



**Interview: Bodhi Garrett**  
*"I'm not sure that we can prevent a local fisherman from selling out to a developer. But, we can provide his community with a broader perspective on tourism and development"*  
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**EDITORIAL: Disasters, made by humans, unmade by Humans.**

Throughout August, disasters made world headlines, from overworked and under-maintained planes that kept falling every week, to the Katrina devastation in Louisiana and Mississippi. What is common between all these disasters, apart from the immeasurable pain, is that they caught the responsible parties by "surprise". A "surprise" for those who believe that cost-cutting is the quickest way to efficiency, that planning and monitoring are things of the past, in the era of high-tech, rapid change and the invisible hand of the market, that privatisation of public utilities and national airlines, takeovers and the like will miraculously lead to higher safety and quality for all, that there is no need for real leadership in the era of spin and PR. Preoccupation with bottom lines is so great, that even before the total number of victims is known, toothless journalists/courtesans compete who will be the first to estimate the economic cost involved. As for the human cost, it is heaped on the inevitable scapegoat, who then resigns and occasionally goes to jail, presumably to teach others. Imagine another possible disaster, that would probably again "surprise": an avian flu pandemic. No, rock star / remote control / philanthropy would not be the answer. Ironically, at this time of globalised over-information, we suffer from both ignorance and lack of globalised thinking. We also lack leaders who really (care to) understand. (Only the other day, one said he would rather be in Tahiti...than "sacrifice" himself) But not all is bleak, as there are always exceptions, not to justify the rules, but to change them: please read our Interview with Bodhi Garrett, who masterfully steers the North Andaman Tsunami Relief (NATR) in Thailand.

**Antonis B. Petropoulos**

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*Submissions: We welcome articles from Members. Article guidelines, can be found at: <http://ecoclub.com/news/information.html>*

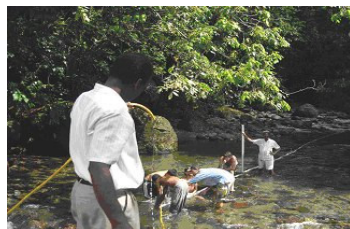
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**CLUB NEWS**

**ECOCLUB.com Ecodge Awards 2005 - Winning Projects Progress Update**

The winning project by [Rainforest Retreat of Karnataka, India](#) which involves the establishment of an association of local small Organic Growers in the nearby village, Galibeedu, run into some delays as unprecedented monsoon rains destroyed the crops of one of the association's founding Members and damage to the local town of Madikeri, which came to standstill for 2 weeks. Still, progress has been made on the legal front, with the Deeds of Partnership prepared and presented to ECOCLUB. A report of what will be purchased with the funds and how the materials will be used and distributed, is also expected shortly.



river adjacent to the health Centre, as seen on the picture on the left. "A good wet time was had by all". The system was screwed together temporarily, and by the end of the day, water was flowing from the end of the pipe. A date for the main installation workshop will be set shortly, and at that time, a concrete intake will be built in the river, and protection for the pipes will be set in place, as the river is prone to occasional flooding and therefore the equipment needs protecting.

The 2nd Winner [3 Rivers, Dominica](#) had proposed the installation of a hydraulic ram pump system in the nearby village health centre. The pump arrived in Dominica on July 28 and on August 6 a preliminary meeting was held at the village health centre, with representatives from the village council, to discuss the installation of the Ram Pump. Concerns were voiced about the future maintenance of the equipment. It was explained to the meeting that the idea was to hold a workshop during installation, so that the members of the community would be equipped with the knowledge to maintain the system. The village council said it would seek a volunteer to take responsibility for the ram pump's upkeep. It was agreed that the following Saturday, the 13th, a demonstration of how the system works would be held, and hopefully a few people would become interested in accepting maintenance responsibility. Meanwhile the village council would ascertain the best day for the main installation workshop. On 13 August, a demonstration of how a Ram Pump works was held in the

<http://ecoclub.com/award.html>

### 🌿 New ECOCLUB Ecolodge in Sabah, Malaysia



We warmly welcome Sukau Rainforest Lodge into ECOCLUB. Sukau, founded by Albert Teo, is a multi-award-winning Ecolodge on Northern Borneo Island, in Malaysia, next to the famous Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary, one of only two places in the world inhabited by ten species of primates, four of which are only found there. Sukau Rainforest Lodge is located on the Kinabatangan River, at 560km long, Malaysia's second longest river, meandering through a flood plain creating numerous ox-bow lakes, an ideal environment for some of the best wildlife and birdwatching in Malaysia and beyond.

