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Ariane Janér: “The construction of big resorts or fast growing tourism destinations in previously sparsely inhabited areas can directly lead to "favelization" of the surrounding areas” Interview on page 4



Director's Cut



In early March I attended the sprawling (10,856 companies, 183 countries) ITB Exhibition in a freezing but beautiful Berlin. I had the pleasure of meeting among others, our Member Ms Annette Monreal of Green Discovery Laos at the Laos PDR Stand at ITB (pictured left), Mr Ouseph Thomas of our Ecolodge Members TourIndia, and Ms Ariane Janér of EcoBrasil, the Brazilian Ecotourism Society, an interesting interview with whom you can read on page 3. For the first time ITB had a separate hall, or rather part thereof, allocated to “ECOtourism” organisations. The benefits of having such a separate section bundled with adventure tourism etc were not all that evident as I had the impression that not too many people were venturing into this separate segment. Philosophically, it is also wrong, as Ecotourism is neither a niche, nor a ‘holier than thou’ tourism, so imho it should be in there with the rest. /// Defeating the labyrinth-like architecture of the exhibition, I also managed to find my way to an informative UNWTO Workshop, opened by UNWTO’s Secretary General Mr. Francesco Frangialli, where the launch of the Sustainable Tourism for the Elimination of Poverty (ST-EP) Foundation was announced with various interesting case studies on poverty alleviation. /// Some notable developments since our last issue, and indeed as ‘no one is a prophet in his own land’, included ECOCLUB SA being accepted as a Member of the Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises (SETE), which unites the most influential tourism enterprises in Greece and also participating in the 1st joint meeting / luncheon between the said Association and the Standing Committee on Production & Trade Committee of the Greek Parliament, in Athens. Our website was also recognised by the leading UK daily, The Independent as a ‘Starting point for Ethical Travel’ in Greece. /// But more importantly, in these tense times, it was particularly refreshing to learn that our Business Members Intrepid Travel, have launched **tours** to Iran (details below). Hopefully this will universally be accepted one day as the preferred way of entering a foreign country... *Antonis B. Petropoulos*



ECOCLUB.com Earthday Photo Competition – The winner



To celebrate the launch of our new Gallery and Earth Day 2006 (March 20) we held the 1st ECOCLUB.com Earth Day Photo Competition. From 13 finalist photos posted in the ECOCLUB.com Online Gallery, our Members voted the entry entitled "When Nature Calls" by

Mr Siddhartha Raj Pradhan of New Delhi, India as the Best Picture! *Winning entry and commentary below:*

"When Nature Calls: The photo depicts me (on the pot!!) trying to explain the concept of a "dry-pit toilet" and its advantages to local school children from a lovely little village called Sirasu, approx.4 km. upstream from where we are based in Rishikesh, Uttaranchal (India). A dry pit toilet is probably the best method of collection for human waste in areas devoid of proper sewer systems. Delivery of human waste to its final resting place is done by gravity. The rate of decomposition is accelerated due to the mix of the sand with lime/ash and does not allow for any waste to penetrate the water table."

Siddhartha Raj Pradhan

The winning prize is a 5lt tin of highest quality Organic Olive Oil, produced by a cooperative in Greece, and selected by the ECOCLUB.com Shop <http://ecoclub.com/shop>

► <http://www.ecoclub.com/gallery>

ECOCLUB, Year 6, Issue 79, March-April 2006:

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ECOCLUB.com Ecodge Awards 2006 – Call for proposals

Learning from, and building on the success of the past two annual ECOCLUB.com Ecodge Awards we are now calling for applications for our 2006 Awards. This year, the Awards aim to fund / co-fund three projects that are initiated, conducted and completed by ECOCLUB.com Ecodge Members from 15 March 2006 until 31 December 2006. Winning projects must be initiated by August 15, 2006 at the latest and be completed by December 31, 2006 at the latest.

The 2006 Awards are open to all active ECOCLUB Ecodge Members that are full and active Members on May 25, 2006. Past winners are eligible, however they must not re-submit the same project. The total Award fund this year has been raised to Euros 2,000 (approx USD 2,400). Three prizes will be awarded (1st, 2nd, 3rd) according to number of votes received. 1st winner will receive Euros 850, 2nd winner will receive Euros 650, 3rd winner Euros 500.

The first two project proposals have been received, summaries as follows:

[The Boat Landing Guesthouse](#) (Laos) proposal is a “Network Building Study Tour”. Details: “Strong relationships between guides, company staff and villagers is key to running a successful community-based business, to building understanding and to lowering impacts of tourism. We will initiate a team building/networking building process by taking the guides and villagers on a study tour to another community-based tour program to learn from their experiences.”

► <http://ecoclub.com/theboatlanding>

[The Eco Hotel Uxlabil Atitlan](#) (Guatemala) proposal is the “Rescue of Fishermen's Small Boats”. Details: “Cayucos –fishermen small boats- are disappearing. Uxlabil proposes to improve 30 old and unsafe cayucos, to preserve a Lake Atitlan tradition and an income source.

