

Ham Rong Proposed Cultural and Historical Site

Alternative site name(s)

Ham Rong-Thanh Hoa

Province(s)

Thanh Hoa

Status

Proposed

Management board established

Yes

Latitude

19°50'N

Longitude

105°48'E

Bio-unit

05c - North Annam



Conservation status

Ham Rong proposed cultural and historical site is not included on any government decision regarding the Special-use Forests network (MARD 1997). However, according to Thanh Hoa Provincial FPD (2000), an investment plan was prepared for Ham Rong in 1994, which proposed establishing a 226 ha cultural and historical site. This investment plan was approved by the former Ministry of Forestry on 18 March 1994, by Official Letter No. 53/KH-LN, and by Thanh Hoa Provincial People's Committee on 25 January 1995, by Decision No. 72/NN-UBTH. A management board for the site was established on 26 February 1995, following Decision No. 675/NN-UBTH of Thanh Hoa Provincial People's Committee. The site is currently under the management of Thanh Hoa City People's Committee (Thanh Hoa Provincial FPD 2000).

Topography and hydrology

Ham Rong proposed cultural and historical site is located in Dong Son district and Thanh Hoa city, on the banks of the Ma river. In English, Ham Rong means "dragon's jaws". The name refers to a range of limestone hills on the western side of the Ma river, 4 km north of Thanh Hoa city, which is thought to be shaped like a dragon's body. The limestone hills

contain several large caves. The elevation of the site ranges from sea level to c.100 m.

Biodiversity value

The main habitat type at Ham Rong proposed cultural and historical site is limestone karst without forest. There is very little natural forest remaining at the site, and the site is thought to support low levels of biodiversity.

Conservation issues

Ham Rong cultural and historical site has five members of staff (Thanh Hoa Provincial FPD 2000). However, the site is situated in an area of high human population density and has been exposed to high levels of human impact for many years. As a result of human activities, the natural forest cover of the site has been largely lost. Thanh Hoa Provincial FPD (2000) identify the major threats to biodiversity to be illegal exploitation of forest products and forest fire. Due to the small area and low biodiversity value of the site, and the high levels of human impact, the site can be considered to be of little or no importance for conservation.

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Other documented values

Ham Rong proposed cultural and historical site is an established destination for domestic tourists. There are several features of the site that are of interest to visitors. Firstly, there are a number of caves at the site, which contain beautiful formations of stalagmites and stalactites. Secondly, there are several temples in the hills. Thirdly, the Ham Rong bridge, which spans the Ma river, achieved fame during the American War, when more than 70 US aircraft were shot down trying to destroy the heavily defended bridge (Dodd and Lewis 1996).

Related projects

The construction of a new bridge to carry National Highway 1 across the Ma river has resulted in some disturbance to the site.

Literature sources

Dodd, J. and Lewis, M. (1996) Vietnam: the rough guide. London: Rough Guides.

Hong Nhung (1999) The dragon's jaws. Vietnam Cultural Window 16: 20-21.

Thanh Hoa Provincial FPD (2000) [FPD questionnaire]. Thanh Hoa: Thanh Hoa Provincial Forest Protection Department. In Vietnamese.

Vietnam News (2000) Ma river bridge marks latest engineering feat by VN builders. Vietnam News 7 July 2000.

Vietnam News (2000) PM opens new bridge that will spur Thanh Hoa growth. Vietnam News 10 July 2000.