🌐 <http://ecoclub.com/sukau>

### 🌿 Community Software Upgrade

During August we implemented an upgrade of our Community (Forum) software. The new platform is user friendlier and offers many facilities, including easier messaging, and new features such as Blogs, Gallery, and RSS feeds. The transition was smooth, without a single day of disruption of service. Visit the new Community at:

🌐 <http://ecoclub.com/c/>

### The ECOCLUB Interview

#### BODHI GARRETT

##### *Bodhi building Ecotourism in Thailand*



Born and raised in Kathmandu, Nepal, which deeply influenced the course of his life, Bodhi Garrett moved to Monterey Peninsula in California when he was seven years old, and went on to study at Berkeley for a B.S. in Environmental Science. While, as he says, “confronting the depressing reality of American mainstream values in 2003”, Bodhi decided to seek his fortune in the wider world, at least until there was “a regime change” back in the USA. After a pilgrimage to Tibet and some time in the Himalayas, he arrived in southern Thailand in November of 2003. At first, he became the project director for a turtle conservation project, but as the all turtles were gone, he joined Golden Buddha Beach Resort, (an ECOCLUB Ecolodge Member subsequently destroyed by the Tsunami), on Phratong island, as the marketing and conservation director. The Tsunami found Bodhi in the US, on a short leave. He promptly returned to set up on January 7 of this year, North Andaman Tsunami Relief (NATR) which has been delivering targeted, community-driven tsunami relief ever since. NATR’s efforts have grown from simple fresh food delivery and short-term income generation into a tightly knit program with over 60 active or completed projects in 12 villages. Their working relationship with these villages pre-dates the tsunami, and allows NATR to recognize and address areas in which tsunami relief efforts are lacking. In the past 6

months, NATR has sponsored a number of livelihood improvement projects, including fishing net replacement, long-tail boat repair, handicraft production (soap and model boats), community gardening, and scholarships to vocational colleges.

### 🌿 *Whose initiative was NATR, and in what ways is it better than the many NGOs set up in the affected countries, after the tsunami disaster?*

NATR was the initiative of several committed individuals who decided to serve the communities on and around Koh Phratong. Before the tsunami, I was working in the North Andaman area at Golden Buddha Beach ecotourism resort. I was lucky enough to be visiting America when the tsunami hit, and I returned to Thailand to find that the resort, and many of my friends, was no longer around. With the support of many kind donors and volunteers, I was able to spearhead the collective effort known as North Andaman Tsunami Relief.

NATR has been very effective in its ability to listen to community needs and respond immediately. This is because our relationship

with the communities in the area predates the tsunami and consequently we are trusted. In addition, our Thai staff members are from the local area and many were directly affected by the tsunami. Community members know that they are able to be open about their changing needs and we will listen.

### 🌿 *What are your personal responsibilities within NATR?*

I am the relief director. I oversee all of our programs, our fundraising and our coalition efforts. We like to say that here at NATR we surf the chaos with as much grace as possible. It is my job to make sure that the surfboard does not break. In addition, I am the manager for our projects in the village of Tung Dap.

### 🌿 *What is your overall evaluation of the results of the relief effort in Southern Thailand? Donor money wasted or well-spent? And are funds still flowing in, or do NGOs increasingly have to*

*compete for the attention of individual donors and larger aid agencies?*

Overall, the relief efforts here in Thailand have been quite impressive – especially when compared with progress in Banda Aceh, Indonesia or the coastal areas of Sri Lanka. The government has done an impressive job of providing necessities for survivors – food, water, and temporary shelter. Unfortunately, beyond necessities, the government has been very focused on helping predominantly tourist areas to recover, and has not been paid much attention to the economic recovery of the area that NATR works in. As a result, the efforts of NGOs have been extremely important in helping people rebuild their livelihoods (fishing boats and nets) and find permanent housing. In addition, psychological and educational services have been provided mainly organizations from the non-profit sector.

