binsar Panjaitan told the press that to develop tourism in super priority destinations, namely Lake Toba, Borobudur, Mandalika, Labuan Bajo Likupang, President Jokowi had directed storynomics tourism. The strategy is implemented by prioritizing narrative, creative content, and live culture and using the power of culture as 'Destination DNA' (Fatkhurrohman, 2019).

Wonosalam is located on the slopes of the Anjasmoro hills which is famous for its distinctive durian commodity. Many springs have continued to flow since the time of the Majapahit Kingdom until now. One of the strengths of the place storytelling of this place is the figure of Alfred Russel Wallace, a naturalist scientist, who once conducted a research expedition in Wonosalam. Specifically, the naturalist scientist whose name is used by the name Wallacea Line which determines the distribution line of fauna in Indonesia, came to Wonosalam and other areas in Indonesia to conduct research.

In the book "The Mally Archipelago" (Wallace, 2009) which contains taxonomy, the origin of life, changes in the earth's plates, biodiversity, and the history recorded by Wallace himself in his expedition to the archipelago, it appears how East Java has given importance to the history of scientific discoveries. knowledge in this world.

Around July-October 1861, Wallace, who is also a friend - if not a student - of the inventor of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, traveled from Ternate to Surabaya on a Dutch postal ship. From Surabaya, Wallace headed to the foot of Mount Arjuna. On the way, Wallace stayed with Mr. Ball an Englishman who married a Dutch woman in Mojokerto. He was amazed by the remains of Majapahit heritage buildings.

During his stay at the foot of Mount Arjuna, Wallace received information that he could find forests and many game animals. In Mojoagung, Wallace was fascinated by the traditional

gamelan musical instrument. In Wonosalam, Wallace admired the Javanese peacock. According to him, the Javanese peacock is different from the Indian peacock. The neck of the Javanese peacock is covered with a green feather barrel, while the crest has a different shape compared to other peacock crests. However, the eye of this bird is as big and beautiful as the Indian peacock. This is a strange fact in geographical distribution, that peacocks are only found in Java and are not found in Sumatra and Borneo.

During his stay in Japan, Wallace collected many kinds of birds. There he also found a rare type of green jungle fowl (*Gallus Furcatus*). This chicken has a beautiful back and neck and bronze scales. This bird also has an oval-shaped comb with smooth, reddish-purple corners, with a green underside. In addition to the rare green jungle fowl and the common jungle fowl (*Gallus bankiva*), Japan also found six types of woodpeckers, four types of king-shrimp, a hornbill that is more than four feet long, and the serindit bird (*Loriculus pusilus*). After a month in Wonosalam and Japan, Wallace managed to collect 98 species of birds.

Cohen (1987) states alternative tourism deserves to be critically studied. These new forms of alternative tourism challenge the profiteering logic of mass tourism and promote a more intimate and authentic relationship between guests and hosts. Molz (2013) states the literature on alternative tourism reveals several important elements related to moral economic exchange and moral encounters. First, as the name suggests, alternative tourism provides an alternative to the perceived negative effects associated with commercial mass tourism. In contrast, the alternative tourism industry aims to support a moral economy based on sustainable trade, fair labor practices, and environmental sensitivity. Second, alternative tourism speaks of a growing desire among tourists to have more authentic, individual, and intimate representations of experiences with the people and places they visit.

Prince & Ioannides (2017) stated alternative tourism has gained increasing popularity in the sustainable development discourse due to its recognized sensitive approach to the needs of host communities. Alternative tourism can be thought of as a form of sustainable tourism, where its smaller scale and more





sensitive operations can be used effectively to generate local development from the ground up. Alternative tourism experiences typically include educational tours, volunteer trips, farm stays, ecotourism, and other types of tourism that are characterized by small-scale operations and are locally owned and controlled.