► <http://ecoclub.com/uxlabil>

The full details are available to Members at a special forum at the ECOCLUB.com Community at

► <http://www.ecoclub.com/c/index.php?showforum=21>

ECOCLUB.com Member News

Belize - Toledo Ecotourism Association report on the Cortez Dance:



Dance is an important part of Mayan culture and is one way of maintaining ties to the past. Through dance a story is told. Performers dress in colourful costumes and are accompanied by singers and musicians.

During Easter, traditional dances such as the Cortez Dance are performed. The Cortez Dance is described as an epic drama which portrays the coming of Christianity to the Mayas. The performers use drums, flutes, and rattles to dramatize the combined forces of the church and army during the European conquest. The dance is named after Hernan Cortez, Conqueror of the Aztec Empire (1519-1521). It is performed for 3 days during Easter, and this year it was held between April 13 – 16. Our next event is the ‘Cultural Revival’, a burn sacrifice and dance, on June 4-6.

► <http://ecoclub.com/toledo>

Cambodia - Yaklom Hill Lodge report on their 2005 progress:

Mid November 2005 marked the 3rd anniversary of Yaklom Hill Lodge’s operation. 2005 also saw our place implement various efforts in working within the lodge staff, and with concerned stakeholders in carrying out activities in an eco way. The following are summary of what we did, although there are still many other activities that we cannot include in this report. We also take this opportunity to present the fact/figures about Yaklom Hill Lodge – those we believe and are certain that contribute to the betterment of environment conservation.

1. Environment conservation :

- 1.1 Tree and Forest conservation : Of the lodge approximately 10 hectare area, more than 90 per cent is devoted to retaining and keeping the tree and forest areas. All native tree species are allowed to grow –some species that locals consider as no value- and some others tree species were also introduced in the lodge areas. This forest and tree canopies have proved to be the best habitat for many bird species and some small wildlife. Some representatives of native tree species are labelled with the name sign in local Cambodian language as well as the scientific name and English common name where possible. This we believe will help provide information to guests and local alike.
- 1.2 Bird and wildlife conservation : With the help of our guests, we have now sighted more than 50 species of birds –most believed to be resident or regular visitors of the lodge forest/tree- According to our sighting and trace identification, there are at least 10 species of small wildlife living in the lodge areas. All forms of hunting and trapping are banned in the lodge areas. This communications have been made within the staff as well as to the visitors.

- 1.3 Maximizing the use of materials while minimizing the garbage to environment: Yaklom Hill Lodge seriously takes the garbage issue in its operation. Any reusable papers will be used such as writing on both sides, or newspaper used in wrapping guests valuables for the safety box, and so on. We think that this will help slow down the process of this garbage going to environment. In addition, all recyclable garbage (bottle, can, scrap metal, disposed batteries, etc) will be sold to local scrap collectors. This not only reduces a huge amount of garbage to environment, but also generates income for the operation.
- 1.4 The use of clean power—solar power: As the lodge is located outside the public power grid, Yaklom Hill Lodge relies on power from its generator only from 6-9 pm, and the rest on our small solar power system. The collective 550 watt panels, when fully charged, can produce power up to 2220 watt-hour per day (or 810 kw-hour per year) for use.
2. **Support to local community project:** Yaklom Hill Lodge is currently working with the 2 participating villages –both are of Kreung ethnic group- in supporting their rice bank scheme. 2005 saw the lodge contribute more than 300 kg of paddy to the rice bank of both villages.
3. **Support to local economy through the visit of guests and use of local products:** Our guests are encouraged to buy local handicraft products when visiting local communities. Income generation may also come in the form of lodging fee to the host families for guests who make homestay in the village. Hiring the villagers for guiding the trek is also another income for locals. The lodge itself also buy local handicraft products for its own decoration as well as for sale in its small handicraft shop.
4. **Cultural Exchange through respecting local culture:** All of our guests who intend to make village visit are always briefed to behave properly when entering the villages. The information regarding this is also made available in our information booklet “What to do and what to see in Ratanakiri” during guest registration and arrangement of excursion. The information is also made available to travel agent and will likely send their clients to Ratanakiri and stay at the lodge. We believe that this preparation will help improve understanding/orientation for guests before their decision to visit Ratanakiri and thus having their visit here more meaningful and enjoyable without having cultural shock for both parties—villager vs. guests. We also encourage our guests to keep their mind open and have a 2-way communication with the villagers-especially with the host families during their homestay. This is the best way in cultural exchange.

► <http://ecoclub.com/yaklom>

Nicaragua: Summer Butterfly Festival at Domitila

Domitila Private Wildlife Reserve is pleased to announce its “Butterfly Festival in the Nicaraguan Dry Tropical Forest” activity. This activity will be conducted by leading entomologist Jean Michael Maes Ph.D., Entomology Museum Director, Leon, Nicaragua and by Eric Van Den Berghe Ph.D., Science and Biology Dean, Ave Maria College, San Marcos, Nicaragua.

Location: Domitila Wildlife Reserve:

Number of days: 7 days, 6 nights

Participants: 4 persons minimum, 8 persons maximum.

Dates: June 15 - June 21, 2006 June 30 - July 6, 2006 July 13 - July 19, 2006 July 28 - August 3, 2006 August 8 - August 15, 2006.