The money is still flowing in, although much less than before. While there has been a lot of money, not all of it has been spent well. Many international organizations are resource rich, but information poor. This has led to unwitting support of corruption, and occasional competition for projects. I have been most impressed with those NGOs that have formed strong alliances with local Thai civil society groups.

*☀️ Is a better life for local people emerging through NATR's efforts, and in what respect? How do you measure NATR's performance?*

By working closely with the tsunami-affected peoples, NATR has developed both short- and long-term initiatives that will ultimately enable self-sufficiency. Long-time relationships between NATR staff and the local population have provided the foundation for our ability to move quickly into the villages and link ourselves with their displaced inhabitants. Ultimately, NATR hopes to empower the local communities through a continuous cycle of needs assessment and project developments that meet those needs in a way that will allow them to retain autonomy.

NATR's success is measured by the degree to which our projects enable communities to do what they want. 'Did the project accomplish what it set out to do? Did it build capacity within the community to address similar problems in the future? Did it distribute resources equally and avoid promoting dependence on external assistance?' These are the questions we ask when evaluating the success of a project.

Is a better life emerging for these communities? A better life can only be built by the communities themselves, but I believe that NATR is helping local villagers to become empowered in creating a sustainable future for their communities.

*☀️ As a result of the tsunami, tourism developers are eyeing previously undeveloped areas, further north the Andaman coast. How is NATR preparing the villagers about this? In effect, would you and could you prevent a local fisherman selling out to a developer?*

I'm not sure that we can prevent a local fisherman from selling out to a developer. But, we can provide his community with a broader perspective on tourism and development, and provide him with tools to benefit from tourism without selling his land. At that point, it is really the fisherman's decision. So, our idea is to provide concrete benefit and empowerment to local communities that enable them to make informed choices.

*☀️ What is the main motive of your volunteers? Romanticism and altruism, or free training as a consultant, and a good paragraph in a CV? Does motive matter for you as long as the job gets done?*

Good questions. The motivation of a volunteer is the most important aspect of their ability to serve effectively. Without a pure intention, it is very difficult to put one's own needs aside and help selflessly. Many of our volunteers are here for just this reason.

Coming from a privileged and wealthy society has both benefits and responsibilities, and NATR is a vehicle to help fulfil the responsibilities. In the end, it will probably look good on a resume, and romanticism is surely part of the motivation, but NATR strives to provide a structure by which people can channel this into service. Also, we work ridiculously hard – this is a function of NATR's commitment to our volunteers and staff as human beings. We love and support and each other, and it is our common vision and friendship that makes us an effective team.

*☀️ What is your evaluation of the laws for tourism development in your part of Thailand, post-tsunami, better / worse, same? At the local level, is NATR exerting any influence for or against the implementation of these laws?*

The laws for tourism development in our part of Thailand are generally weak, as they are across the country. To be more accurate, the laws themselves are well written and ambitious, but their enforcement is sporadic and weak. On the local level, NATR is participating in the planning process for the island of Koh Phratong – we are attending high-level meetings and lobbying local authorities as much as possible. Since these meetings are usually held in the provincial capital, villagers are often excluded. NATR has been shuttling villagers to these meetings to make sure that development plans reflect the needs of local communities (who are small resource users dependent on the bounty of nature).

In the end, though, we must face the fact that we are up against big developers with big money. Therefore, we believe that economic incentives towards positive tourism development are the best way forward. Occasionally, laws can set a precedent and provide motivation towards a more sustainable future. Usually, however, laws reflect the current reality. As such, we must create an economically viable, socially profitable, situation before we can expect it to be supported by the law.

