

2. Study Area

2.1 Location and Boundary

Phitsanulok is located 377 kilometers north of Bangkok. Phitsanulok occupies an area of approximately 10,815,854 square kilometers (km²) or 6,759,909 Rais (1 Rai = 1,600 square meters) accumulated as 6.37% of the total areas of the Lower Northern region of Thailand or accumulated as 2.1% of the total areas of Thailand. Phitsanulok is surrounded by various provinces indicated as follows;

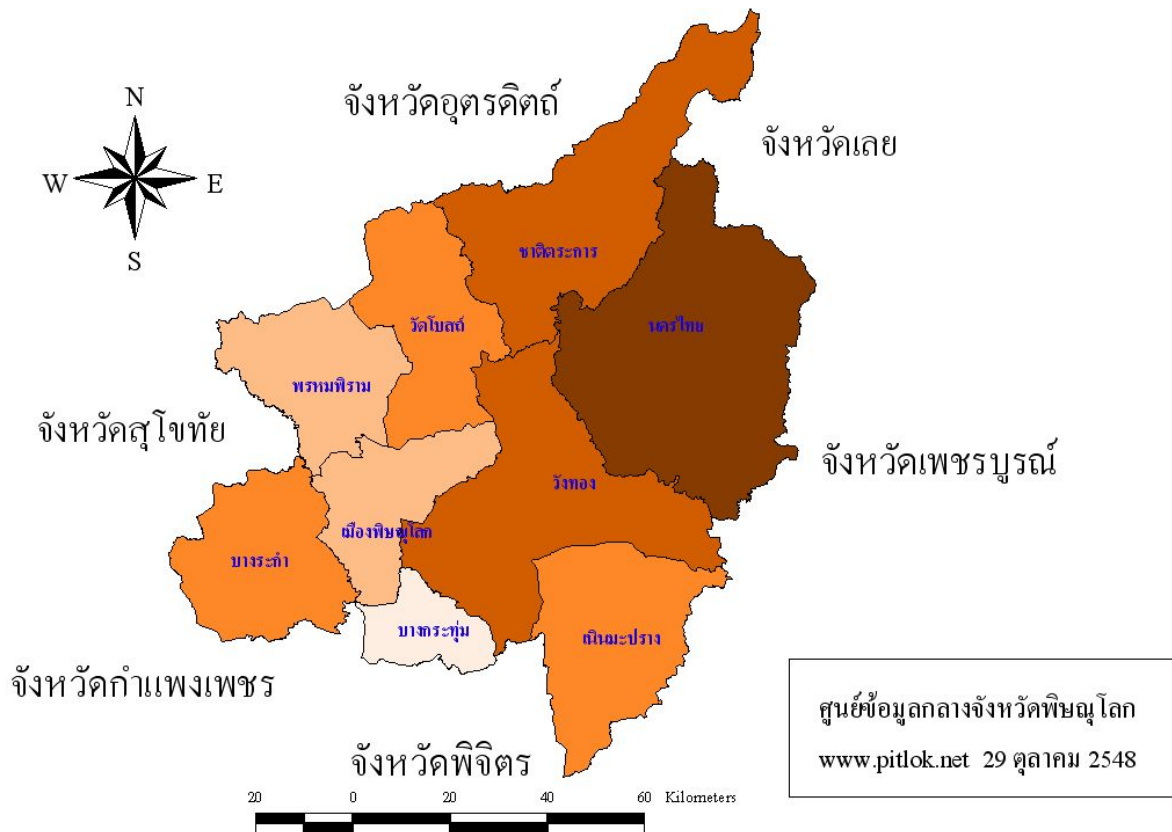


Figure 2.1 Phitsanulok neighboring provinces

Source: <http://www.pitlok.net/images/stories/image/pl2.jpg>

The North:	Connected to Nam-Pard District, Uttaradit Province, and Lao.
The South:	Connected to Muang District, and Sam-Ngarm District of Phichit Province.
The East:	Connected to Loam-Kao of Petchaboon Province, and Darn-Sai District of Loei Province.
The West:	Connected to Sri-Sam-Rong District of Sukhothai Province, and Pran-Kra-Tai District of Kampheng Phet Province.