Price per person: ECOCLUB.com Members US\$ 960, Non-members US\$1,200

Price includes: Round trip transportation from Managua International Airport to Domitila • Entrance fee to the Reserve • 6 nights in double private room, with private bathroom and shower • All meals • All natural drinks • All hikes guided by biologist • Bilingual biologist guides (French, Spanish, English, German) • Transportation to wetlands and fresh water lagoon excursions • Natural snack for excursions • Bottled water for all hikes and excursions • Native guides • Domitila Butterflies list • Domitila and regional Butterflies plate • Nightly gathering lead by entomologists to discuss the different butterflies species observed during the day.

Not included: Soft drinks and alcoholic beverages.

For reservations: Contact us 60 days before the date of your group arrival.

For confirmations: We require 50% of the total payment 40 days prior your group arrival date. The 50% balance must be paid 15 days before your group arrival.

To Book: Please use the on-line form at <http://ecoclub.com/forms/ecp088.html>

► <http://ecoclub.com/domitila>

Australia: Intrepid Travel report on their new Iran tours:

With a rich and varied culture, incredible Islamic architecture, fascinating ethnic groups, beautiful mountain and desert scenery and remarkable history, Iran would have to be one of the most alluring and mysterious destinations in the Middle East.

Departing from Tehran, Intrepid's Iran Adventure explores Esfahan, and the ancient city of Darius the Great, Persepolis.

Travellers trek through the majestic Alborz Mountains, enjoy a sunset camel ride, relax in the wonderfully restored teahouses in

Shiraz and Kashan and meander through the ancient mud brick town of Yazd. But the greatest highlight for travellers will be a night spent with the Qalaqais nomads of the harsh Iranian plateau, to experience nomadic life through herding their animals, tending to the fields and perhaps helping with the cooking, sharing a meal and participating in traditional nomad dancing and singing.

► <http://www.intrepidtravel.com>

For access to daily updated ecotourism headlines from around the world, events, jobs and business opportunities please join at <http://www.ecoclub.com/join.html>

Members, go to: <http://www.ecoclub.com/c>

THE ECOCLUB INTERVIEW

Ariane Janér

Brazil Sustainable Tourism Program, Instituto de Hospitalidade & EcoBrasil



Ariane Janér is a Dutch zoologist (MSc Leiden) with a degree in business administration (MBA Delft), who has been living in Brazil since 1988 and working in the area of sustainable development since 1991. She has consulted on many ecotourism projects in Brazil and also helps develop practical training courses. Ariane builds on her experience in marketing and finance acquired through a career at Royal Dutch Shell, as a freelance consumer market researcher for Euromonitor, as a financial analyst for Baxter Straub and as owner/director of an ecotourism operator. She is at present responsible for the marketing activities of the Brazil Sustainable Tourism Program (PCTS www.pcts.org.br) coordinated by the Instituto de Hospitalidade (www.hospitalidade.org.br) She is one of the co-founders and still actively involved with EcoBrasil (www.ecobrasil.org.br), the Brazilian Ecotourism Society. Ms Janér can be reached at ariane@ecobrasil.org.br

Instituto de Hospitalidade (IH) is a national, non-profit, non-government organization dedicated to the promotion of sustainable tourism as a tool to promote economic and social development, cultural diversity, and the preservation of our biodiversity. The Institute pursues a variety of projects in partnership with Brazilian, international and multilateral organizations that

specialize in educational, labour, cultural, environmental and tourism industry endeavors. Launched in 1997 with support from 32 corporate, governmental and Third Sector organizations, and established in Salvador (Bahia), Brazil, IH has developed, implemented and managed dozens of successful projects throughout Brazil. EcoBrasil was founded in 1993 with a vision for helping develop Brazil as a reliable destination for ecotourism through the exchange of information and developing and participating in innovative projects. Since then EcoBrasil has been involved in many initiatives in Brasil, most recently the Best Practices in Ecotourism Project, created in partnership with Funbio.

The Interview follows:

- ☼ *Prospective eco-sensitive visitors to Brazil grew up hearing sad stories about the destruction of the Brazilian rainforest, the plight of the indigenous and the murder of concerned activists. Can you or the government promise to ecotourists, that beyond decrees to expand National Parks and create more protected areas that the situation has really changed on the ground, in recent years?*

No, I think nobody can promise that. There are **complex forces** at play in the destruction and protection of the Amazon. I can point to promising examples like Mamiraua in the Amazon basin (a large scale NGO led project with active community participation), Cristalino Jungle Lodge in the Southern Amazon (private enterprise inspiring government) or ARPA - Amazon Protected Areas Project (a public-private/NGO partnership) and small community initiatives, but unfortunately they are not enough.

We should remember that economic success is measured in GDP and **GDP does not differentiate if you generate income by destroying your natural capital** or if you generate income by earning "interest" on your natural capital. With China as the next "thirsty" elephant at the world's table, even more forest in the transition zones between the water rich Cerrado and the Amazon is cleared for soy plantations, pushing smaller landowners further inside the Amazon. And Biodiesel, far from being a miracle solution to energy problems, will also stimulate further land clearance.