*☀️ It is commonplace nowadays to that an NGO has to work "with the local community". But who is really the local community in the case of the villages you are working with, How is decision-making taking place in the community. Are there elected leaders, do people vote seeking a majority, a consensus emerges when all have agreed, or are elders taking the decisions. Do you take any steps not to upset the local decision-making traditions, or you believe they should be modernised?*

I believe that all decision-making processes are inherently susceptible to corruption and inequality, be they modern or traditional. What we see in the villages is that some communities have a common voice, and others are divided. This is a function of whether local leadership seeks to serve only their families, or if they truly care about the village. In general, there is a balance of power between the chief (who retains his position for life) and the Obataw (who is elected every 2 years).

As for NATR's process – we strive to work with all levels of power in a village. If a project caters to the chief's needs, it will fail from a lack common interest. If a project ignores the chief's desire for recognition, it will be hampered from above. Thus, we make sure to listen to everybody, but we generally place more emphasis on serving the under-represented groups – women and poor families.

*☀️ Do you worry at all about introducing inequality within the communities through better education and cultivation of entrepreneurial skill. And what about the villages that you are unable to assist, is this causing any envy?*

When we offer a program or educational opportunity to a village, we consider equity issues as far as possible by informing all community members during village meetings. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that some people will be keen to take up new opportunities, which may ultimately generate them a higher income, while others would prefer to focus again on the livelihood that they

had before the tsunami. Our philosophy is essentially to offer people choices and support them in whatever livelihood they choose, providing it is environmentally and socially sustainable. By coordinating closely with other organizations, we are able to monitor whether all villages are being assisted with educational opportunities and we are able to direct funding to communities that seem to be neglected in any way.

*🌀 From your perspective as recipient and user of relief funds, what really made people offer their support? Humanitarian feelings of solidarity, solidarity to western tourists, or guilt for third world misery?*

Initially, most of the funding that NATR received was from people with personal links with the area who genuinely wanted to help friends and families that they knew. The fact that Thailand has received so much private funding, compared to other tsunami-affected countries, also seems to be because people who have visited Thailand love and respect the way in which they have been welcomed as tourists, and genuinely want to help. Subsequently, we have received funding through international service agencies and these large sums seem to have been generated because people could not believe the scale of this natural disaster. Private individuals seem far less willing to give money to a disaster that is generated directly through human mismanagement.

*🌀 Your project program for these villages is very worthwhile, ambitious and exhaustive. One cannot help wondering, however, where is the local government?*

Local government has been active in the area in many respects, such as providing housing, replacing boats and providing educational support for orphans. However, many of the most disadvantaged communities do not have the official paperwork to show they owned land or boats, or even ID cards. These are the groups that donor organizations are able to help, as well as assisting people who somehow slip through the nets of the inevitable government bureaucracy.

*🌀 After reviewing some of your projects, it seems NATR has decided, assumed under consultation with the local people, that sustainable tourism and arts & crafts production is a future model of these villages, and you are planning all this with determination, western efficiency and funding. Is there a chance that tourism will get out of hand and those local villagers, who do not benefit, will suddenly decide they were better off as poor fishermen without outside attention?*

Many community members have visited places like Phuket, Koh Samui and Khao Lak and can see the potential pitfalls of uncontrolled tourism development in terms of both cultural and environmental degradation. Therefore, the tourism model that we are developing together with the villages is community-based and they can opt in or out at any stage. We are also collaborating with a Thai NGO who has long experience in building CBT initiatives and is aware of both the advantages and disadvantages. If tourism development is truly to be both sustainable and empowering, it must be the choice and responsibility of the villagers themselves to create

a positive future. NATR aims to facilitate a space in which communities can explore their relationship to the natural environment and the long-term implications of tourism while also acquiring concrete skills and professional assistance to ensure that their visions work for the benefit of the majority.

*🌀 What measures are you taking so as not to make villagers dependant on NATR and other outside aid?*

NATR will measure its true success by its ability to pull out completely from the projects in which we are currently involved – this is our modus operandi and underlies all our planning.

