

This Issue Sponsored By:

[Siam Safari Nature Tours](#) (TH) - [Canyon Travel](#) (MX) - [La Selva Jungle Lodge](#) (EC)  
[Eco Holidays Malta](#) (MT) - [Abha Palace](#) (SA) - [St-Géry Historic Estate](#) (FR) - [International Centre for Responsible Tourism](#) (UK)  
[2008 Travelers' Philanthropy Conference](#) (TZ) - [Camps Bay Accommodation](#) (ZA)

**In this issue:**

- Editorial – [p.1](#)
- Ecotourism in Jordan – [p.3](#)
- Tourism in Chitral and the Kalash of Pakistan: – [p.6](#)
- Ecotourism in Post-Conflict Peace-Building: [p.10](#)
- Member News Roundup – [p.18](#)



**Habis Samawi (Jordan):** “Decision makers are not very aware about ecotourism issues, most think only about attracting more economic development” [\(p.3\)](#)

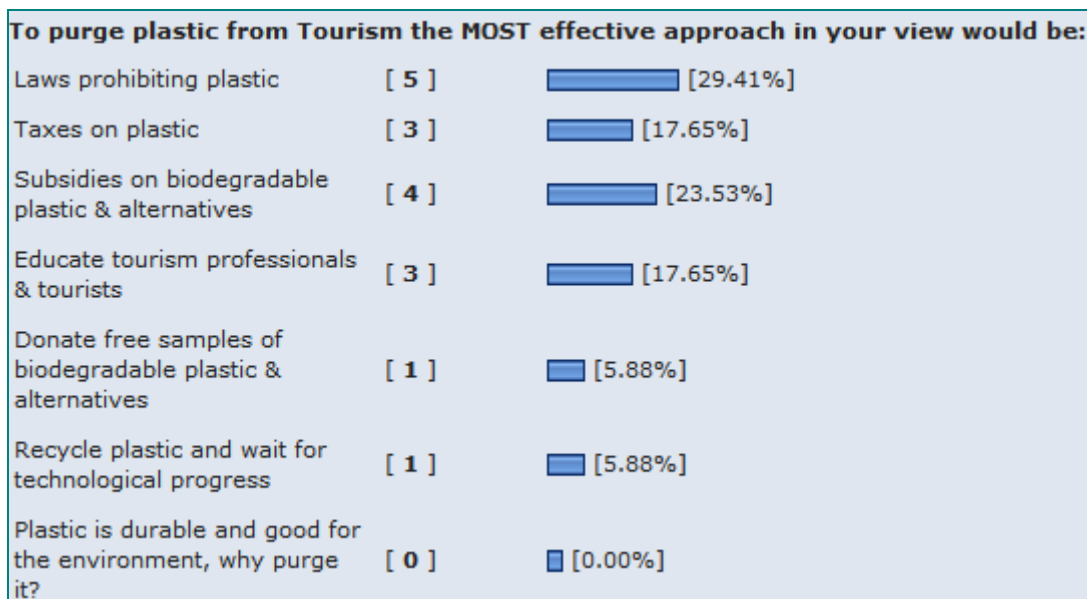


**Shams Uddin (Pakistan):** “The people of Chitral believe in cultural diversity, peace and friendliness” [\(p.6\)](#)

## Director's Cut: Tourism Without Plastic

This is the title of this year's [ECOCLUB.com Earth Day Photo Competition](#), which seeks to examine the problems that plastic creates in various aspects of Tourism, as well as some innovative solutions to reuse it, reduce it or replace it. Due to its versatility, cheapness and durability, plastic is the menace in disguise. This year's theme was inspired by current moves to ban plastic bags in many cities and countries around the world and by the successful completion of the Carpe Diem Travel plastic bag recycling project in Cambodia, which we funded in the context of the [ECOCLUB.com Ecotourism Awards 2007](#). [Voting is now open](#) and the tree winners will be announced on 20 March, Earth Day!