Phitsanulok Municipality covers the areas of 18.26 square kilometers (km²). According the geographical measurement, Phitsanulok is located in the Lower Northern region of Thailand with its borders connected to Sub district Administrative Organizations indicated as follows;

The North:	Connected to Hao-Roa, and Aranyik Sub district Administrative Organizations.
The South:	Connected to Ta-Thong, and Wat-Chan Sub district Administrative Organizations.
The East:	Connected to Aranyik Sub district Administrative Organization.
The West:	Connected to Ta-Thong, and Bann-Klong Sub district Administrative Organizations.

2.2 Geography and Climate

Geographical characteristics of Phitsanulok: In the North and at the Central parts of the city are the high mountainous areas including small plateaus. The high mountainous areas cover the northeast areas of the city including Wang-Thong district, Wat-Bot district, Noeun Ma Prang district, and Chart-tra-karn district. The central areas are the flat grounds. The south areas especially of the Nan and Yom Rivers' Banks which cover Bang Ra Kham district, Muang district, Prom Piram district, and some parts of Wang Thong district are considered the most productive areas to conduct agricultural plantations.

Climate of Phitsanulok province is considered mainly as a hot and humid. The major seasons are as of Thailand's climates; summer, rainy, and winter.

- The Summer: It begins around February and end at around April.
- The Rainy Season: It begins around May and end at around October.
- The Winter: It begins around November and end at around January.

2.3 Administrative Management and Demography

According to the administrative deviation, Phitsanulok province can be divided into 9 major districts, 93 sub-districts, 1,039 villages, 1 city municipal, 12 sub-district municipals, and 89 sub-provincial administrative organizations. The total population of Phitsanulok gaining from the department of provincial administration; The Ministry of Interior in 2003 was 840,970 people; male 415,305, and 425,665 female. The most crowded population area was the City district which included 267,855 families.

2.4 Social Characteristics

2.4.1 Religion, Culture, and Tradition

Most population of Phitsanulok province is Buddhists. It is of 858,040 persons with the total of 225 temples. The Christians are ranked the second with 8,116 persons with the total of 13 churches. The Muslims are ranked the third with 690 persons with 1 mosque. The Brahmans include 408 persons while Hindus, Sikhs, and others include 139 persons, 83 persons, and 401 persons, respectively.

Phitsanulok province has various cultural information centers including a national museum, a private museum, the temple museum, one provincial cultural center, one district cultural center, the cultural provincial senate, 9 district cultural senates, and 4 sub district cultural senates. Phitsanulok province has long historical cultures which become its charms as presented as follows;

- Water-Splashing to the Buddha Jinnaraj Buddha Image: The Buddha Jinnaraj Buddha Image has gained most highly respect from Phitsanulokians and it has long remarkable histories as of the birth of this town. Phitsanulokians conduct the water-splashing to the Buddha Jinnaraj Buddha Image as to ask for good auspicious on Songkran Day which is always being held on 13 – 15 April of every calendar's year.
- The Drum-Stepping Culture: It is the traditional culture which was being done in the history at The Pra Sri Rattana Mahathat Wora Maha Wiharn (Wat Yai) to tell the time to local people.
- The Victory-Flag Ceremony: It is being held every year at the Chang Luang Mountain. People brought different kinds of food to worship the gods and to make merits with the monks in order to ask for the blessings.

2.4.2 Education and Public Health

525 educational institutes are manipulated in Phitsanulok province with 8,104 teachers/lecturers, 146,663 students calculated in the proportion of the teacher/lectures per students as 1:19 by divided in accordance with 2 educational systems as follows;

2.5 Basic Infrastructures

In 2003, Phitsanulok delivered electricity for 613,596 million units per hour with 217,378 electricity users.

In 2003, the capacity of water supply system was 1,130 cm./hour with 19,813 consumers.

In 2003, the postal services scattered all around every districts with the total numbers of 15 post offices delivered the ordinary mails approximately around 10,131,586 mails and parcels, 121,255 express mail services, 71,788 parcels, and 9,517 telegraphs.

For the telephone communication services, there were 21 telephone organizations in 2003 with the services provided for 57,963 users.