*🌀 From these 8 months of everyday hard relief work, what is the most valuable lesson you have learned?*

Many of NATR's staff and supporters lost friends of family in the tsunami. Our daily work is full of constant reminders of those that died, and the wave that took them. To be sure, this can be painful, but there are also positive aspects of having to face our loss each and every day. Often, people heal through self-nurturing and disengagement from the more troubling aspects of life. Here at NATR, we are exploring another way of healing – through service. By serving those that share in our losses, we are able to mitigate the suffering within ourselves. In choosing to help others to heal, there is an inevitable healing process within – a subtle transformation of despair into acceptance and then hope. We are discovering together that working for the greater good can transform sobs of grief into tears of compassion and lighten a heavy heart.

So, to summarize, I have learned that service is good for the soul, but only if done with wisdom and discretion.

*🌀 Is there anything else you would like to say to our readers, perhaps about your current needs in funding and volunteers?*

We have an extremely dedicated team of Thai staff and volunteers at the moment. The only position we need to replace in the near future is that of position of financial manager, ie someone with familiarity with accounts. In terms of funding, we are really looking for large-scale funding for our Community Education, Vocational Training, and ACE Tourism Program. If any of your readers would like to support this, we would be very happy to communicate with them.

*🌀 Thank you very much.*

● For more details, please contact:

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NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

**Greece:** Zante Feast presented together with Pittsburgh Slow Food convivium an evening of Zakynthian foods and a presentation about sustainability on the island and in Greece. Sotiris Kitrilakis, Zante Feast's Director is also presenting a taste workshop of Zakynthian goat's milk cheeses that are endangered, Slow Food Cheese is also being held in Bra Italy from 16-19 September, 2005

● <http://www.zante-feast.org>

**Spain: Mas Lluerna** hosted two ten day-long sustainable living workshops at their Farm in August including presentations on Organic Agriculture, Sustainable Architecture, and Biodiesel

● <http://ecoclub.com/lluerna>



**Saba, Netherlands Antilles:** Angelika Hartleib, Director of **El Momo** reports that the neighbouring island of St. Maarten unfortunately decided to go through with the creation of a Dolphinarium. Developers have even promised an Environment fund, however this may be just a smoke screen. A letter was sent to the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) from all the nature foundations of St Maarten to protest this development. On the positive side, Radisson Seven Seas recently removed Dolphinarium from their shore excursion options.



Meanwhile, Saba, still happy without a Dolphinarium, is preparing for the annual Sea & Learn festival, details at:

● [www.seaandlearn.org](http://www.seaandlearn.org)

**Ecuador: Casa Mojanda** was selected for inclusion in The Green List, Conde Nasts' "11th Annual Tribute to Ecotourism's Finest". Casa Mojanda have also just opened a community library for both children and adults and features computers with great educational software, and continues to work in the leadership of the Mojanda Lakes bi-county committee to protect many thousands of hectares of paramo and the Mojanda lakes that are the main watershed of the area.

● More details: [Casa Mojanda](http://www.casamojanda.com)

Meanwhile, **Black Sheep Inn** is one of the three finalists in the Conservation category of the Sustainable Tourism Awards, organised by the Smithsonian Magazine and Tourism Cares for Tomorrow. The judges selected Black Sheep Inn for "making a significant contribution to protecting and enhancing their natural environment through an innovative approach to travel and tourism". In particular, the judges noted "Black Sheep Inn owners' strong commitment to the community, exemplified by diverse projects such as school assistance, ancillary business development and waste management." The winner will be determined by voting.

● Support BSI by voting at <http://www.sustainabletourismawards.com/vote.htm>

NEW PUBLICATIONS

**"Women, Forests and Plantations. The Gender Dimension"**

Publisher: World Rainforest Movement Uruguay,

Argues that the encroachment of global commerce and "development" projects into the forests has not been gender neutral and has had a double and differentiated impact on women, depriving them of their traditional rights to and link with the forests while reinforcing a patriarchal society model.

● Free copies available to Non Governmental Organizations and Indigenous Peoples Organizations, from WRM International Secretariat at: [bookswrm@wrm.org.uy](mailto:bookswrm@wrm.org.uy) and send your postal address. For other organizations or institutions its cost is US\$ 10 (shipment included).