It is easy to imagine how change can be effected in a simple situation: for example in super markets where a small charge on plastic carrier bags at the counter can work miracles. Barry Murphy informs us that in Ireland a 22 cent charge per bag led to a [93% reduction](#) in carrier bag consumption. However in a sector as complex as Tourism it is not immediately clear how we should proceed, while a photo by Richard Gubler illustrates the [backstage picture of a Thai tourism paradise](#) - poor people trying to recycle in a hap-hazardous way. We are also currently holding a [Member poll](#) & debate offering various policy options. The results so far are presented below:



The majority (41.18%) favour taxes or subsidies, 29.41% think laws banning plastic are the most effective option, 17.65% believe that education of tourism professionals and tourists is the lasting way, with only 11.76% favouring low-key measures, “waiting” for technological progress or “donating free samples” of alternatives to plastic. The poll and debate continues and Members are welcome to [post their views](#) .

Plastic can be found nearly everywhere in the tourism ecosystem: besides plastic water bottles, think of cups, straws, food packaging, plastic chairs, shopping bags, garbage bags, room fittings, tablecloths & menus, plasticized brochures, maps,

business cards, name badges (conferences), stickers, folders, detergent packaging, hotel complimentary toiletry and vanity items, appliances (phones, tv, coffee makers, fans, aircon, etc) plastic tickets (e.g. subway, Multi-entry city-museum cards), but also what the tourist brings with them - travel bags and their contents, gear and clothing, especially anything claiming to be water proof and adequately insulated with the latest space technology for intergalactic travel...

Plastic is a menace. Yet, it can also have a funny side: A plastic duck – bath toy armada may finally arrive in Britain (or Ireland or France) 16 years after 3 containers housing 30,000 plastic toys fell of a ship crossing the Pacific. In the process the intrepid ‘Friendly Floatees’ have helped scientists study ocean currents and climate change research as currents determine climate and [carbon cycles](#). (They have also helped a few children’s book authors break their writer’s block). While their original cost was \$5 now they can fetch up to \$1,000 as collectors items. An extra incentive then for picking up that rubbish from the beach! Which in turn makes one think if such incentives could be used to induce tourists to clear beaches - an innovative olive/grape/fruit and *trash* picking holiday? ☺ Seriously now, Tourists can also play a big part, by avoiding plastic, explicitly stating this to their hosts and encouraging them to follow. However [if bins are overflowing](#) (see picture below) if the local and central government does not fulfil its responsibilities in facilitating, organising and monitoring the collection, reduction, reuse and recycling of plastic and other refuse, even the most determined individual or private sector efforts will likely degrade into apathy and anarchy.

A ‘Tourism Without Plastic’ has of course broader connotations. It is a big step for tourists and a small step towards a (utopian?) Tourism free of plastic food, plastic smiles, plastic people. A tourism free from mass-produced, artificial, pre-packaged experiences, an affordable, non-consumerist tourism where ‘plastic’ in your wallet is not so important. Where travel would be a fundamental human right for all, in a free, borderless and equitable society, rather than two weeks of excess for ‘northerners’ in the ‘south’, to make up for the misery & the pointless pressure of the other fifty. Well, I *did* say utopian...

Back to Earth however, Ecotourism is already making a difference, playing a role in peace-building in Africa, according to a very interesting paper by Nikolas Strong-Cvetich and Jason Scorse, which you will find on page 10.

Finally, in 2008 we are celebrating 25 Years of Ecotourism! Hector Ceballos-Lascurain is recognised as the Father of Ecotourism, not so much for coining a term (that others may have also coined at different places and times) but the very person who saw that Ecotourism would be recognised and endorsed by the prestigious IUCN, and who single-handedly undertook to implement and document it as an architect and scholar in its early steps. This celebration is most timely, at a time that various other "tourisms" engage in acts of me-too-ism trying to dethrone Ecotourism from the minds of ecotravellers. More on page 18.  
 ▶ [More Director’s Cut](#)

### ECO PHOTO



Submitted by Prof. Trevor Sofield

**Waste Management, Entrance to Botum Sakor National Park, southern Cambodia**

“The signage is excellent, the message clear and, even the rubbish bin is a recycled rubber car tyre! The reality...rubbish all around the signage.”