Unfortunately, **the economic contribution of successful ecotourism is very small compared to international pressures for more resources** to fuel the world economy. Unfortunate indeed as when you clear the Amazon you will change rainfall patterns

in an area that will go from Argentina to the Southern United States. Some scientists have already pointed out that it was no coincidence that there was a record hurricane season in the Caribbean and a record drought in the Amazon last year

Don't get me wrong, **locally ecotourism can have tremendous impact**, but there are just not enough ecotourists to save the Amazon. What is needed for saving the Amazon is the recognition of the ecosystem value of the forest standing and a effective compensation system to make sure that the forest remains intact. For this a paradigm shift is needed in the way the world measures economic progress.

And, of course, we should all be starting to eat less meat so our ecological footprint reduces.

☼ *In a 2004 speech Brazilian President Lula stated that sustainable tourism "can lift the self-esteem of communities when they see the value to others of their heritage, culture and way of life". But are there enough tours that really show tourists the real heritage, culture and way of life / standard of living of Brazilian communities, or do tourists still see (& want to see) the glossy Brazil? And how satisfied are you with national tourism policy towards sustainable tourism?*

Supply usually follows demand. There are enough tours in Brazil for people who want to go further inside the country and experience an authentic Brazil. However, demand is very small still and some of the suppliers offering special interest tourism are struggling to make ends meet.

Sun & sea is still the dominating segment of tourism the world over, and these beach tourists are the easiest to attract, so that is where the short term smart money is going : a large part of Brazil's growth in tourism in recent years has to do with cheap charter flights to the beaches in the Northeast.

Despite the fact that Lula mentioned sustainable tourism in his speech, the Brazil international marketing plan hardly touches on the subject. There are plenty of people working for sustainable tourism both within the government and in the private sector, but **there is no consistent national tourism policy towards sustainable tourism** and Brazil as yet is using simple indicators such as number of tourists and tourism receipts to measure success. So the road towards sustainable tourism is a long one.

☼ *Even people who have not been to Brazil know about the infamous favelas. Has sustainable tourism, so far been in any way relevant for the people in these favelas, beyond say the creation of menial jobs? Could you mention some successful tourism projects that really made change?*

In the first place, it is difficult to generalize about favelas, they are different by suburb, city and region of the country. In Rio, one could argue that they are partly the result of poor housing policies and the "cost" of long job commutes from the suburbs. Part of the people who live in favelas, especially in those with good locations, can be considered lower middle-class. When I recently checked the price of a room in the Rocinha favela (which is all brick and mortar - not cardboard shacks), close to where I live, it was very similar to the price of a one room apartment in the nearby Leblon neighbourhood. I am not trying to say that favelas have no problems (they certainly do and they are especially linked to drug-crime).

In Rio, Rocinha and other favelas have been receiving favela tours for more than 10 years, with direct involvement of the community. And in general I would think that those located close to tourism areas, will have profited from tourism. But the favelas in Rio depend on the economics of a big city not just tourism.

On the other hand, **the construction of big resorts or fast growing tourism destinations in previously sparsely inhabited areas can directly lead to "favelization" of the surrounding areas**, as tourism planners forget about proper housing conditions for workers and how to deal with tourism related migration (from rural to urban areas).

☼ *Was indifference, ignorance, or some other obstacle a bigger challenge when the Sustainable Tourism Certification Program of Brazil (PCTS) was first launched and during its implementation? What would be important milestones and lessons learned so far?*

I would say that the main obstacles are a combination of too high expectations (of how easy it is to shift the paradigm to thinking sustainably) and too many agendas (of what people want to use sustainable tourism concepts for).

By studying other programs, we managed to absorb some of their lessons learnt such as having adequate funding, investing in partnerships and international networking and not forgetting how important capacity building and marketing are.

Important milestones were coming to an agreement with the CBTS (Brazilian Sustainable Stewardship Council - an initiative led by the environmental NGO sector) on working together on a developing standards in a modular way, starting with the accommodation sector; linking into international networks (such as the Network for the Americas) and of course developing the standard in a more than a year long participatory process. The standard is now close to being approved as an official Brazilian standard (which will facilitate further government support) and we are implementing by destinations. There are no companies certified yet, as our priority is not certification but creating a critical mass and an awareness of the advantages of sustainable tourism practices. That is where we are now: working with tourism enterprises and destinations to implement sustainable practices.

The most important milestone, however, is still far away and that is making sustainable tourism a mainstream concept. All tourism planners should realize that there is no quality tourism and no sustainable growth in tourism without incorporating sustainable tourism practices.

- ✿ *The stereotypical tourist visits Copacabana, Bahia, the Iguacu falls, the meeting of the waters in the Amazon and lately, perhaps include a Fazenda in the Pantanal. But what proportion of Brazil's visitors really care about environmental, social and sustainable issues? Is this percentage growing over the years and what in your view could Brazil do for it to grow faster?*

Yes, the classic tour of Brazil is Rio, Foz, Salvador & Bahia and the Amazon (and the Pantanal). However, all these wonderful destinations not only have the bog standard product, but also a lot of alternative products for those who want something completely different. Rio is a city with true natural charm and one of Brazil's great adventure centres (hiking, climbing, surfing, sailing, horseriding, biking, hanggliding ... you can do it all in Rio). You can stay in the Copacabana Palace and dine in fancy restaurants or in a B&B in the favela and do volunteer work and everything in between. Both Foz (revitalization of National Park with a host of new activities and products) and Salvador (restoration of Historic Centre and cultural revival) have invested in repositioning their product. The Pantanal probably already rivals the Amazon in number of foreign tourists.