**Protected Areas / In-Situ Conservation**

A special edition of the Convention on Biological Diversity News entitled: "Protected areas for achieving biodiversity targets."

● Download at: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/publications/news-pa-supplement-en.pdf>

**RURAL TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:**

Published by Ucodep and Movimondo

Good background material on Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Morocco and Yemen.

● Download at: [http://www.rural-tourism.it/attivita/Pubbli\\_PDF\\_Executive\\_4Lingue/turismo-ING.pdf](http://www.rural-tourism.it/attivita/Pubbli_PDF_Executive_4Lingue/turismo-ING.pdf)

**Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide for Policy Makers**

Published by UNEP & WTO

A two years research on approaches and tools for the development and implementation of sustainable tourism policies that have demonstrated to be effective in practice. The research addressed the development and the implementation of sustainable tourism policies, strategies and tools to create the appropriate environment for the development of sustainable tourism activities. The Guide presents a comprehensive set of instruments, ranging from planning regulations to economic instruments and the application of certification and indicators, sets out 12 aims for sustainable tourism and their implications for policy, and describes the collaborative structures and strategies that are needed at a national and local level. It also identifies ways to influence the development and operation of tourism enterprises and the activities of tourists.

● Download at: <http://www.unep.fr/pc/tourism/library/A%20Guide%20for%20Policy%20Makers.htm>

**ECO EVENTS – THIS MONTH**

Plan ahead by checking the full listings at <http://www.ecoclub.com/events>

**1st National Conference on Ecotourism – USA**  
**September 14-16, Bar Harbor, Maine**

The International Ecotourism Society, together with the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce, is sponsoring this first-ever national conference on the current status and future potential of ecotourism in the USA.

● <http://www.ecotourism.org>

**Asia Pro-Ecotourism Conference – Malaysia**  
**September 26-28, Bangunan Perak Darul Ridzuan**

Building partnerships and exchanging best practices and know-how for Sustainable Development. Organised by EuropeAid and the Malaysia Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

● <http://www.ecotourism-eum.com/htm/conference-program.htm>

**International workshop - 'Ecotourism labelling, a route to sustainable rural development' – Malmoe- Sweden**  
**September 22-23**

The aim of this workshop is to promote the exchange of experience in ecotourism labelling around Europe. The workshop will cover among other the experience gained during the establishment and operation of the Swedish ecotourism labelling system Nature's Best, the development of the a label in Romania and efforts to establish eco-labelling systems in Hungary and Greece. The workshop also aims to create networking opportunities for future partnerships and learn how to access available European tools for green rural tourism development and marketing. The International Workshop marks the completion of the Eco-Route project which started in 2003. Its aims have been to systematically prepare local communities' members in the participating pilot regions for the introduction of a system of quality assurance in ecotourism servicing. To learn more about the project please visit ● [www.ecoroute.org](http://www.ecoroute.org) or email [eco-route@annamartinez.info](mailto:eco-route@annamartinez.info)

**IIPT Summit – Pattaya, Thailand**  
**October 2-5**

**3rd Global Summit on  
 Peace through Tourism**

Organised by the International Peace through Tourism with the support of the Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) and the World Tourism Organisation (WTO). The Summit's Theme is "One Earth One Family: Travel and Tourism - Serving a Higher Purpose" and the Aim is to develop a 21st Century Agenda for Peace through Tourism. The Summit will provide a forum for leading government, industry, donor agency, and NGO decision makers, as well as leading educators, researchers, professionals and practitioners, to debate and reach consensus on the contribution of the world's largest industry to the global issues of our time, including a coordinated and sustained travel industry response to redevelopment and revitalization of tsunami affected countries Poverty reduction; Healing the wounds of conflict & preventing conflict ; Ecological Enhancement and Preservation of Biodiversity In addition to Plenary Sessions featuring world leaders and travel industry statesmen, Concurrent Sessions will include case studies of Success Stories and Models of Best Practice.

● <http://www.iipt.org/3rdglobalsummit/>

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If you are organising an ecotourism-related Trade Show, Conference or Workshop please Request a Free Event Listing at <http://www.ecoclub.com/listevent.html>