## THE ECOCLUB INTERVIEW

**Habis Samawi**

**Associate Professor in Tourism, Dept. of Geography,  
Social Science College, Jordan University**

**“Decision makers are not very aware about ecotourism issues, most think only about attracting more economic development and big projects regardless of the social and environmental impacts.”**



Dr Habis Samawi obtained his B.A. in Geography from Beirut Arab University an MA in Geography of Tourism from Alexandria University, Egypt and a Ph.D. in Geography of Tourism from the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A. He has held various academic and professional posts, including Researcher for The Ministry of Tourism in Jordan, Director of Tourist Guides Program in Jordan University, supervising over 35 Groups and Associate Professor in the Dept. of Information, Tourism & Arts of the University of Bahrain. A keen supporter of Ecotourism, Dr Samawi presented a paper on “Perceptions and preferences of Tourists toward selected Ecotourism Destinations in Bahrain” at the Global Ecotourism conference 2007, in Oslo, Norway, while he has also produced various ecotourism papers including “Ecotourism in Petra, Jordan”, “Ecotourism in the Arab World” and “Marine Ecotourism in Bahrain”. He lives in Amman, Jordan.

*The Interview follows:*

**ECOCLUB.com: Much is being said about Tourism's potential for peace building. Have you seen this at all in Jordan, with reference to cross-border Tourism in Aqaba & Eilat?**

In fact, the role of Tourism in bringing peace to Jordan is very obvious. For example, The Dead Sea beach before the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994 was undeveloped, but since the peace treaty you will notice a big tourism development. More than four big hotels (5 stars) have already been constructed, around five more are in the process as well as many other services such as restaurants and other. This is just one example. In Aqaba region now, there is a big development plan, also because of the political stability in Jordan, there are a lot of investors from neighbouring countries who are moving in the area.

**ECOCLUB.com: Besides the peace treaty and investment - does tourism visibly lead to understanding and conciliation at the people level? Is there any evidence? Are there any specific tourism programs designed to do so?**

Yes there is some development in Dhana reserve for example where the local people are directing the whole site, but in many other the locals are still not aware about ecotourism procedures. The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) is the body mainly concerned about all ecotourism issues in Jordan.

**ECOCLUB.com: How important is domestic tourism in Jordan and in what aspects is it different than international tourism?**

In Jordan, one notices three types of tourist movements: first, international visitors coming for cultural and religious purposes constitute around 40% of the total, while regional visitors coming mainly from the Gulf States (Arabs) are around 55%, and domestic tourism accounts for just 5%. Now both regional and domestic visitors are mainly interested in recreational issues as well as medical and educational issues. Domestic tourist demand increases on the weekends and holidays, their favourite sites are natural reserves such as Dhana and Dubin and Aqaba, as they tend to prefer nature and the sea.

**ECOCLUB.com: Islamic tourism is a new and growing trend in the region. Does it merely describe the diversion of tourism flows after 9/11, when Arab and Muslim tourists started visiting Arab destinations, whereas Westerners stayed away? Or rather, is it a regional version of Ethical / Responsible Tourism'?**

After 9/11, everything changed and tourism in Arab countries has increased. Also, I think we have to remember that according to 2005 Statistics Arab tourists from the gulf states are rated the highest spenders among all tourists, spending twice as much as the others. Essentially, Arabs started looking for new tourism markets, particularly in South East Asia and Turkey. But do not forget another explanation that describes the movement among the Arab tourists, which is that they speak the same language and they have the same religion, and they are neighbouring and very close, so most of them come by driving their own vehicles, and this saves money too. I will not agree with the term of Islamic Tourism, Muslim tourists in general have the same needs. In the 1950s local people in Spain were annoyed by European tourists who used to come for swimming but today Spain has become the most important tourist destination after France. I see a big development in responsible tourism in the Arab world.

**ECOCLUB.com:** Are there any negative effects from Tourism in Jordan so far, especially in areas such as Aqaba that have experienced intense development in the past decade?



The World Heritage Site of Petra – Hellenistic architecture

But for sure we are still behind western Europe. There is an adequate legal framework for ecotourism but the problem is its application: for example, the RSCN has set laws and policies to preserve and conserve nature and tourists sites. There is a big project going to take place in one of the sensitive areas in Dubin-Jordan very close to Dubin reserve. The only people who expressed concern about the project were RSCN. The project is currently under way, however many changes were made so as to protect the environment.

**ECOCLUB.com:** Is the western beach culture, the sea sun & sand tourism really compatible with prevailing traditions and social norms in Jordan, or is Aqaba and Wadi Rum accepted as a sort of special enclave where beach culture - and even overnight rave parties are tolerated so that mainstream young westerners are attracted to visit Jordan? Is any alternative strategy focusing on ecologically & culturally sensitive travellers also followed?