Of course, Brazil does not have a lack of other great places to go. That is the problem with a country the size of a continent. I personally think that Brazil should market itself by region and that tourists should not try to jet all over Brazil to see the highlights, but concentrate on one or two regions.

I don't have any good statistics or attitude research, but I think that most tourists who visit the interior care about these issues. The important thing is that Brazil also shows it cares about keeping itself a wonderful destination.

- ✿ *And what about domestic tourism? Brazil has a growing middle class that likes to explore its vast homeland on weekends, are they adequately eco-minded in your view?*

The Brazilian domestic market is huge. With the exception of the Amazon, in most ecotourism destinations you will find more Brazilians visiting than foreigners. According to the first results of the 2006 Domestic Tourism Study (Embratur/Fipe), nearly half of the Brazilian population travels and more than 80% of these travel for leisure reasons. The study also shows that 15% of travellers enjoy visiting natural attractions and 6% (ranging from 3% in the lower income classes to 10% in the higher income classes) of the travellers consider themselves ecotourists.

Since the 80s the environmental (and social) movements have been quite successful in getting eco-messages across: you can see this clearly in the number of serious NGOs, NGO membership, consumption of organic and natural food, recycling, mobilization for environmental issues etc. Of course, in Brazil, consumers have less disposable income and cannot always make the eco-choice even if they would like to. And of course, I would like to see even more people become eco-conscious, but that also goes for other parts of the world.

- ✿ *Private Natural Heritage Reserves (RPPNs) in Brazil, are touted as an alternative solution for large landowners who can get tax breaks in return for (promising to) not to cut down the forest, and engage instead in tourism, pharmaceutical research, and environmental education. Does this just create 'islands' of private wealth in a sea of public poverty and landlessness, or is it actually working? Has sustainable tourism in Brazil stopped the destruction of Brazilian forests or merely decreased the rate of destruction? Can your institution monitor that private landowners stick to their word? And does your institution favour private, public or community ownership of tourism's natural resources?*

The view on RPPNs seems a bit distorted to me. In the first place many are relatively small and not created by large landowners. In December 2005 there were 425 registered RPPNs with an average size of 1000 ha (in Brazilian terms this is not a large area). There are a few really big ones (but in areas like the Pantanal or the Amazon, where it makes sense) and a lot of small ones. In the second place the advantages in terms of tax breaks, preferred treatment for financing etc. are not that attractive in practice. In return you need to invest in a management plan and consult with IBAMA (RPPNs are overseen by IBAMA and not by the Instituto de Hospitalidade or EcoBrasil) if you want to do anything in your reserve. All the RPPNs I know were created by serious people or institutions, who could have made more money by selling or developing their land.

I cannot speak for my institution about favouring a type of ownership. Personally, I believe that there is not one right model, it depends on the local situation. The key thing is that somebody, be it community, private owner, government or destination stewards must feel that you don't really own things, you just have to take good care of natural and cultural assets, so you can pass them on for future generations to enjoy.

- ✿ *Manaus is historically synonymous with boom and bust, with reference to the rubber rush of the early 20th century, with its magnificent Opera House a testament to past glory. Some say, the story is being repeated, in terms of the Jungle lodges that once proliferated, but are since not faring that well, with tourism in Manaus falling by 40% in recent years. Given that Manaus is at the heart of the world's lungs, the vast Amazon rainforest, is this development*

worrying for sustainable tourism? What is wrong? Not enough authenticity? Not enough local participation? Violent crime? Negative environmental publicity? Competition from the Pantanal?

To me the Amazon is not the world's lungs (mature rainforests are not net oxygen producers), but the world's "sponge" (the region is very important for its climate control - watershed - rainfall function). Yes, tourism dropped in the nineties from a high in 1989 and some lodges closed. However, the past few years tourism has been on the rise again and there has been a lot of new investment lately. But, as I said before, growth of beach tourism is stronger.

And yes, competition from other destinations is an issue. Demand is now spread over a greater number of destinations. Manaus does have an image problem as a bit of a tourist trap and an "old destination". The Amazon is huge and there are other great places to go like in the Amazon like Belém, Santarém, Cristalino, Mamiraua, Vale do Guaporé, Amapá, Tocantins and there are more than a hundred eco-destinations to go in Brazil, which are not in the Amazon, but have a magic all their own.

✿ *The carnival & beach culture of Brazil is a big attraction; however it also results in sex tourism. Recently there has been a wave of tourist arrests in Natal related to sex tourism. What are your thoughts / actions on this sensitive issue?*

True and this is not a new issue. This is one of the "public costs" of attracting tourists with cheap charter flights and it should have been no surprise as we saw this starting in Recife years ago, when they started as a charter destination. As one of the incoming tour operators in Natal explained it to me, the sex tourism is detrimental to her mainstream tourism business, as her market is families with children, who do not enjoy coming face with the sex trade in the same hotels and restaurants they visit.