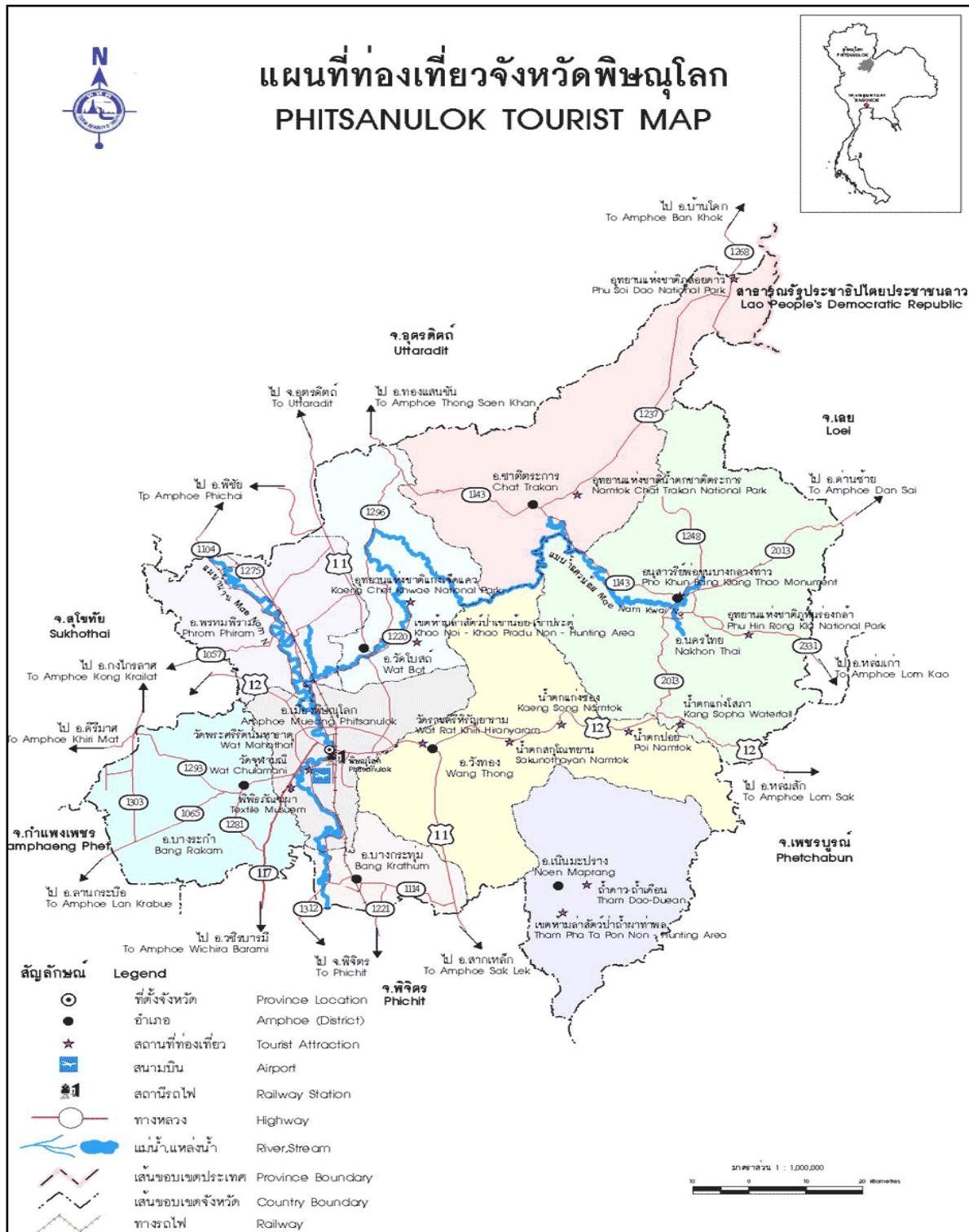
2.6 Economy

Mainly, Phitsanulok is considered as an agricultural city. Agricultural products including cassavas, corns, and beans are being grown widely in the areas. The rice growing is also considered a major farming. The quantities of rice gained are, however, reduced since 2003 due to the spread of plant diseases. Other major careers that inject Phitsanulok's economy are the industry services calculating as 6,260 billion Baht or 18.83 percent of the gross income, and the wholesale businesses are calculated as 5,360 billion baht or 16.12 percent of the gross income.

2.7 Tourist Attractions

Phitsanulok is full of various tourist attractions ranging from the archeological sites, the historical sites, the educational sites, as well as the natural sites. The names and the locations of the sites can be found through the websites, or other publications.

	
ศาลหลักเมือง	พระพุทธรชินราช
	
ศาลสมเด็จพระนเรศวร	วัดราชบูรณะ
	
อุทยานแห่งชาติน้ำตกชาติตระการ	อุทยานแห่งชาติภูหินร่องกล้า
Figure 2.2 Tourist Attractions	



Source: <http://www.budhosp.go.th/phitsanulok.asp>