Without any doubt, there is a difference between the needs, the beliefs and the attitudes between Arabs and Western Europeans, at the moment I do not think that Jordan is ready to host young tourists, and especially in Aqaba we will see some reluctance from the locals. In case of the cultural tourists I think it is not causing any troubles among the local communities. Frankly speaking the economic development council in Aqaba are the only people who can decide about tourism projects in the area, they consider some issues, but I am sure if there is they are presented with an ecotourism study, they will stop the tourist projects especially in Aqaba, because they are against the environment. Wadi Rum right now is still doing well.

**ECOCLUB.com:** Has Tourism, as in other countries, resulted in or at least promoted an emancipation / empowerment of women in Jordan, and has this created any tensions?

Jordan is different than many Arab countries; the women in Jordan have the right to vote and to reach a high position, so now you will find more than three women holding the post of government minister. At the same time women have the right to go to universities, where you can find real competition between men and women. But again we can not compare ourselves with the western communities. The role of women is still small even when you go to high education in tourism, you will find women

As you know, tourism has two aspects, the positive one where Jordan has gained more hard currency, income and more employment opportunities for their people, around 32,000 new jobs in Jordan according to 2006 statistics. For the negative, I can see pollution and other social problems, the local people always complaining and some times rejecting the western tourists' behaviour. Most tourist sites in Jordan attract cultural tourists, and these are mainly elderly people and they cause no problem to the local communities. I think in Aqaba we might have some resistance between the locals and tourists in the beginning. Locals are always complaining because in some areas they are not benefiting from tourism. For example in Petra, Rum, Dhana local people are so happy to coexist with tourists, but for the rest sites such as Jerash, Madaba, Ajlun, Umm Quies and Aqaba the attitude of the locals is negative toward tourists.

**ECOCLUB.com:** How high on the agenda, is environmental protection and water conservation in particular when it comes to new tourism project developments in Jordan? Is there an adequate ecotourism legal framework in place?

Yes, Jordan is very aware about environmental issues, so before making any tourism development in any area they usually consider the environment. One of the most important issues that is facing Jordan is the shortage of water, and you know tourists are consuming water more than the locals. In Jordan, you can see a lot of natural reserves such as Dhana , Shumeri ,Dubin and many others. So I see Jordan as the most environmentally-conscious Arab country.

demand in tourism education is less than for men, because of traditions and customs. I think it is a matter of time. Twenty years ago men used not to be in favour of working in hotels, but now all things have changed: 95% of workers in tourism are Jordanians, out of which 15% are women.

**ECOCLUB.com: Is Tourism gaining in popularity in Jordanian universities in terms of number of students, Tourism departments and courses taught, and what about Ecotourism?**

Yes there is a big demand in Jordan universities for tourism programmes so more than 8 universities out of 18 are offering one major in tourism, and in October 2007 a big conference was hosted by Jordan Applied University and The college of Hospitality Tourism Education about the future of tourism education in Jordan. For Ecotourism education yes there is a good movement. There are more courses and workshops to be held in the area in coordination with RSCN and the Ministry of Environment and UNEP. By the way UNEP have a base in Bahrain and I worked there as a consultant since 2000. We have produced many reports and held many workshops in Lebanon, Egypt, Oman and Oslo-Norway. I produced with UNEP two reports one about sustainable tourism in hotels, and the other about sustainable tourism in the Arab World. At the same time the Tourism sector has now become very aware about ecotourism issues, so with the help of TIES a workshop was held in Amman in January 2008.

**ECOCLUB.com: You have also greatly researched Tourism in Bahrain. Once upon a time most Gulf countries rejected international tourism. What prompted this sea change? How sustainable is the Bahrain tourism model, in an environmental, social and economical sense, and does it differ at all from the Dubai model?**

My main experience is based on Bahrain where I stayed for 5 years. Tourism became an important way to attract more Arab and foreign investment, but the problem here is not with the people but with the decision-makers, most people are aware about the negative impacts that big tourism projects may cause to the sensitive shores. The real problem as I mentioned lies with the decision makers: three or four big tourism projects have recently been established and they are impacting negatively on the environment. In Oman for example they held last year a big international conference in Ecotourism. I hope neither Bahrain nor Oman are going to copy the Dubai model. The decision makers are not very aware about ecotourism issues, most think only about attracting more economic development and big project regardless of the social and environmental impacts.