Brazil already has a National Campaign against Sex Tourism, but actions on the ground have been timid. However, you should remember that prostitution is not illegal in Brazil (though promoting sex tourism and having sex with minors is). The arrests are a sign that the government is clamping down and we hope they keep it up. However, prevention is always better a remedy and thinking sustainable tourism from the beginning might have avoided underestimating the problem.

✿ *Even if competition to attract 'wealthy foreigners' is fierce and very visible in the world's large travel fairs, this being a form of economic nationalism, internationalism, cooperation among neighbouring countries is also paramount when it comes to protecting shared resources, reducing poverty and migration. Do any notable cross-border initiatives exist in Brazil in the sphere of sustainable tourism?*

I have been to workshops for the greater Amazon region, there are parks like Iguaçu (Brazil) and Iguazu (Misiones, Argentina) or corridors like the Guaporé Valley (Brazil and Bolivia) that form one area. In sustainable tourism we are talking both through the Network of the Americas (led by Rainforest Alliance) and other channels to neighbouring countries, but I think there are so many urgent things to do nationally (plus frequent changes in government policies in other countries) that it is more talk than action at the moment. But I personally would love to see cross-border tourism development like training, cross-border parks and itineraries take off.

✿ *And finally, Brazil is the birthplace and an enthusiastic host to World Social Forum meetings, (themselves a form of social tourism). So, do you see Sustainable Tourism in Brazil remaining politically neutral, concerned with environmental conservation, or do you feel it will become a movement 'for another tourism'?*

You might find it interesting to know that there is another World Forum in Brazil: the World Tourism Forum for Peace and Sustainable Development (www.desti-nations.net), which will hold its 3rd annual summit in Porto Alegre at the end of this year. The *Instituto de Hospitalidade* coordinates this event for Brazil's Ministry of Tourism and the UN.

Coming back to the Sustainable Tourism Program : our standards consider 3 dimensions : environmental, social-cultural and economic. The idea behind the program is that there is no quality tourism without sustainability inside. We believe that all types of tourism should adopt sustainable practices and therefore our program is politically neutral. Personally, I think a movement for "another tourism" is important for the diversity and evolution of tourism.

✿ *ECOCLUB: Thank you very much*

ECO WORLD – A selection of developments last month



International: The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Tourism Partnership of the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) announced a joint initiative, the Tourism and Human Rights Initiative, which will recognise the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism as the overarching standard to guide the global activities of the project, to be reinforced through the development and adoption of a specific set of human rights principles for the industry, with appendices for individual sectors. The process promises to be inclusive, engaging with expert representatives from organisations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Global Compact, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), UNDP, UNICEF, bilateral development agencies and civil society groups such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Save the Children. Hotels will be the first tourism sector to be addressed.

Details: http://www.world-tourism.org/code_ethics/eng/global.htm

Visiting the UN World Tourism Organisation in Madrid, UN General Secretary Kofi Annan, recalled his own past involvement in tourism projects in his native Ghana, and remarked that "tourists should not be offered Europe abroad. We really need to get them to not only interact with the people but also to offer them authentic culture." In welcoming Kofi Annan, UNWTO's Francisco Frangialli stressed Tourism's "capacity to contribute decisively in the fight against poverty".

Details: <http://www.world-tourism.org/newsroom/Releases/2006/april/kofi.html>

Africa

Dubai: In the Gulf emirate of Dubai the world's largest 'Snowdome' opens its doors. This \$1bn mega project to be completed in 2008 is home to the world's third largest indoor ski slope. A self standing dome 200 m wide and 75 m high, will house a huge revolving ski slope that manufactures snow year round. The complex will include a deluxe hotel designed like an iceberg. Dubai hopes to attract 15 m tourists by 2010.

Details: <http://www.natives.co.uk/news/2005/04/08dub.htm>

Namibia: Namibia's Ministry of Environment & Tourism (MET) announced it had received a \$8.2 million grant by the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the 'Strengthening of Protected Areas Network' (SPAN) project, which will run until 2011. A MET study found that park-related tourism contributes up to 4,4 percent of GDP. As such the MET is determined to improve national parks management and unlocking the economic potential of its parks for local development and poverty alleviation. The country's national parks are key to biodiversity conservation and vital to the tourism industry, which is one of the mainstays of the national economy.

Details: <http://www.namibian.com.na/2006/March/environment/06E2E157A.html>

Americas

United States: In the state of Utah, a program entitled Diversity in Environmental Education and Protection (DEEP) will be implemented by Zion National Parks' Zion Canyon Field Institute and the Zion Natural History Association to reach new immigrants to southern Utah. This program provides them with a learning experience based on ecotourism principles, environmental education and specific issues such as water-use, litter, recycling, local flora and fauna, and habitat conservation. The program will be offered for free. In the last 5 years, the Hispanic population has grown by over a quarter to around 10% of the population. **Details:**

<http://www.usee.org/services/webarchive/WebFeb2006.pdf>

Asia

India: The Guardian reports that thanks to improved hospital standards, fewer laws, lower costs and a growing supply of surrogate mothers, the West Indian state of Gujarat is becoming a 'reproductive' tourism destination mainly for UK couples of Indian descent. UK Immigration laws however complicate/restrain matters as newborns are not guaranteed citizenship.