Weaver (1995) stated, alternative tourism criteria:

- accommodation: low density, scattered, small scale, based on local vernacular style, locally owned and operated;
- attractions: 'authentic' cultural and natural features, utilized by tourists and locals alike, emphasis on the uniqueness of the place, or 'sense of place';
- market: low volume, year-round flow, diverse origin, (including intra-regional), highly motivated, receptive to local culture, seeking understanding and knowledge;
- economy: complements other sectors, encourages local linkages, requires minimal imports, produces high multiplier effects;
- regulation: local control, public sector, and community involvement, long-term planning, holistic emphasis;
- Impact: functions in the environmental, social, and economic carrying capacity of the destination; improve the local natural environment.

Gard McGehee (2002) promotes alternative tourism as a means to encourage organized social action. The Earthwatch Institute is one of more than 1,000 organizations that promote and/or develop some forms of alternative tourism. Expeditions are an alternative form of tourism, in which paying volunteers participate in one of 126 types of research-oriented expeditions for 10-14 days, including evaluating coral reef conditions, studying maternal health among West African women, assessing killer whale populations, or recording history. oral. Participants may learn basic research skills, data collection techniques, or interview methods.

Based on Table 1, the products that have been consistently developed and run by the people of Dusun Mendiro over the last five years are birdwatching, forest exploring, and river cruising.

**Table 1.** Sustainability of the ideal attributes of mass and alternative tourism

Perceived attributes of mass tourism	Dimension	Perceived alternative tourism attributes
High	Number of tourists	Low
High	Number of tour packages	Low
High	Spatial distribution of tourists and infrastructure	Spread
Low	The economic benefits of tourism on local communities	High
High pressure	Pressure on the physical and socio-cultural environment	Low pressure
Low	Authenticity level	High
High	Dependence on developed or developing markets	Low
High	Market forces in international tourism operators	High
Low-medium	Market education level	Medium-high

Source: adapted from Hall (2000)

Alternative travelers gravitate toward the allocentric pole of the psychographic continuum, which is characterized by intellectual curiosity, self-confidence, openness to new experiences, and respect for other cultures. Also described as 'adventurous' (Plog, 1974). Allocentric travelers are risk takers who prefer to explore places that are perceived as more authentic than 'tourist destinations'. In contrast, psychometric



tourists prefer to avoid risk and feel comfortable with destinations, and those who are already established, dominate unsustainable mass tourism. For example, FIT (free independent traveler) avoids arranging package tours, traveling as individuals or in small groups. The allocentric tendencies of alternative tourists give rise to a preference for unique 'authentic' cultural, historical and natural attractions and allow interaction between visitors and residents. Alternative tourism accommodation tends to be small-scale facilities.



**Figure 1.** Jungle Tour



**Figure 2.** Explore the Springs



**Figure 3.** River Cruise

Source: Author's Documentation

The impressions of five millennial tourists who took a one-day trip to explore conservation forests, springs, and bird and river observations obtained through interviews at three different trip sessions can be grouped into three themes, first, authentic and unforgettable impressions, second, the need for improved management and tourism travel packaging, third, increasing the selling value and tourism products. Opinions from ecotourism village managers consisting of local tour guides, homestay owners, hamlet heads, and community leaders can be grouped into three themes, first, the need for support from villages, sub-districts, and districts in infrastructure improvement, promotion, and improvement of skills and knowledge of residents related to tourism. Second, the need for support from the relevant tourism industry, especially travel agents, to create alternative tour packages to Mendiro Hamlet, Wonosalam. Open support is also aimed at a wide audience and educational institutions to collaborate to explore the uniqueness and potential of Wonosalam, to strengthen its attractiveness as an alternative tourism destination.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is, that the concept of alternative tourism finds its relevance to ecotourism practices in Wonosalam through observation of springs, jungle tracking, river crossings, birdwatching which is carried out on a small scale, and the attractiveness of villages located on the border of conservation forests. The ownership and management of this





tourist village are entirely local. The follow-up of this research is as follows, first, it is necessary to research scientific tourism in Wonosalam which is carried out on a small, in-depth scale and because it is included in the criteria for alternative tourism. Second, travel agents collaborate with local Wonosalam residents to develop alternative tourism by placing residents as the main actors who provide all the needs of tourists while in Wonosalam. Third, local and central governments need to introduce the potential of Wonosalam as a tourist destination that has a biodiversity appeal by developing place storytelling in the footsteps of Alfred Russel Wallace.

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