Details: <http://www.namibian.com.na/2006/March/environment/06E2E157A.html>

Japan: 10 Liberal Democratic Party lawmakers initiated draft ecotourism legislation that would require regions planning to introduce ecotourism to first set up a council comprising of local municipalities, tour operators, NGOs and other interests, draft an overall plan to define a protected area and limit access to tour operators and guides, and submit it to the Environment Ministry for approval.

Vietnam / Laos: A tourism official has told VietNamNet that the central province of Nghe An will cooperate with the Xiangkhoang and Luang Prabang provinces of Laos to launch cross-border tours. Nghe An province includes the birthplace of Ho Chi Minh while Luang Prabang is a world cultural heritage site. The Vietnamese will also send a task group to Luang Prabang province to research the development of craft villages.

Details: <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/travel/2006/03/552513/>

Europe

Germany: Part of a UNESCO World Heritage site, and housing treasures such as the Pergamon Altar and Babylon's Ishtar Gate, Berlin's famous Pergamon Museum will gain a new wing at a cost of €351m, financed by the federal government. Work will start in 2011 and will last for 15 years. Last year the museum received 1 m. visitors.

Details: <http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/article348181.ece>

United Kingdom: Willie Walsh, the new CEO of British Airways urged the European Commission not to introduce a complicated carbon trading scheme for airlines, and to

ignore the upper atmosphere effects of airplanes, due to little scientific consensus. BA's chief pointed out that airlines were 'only responsible for just over 5% of UK emissions', and that flying was not a 'selfish, anti-social activity that single-handedly threatens planetary catastrophe'

Details:

<http://www.forbes.com/markets/feeds/afx/2006/04/07/afx2654871.html>

Oceania & Pacific

Australia: The Tasmanian Greens leader, Peg Putt has called for a level playing field for tourism operators by ending planning exemptions for forestry and marine farming, and the creation of walking trails in the Tarkine, in the north-east highlands and on the east coast. She says that sustainability is key to their tourism policy and cautions that the region's cultural and natural heritage should be managed very carefully.

Details:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200603/s1585110.htm>

UPCOMING EVENTS – April / May 2006

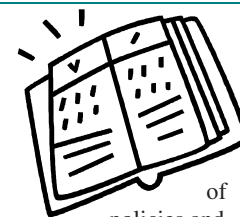
Members, plan ahead by checking the full listings at <http://www.ecoclub.com/events>

ALASKA TRAILS CONFERENCE – FAIRBANKS, ALASKA, USA

April 5-8, 2006

Conference themes include: Best trail management practices; Trail funding sources for construction, maintenance, and enhancements; Non-profit training opportunities across the state; Universal trail assessments; Economic benefits trails; State of Alaska trail easement reservation policies and process; Hands-on trail training courses; Successful trail and politics from the MatSu Borough; Mini-mechanized trail building and maintenance; Equipment examples and displays; Homer's "Kachemak Green" development and Trail information. Troy Duffin, a highly acclaimed trails expert, will be speaking about the "Economic Benefits of Treating Trails as Assets and Integrating them into Subdivisions and Neighborhoods" will be the keynote speaker. He will share some of his experiences and examples from the Park City, Utah area where trails benefit developers, home owners, and the public.

www.alaska-trails.org



of policies and

PEOPLE VS. LANDSCAPE: THE DELICATE BALANCES OF HERITAGE – GLASGOW, SCOTLAND, UK

April 18-19, 2006

Conference looks at the different tensions that arise out of the attempts to balance the needs of both the built and the natural heritage with 'the public' who interact with these places. Four themes - management, sustainability, tourism and modern development - have been selected as a means to focus ideas and to prompt discussions from the floor.

<http://www.heritagefutures.net/studentconference.html>

8TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, PUERTO RICO, USA

April 25-29, 2006

Conference theme "Keeping the Right Balance - Economic Progress and Sustainable Tourism". Topics to be discussed include: The economic benefits of sustainable tourism and its social contribution; Best practices and case studies for developing sustainable projects; Sustainable tourism initiatives being implemented in the Caribbean and Puerto Rico; and The many sides of Puerto Rico.

<http://www.onecaribbean.org/information/ca...?categoryid=839>

INTERPRETING WORLD HERITAGE – PUERTO RICO, USA

May 1-5, 2006

The Association for Interpretation (AI) plans to host its first annual international conference on the subject of heritage interpretation in May 2006 on the island of Puerto Rico. The conference will bring together 150-300 delegates from 30-40 nations in an effort to create opportunities for professional development for attendees and establish a network for professional associations and individuals involved in heritage interpretation around the globe. This capacity-building network will allow the exchange of ideas and facilitate working partnerships between nations with established interpretive organizations and developing nations that need assistance with the promotion and instigation of interpretive facilities to enhance tourism experiences, benefit local economies, and sustain sensitive cultural and natural heritage resources.

www.interpnet.com/iwh

CRITICAL ISSUES IN LEISURE AND TOURISM EDUCATION – BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, UK

May 10-12, 2006

This conference seeks to analyse critical issues in leisure and tourism education from the perspectives of theory and practice. These include issues which are critical to the success of leisure and tourism education, critical reflections on practice and critique of the state of leisure and tourism education.

<http://www.bcuc.ac.uk/main.asp?page=4650>

WORLD CONGRESS ON SOCIAL TOURISM – PROVENCE, FRANCE

MAY 10-12, 2006

The International Bureau of Social Tourism will host the World Congress on Social Tourism with the theme 'Towards a Tourism Based on Development and Solidarity.'

www.bits-int.org

2006 EXPOTUR – COSTA RICA TRAVEL MART – SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

May 14-19, 2006

2006 EXPOTUR is the primary tourism Travel Mart of the Region and since its inception, in 1984, has promoted the tourism services and travel attractions of Costa Rica and Central America. This event offers the opportunity to initiate and maintain negotiations with tourism service providers (Airlines, Hotels, Tour Operators, etc.; as well as Government Ministries/Institutes of Tourism), giving wholesalers a

competitive edge, by designing the right package at the right price; while creating marketing alliances with Costa Rican and Central American Sellers.

<http://www.expotur.com/>

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ISLANDS AND SMALL STATES – VALLETTA, MALTA

May 25-27, 2006

The objectives of the conference are to: Develop and discuss orientations in tourism that promote the attainment of lasting economic and social development, giving due attention to environmental concerns; Facilitate exchange of ideas between scholars and practitioners in the field of tourism; Issue a statement for policy-makers and others involved in tourism, with the aim of promoting sustainable tourism; and Publish a book on sustainable tourism.

<http://www.home.um.edu.mt/islands/>

THE THREE MINUTE ECOTOUR™



DADIA Forest National Park, Greece
(Latitude 41.1 , Longitude 26.3)

Location: North-eastern Greece, in Evros Prefecture, at the foothills of the Rhodope mountain range and near the border with Turkey and Bulgaria. The park covers a surface area of 7,290 Ha of forested hills, mainly pine and oak trees, lush valleys, rocky slopes, rivers and lakes. It is part of the NATURA 2000 network.



Best time to go: In the springtime before the birds begin their migration. In the autumn to see vulture hatchlings.

Famous for: most biodiverse colony of European predatory birds.

Star Species: Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) See one of its last remaining colonies in Europe, with 90-100 birds.

Weather: Climate: cold, wet winters (snowfall from December to February), hot summers.

Don't miss: Bird feeding stations and observation posts to view predatory birds in the wild.

Do miss: busloads of schoolchildren visiting.

Biodiversity: The park is home to 36 of 38 European predatory bird species. These include the endangered Black vulture, the Griffon vulture, the Imperial eagle, the Lesser Spotted eagle and the Black stork. There are over 40 species of reptiles, amphibians and mammals and a rich diversity of flora.

Environmental concerns: Some logging, hunting and land clearing which have now been banned. Some carrying capacity strains due to many school trips. Avian flu has infected birds in nearby Evros Delta.

Conservation efforts: WWF Greece has been involved in biodiversity conservation and management efforts since 1992. It has worked with the local municipality to set up an Ecotourism Information Centre within the park and a micro-enterprise run by a local women's cooperative which offers traditional meals and products. Habitat restoration, improvement of water availability, and the establishment of a network of feeding sites for the Black Vulture population was supported through the European Union LIFE programme.

Tourism: The Ecotourist Centre of Dadia, an ECOCLUB Ecolodge Member, is located within the park. The Municipality of Dadia operates the information centre, lodge, restaurant and guided tours while WWF is responsible for on going conservation efforts. This is considered as the best ecotourism example in Greece, as it is a community-owned enterprise which conserves the environment.

Getting there: Nearest airport: Alexandroupolis (50km) with flights from Athens and Thessaloniki.

Nearest train and bus: Soufli (15km). There is a bus service from Soufli to Dadia.

Nearest bus: Dadia (1 km)

Where to stay: At the ECOCLUB Ecolodge *Ecotourist Centre of Dadia*, at the entrance of the Park, Open year-round.
<http://ecoclub.com/dadia>

Other sites to visit within a 100 kilometre radius:

Soufli: 7 km north of Dadia is the town of Soufli, an old centre for silk trade. Visit the Silk Museum housed in a 19th c. mansion + (30) 25540 23700

Didimoticho: The town of Didimoticho ('Twin wall') is 30 km northeast of Soufli. Visit the castle, and the town's old section, partially enclosed by well-preserved remains of double Byzantine walls.

Delta: The Evros Delta wetland, home to over 250 bird species, and important flyway for birds migrating between Europe, Asia and Africa. Make arrangements at the Evros Delta Visitors Centre in Traianoupolis. (<http://www.evros-delta.gr>)

Feres: The town of Feres with its intact Byzantine church of Panagia Kosmosotira (1152 AD) (our Lady the saviour of the world).

Samothraki: Catch a ferry to the island of Samothraki, 22 miles from Alexandroupolis, with its towering Mt Fengari (Mt. Moon) rising to 1,611 mt with important ancient monuments, waterfalls and hiking paths, and the Aegean's only remaining primary forest.

ECOCLUB, Year 6, Issue 79, March-April 2006:

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