**ECOCLUB.com: After the rather-hyped "New Seven Wonders of the World" competition, even the most ignorant will have now heard of the cultural & natural wonder that is Petra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. But how is Petra coping with the growing affection? Are there plans to cap the number of visitors, raise prices or are other visitor management tools being considered?**

Jordan was proud to have Petra listed among the new 7 wonders. I think this will not change much, because we all know the importance of Petra among the rest of the cultural sites in the world, it is really magnificent not only for Jordan but for the whole world. I think it might attract more tourists, but again we have to keep an eye on the number of tourist arrivals in order to preserve the location for the new generations. I think we are going to limit the number of tourists in Petra. There are many ways to eliminate excessive tourist numbers in sensitive sites such as by increasing entrance fees, through a management plan to limit, or by educating locals and tourists about the sensitivity of Petra.

**ECOCLUB.com: Finally, what sites would you recommend to Ecotourism enthusiasts in Jordan?**

I can suggest so many sites, such as Petra, Jerash, Madaba, Dhana reserves, Wadi Rum. I recommend Petra because it is very rich in their nature and culture, it is one of the best preserved ancient sites in the world, this was the reason it was nominated as one of the new 7 Wonders of the World, and also there is a good management plan to conserve the whole site. In Wadi Rum there is the Rum Reserve where RSCN is monitoring the development of any tourist projects - they do not let any hotel to be established in the area. In addition Dhana reserve and the Baptism site are really well preserved sites and locals are being trained to work in both locations. Thank you for the great opportunity to express my ideas to you and to the ECOCLUB.

**ECOCLUB.com: Thank you very much!**



The Martian landscape of Wadi Rum



## THE ECOCLUB INTERVIEW

### Shams Uddin

**Project Manager CAMAT (Chitral Association for Mountain Area Tourism)**

**“The people of Chitral believe in cultural diversity, peace and friendliness”**



*Mr Uddin was born in Chitral, Pakistan in 1968. He holds Master Degrees in International Relations and Political Science, and a Bachelor of Education, all from Peshawar University. He worked as a Consultant for the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, as a team leader with KADO [Karimabad Area Development Organisation], and has also conducted research on medicinal herbs.*

*Chitral Association for Mountain Area Tourism (CAMAT) is an NGO working for the promotion of community-based tourism in Chitral, the northernmost district of Pakistan, formed in 1998 by a wide spectrum of tourism stakeholders, including civil society organizations, environment and cultural societies, traditional sports clubs and academic institution within the district. The major objective of the association is to enhance income-earning opportunities for “poverty reduction through environmental-friendly and culture-rooted community-based eco-tourism in the remote mountainous region of Northern Pakistan”, through the financial support of UNESCO. In particular CAMAT seeks to protect Indigenous cultures by reviving and promoting the age-old festivals and cultural events, such as Jashan-e-Chitral, Jashan-e-Shandur, Jashan-e-Qaqlasht and Jashan-e-Boroghil. By adding economic incentives to these events, CAMAT believes it can make the protection of traditional culture a desirable outcome for community members. At the end of local festivals, an elaborate waste disposal campaign is always undertaken in cooperation with the local community. In the future, CAMAT intends to promote community-based eco-tourism in the remote mountainous region, and to this end, it seeks guidance and financial support from international NGOs.*

*The remote Chitral region, in the High Hindu Kush, traditionally controlled trade routes from Afghanistan to India, and historically enjoyed relative independence as a princely state, but has recently suffered from unrest as a result of the Afghanistan war just across the border. It is a cultural mosaic, inhabited by numerous tribal groups and one of the most linguistically diverse areas in the world. Ethnologists are fascinated by tiny groups such as the [Kalash](#) (pop. c. 6,000) half of whom are polytheists, with a distinct language, clothing and customs. Kalash legends, historical evidence and [recent research](#) indicate that Kalash along with other tribes may be remnants of the [Indo-Greek](#) civilisation which resulted from Alexander the Great's passage from the area. The 1975 movie “The Man who would be King” with Shawn Connery & Michael Cane was based on this legend.*

*The Interview follows:*

**ECOCLUB.com: What prompted the creation of the Chitral Association for Mountain Area Tourism (CAMAT) and what has been your role?**

CAMAT [Chitral Association for Mountain Area Tourism] was established in 1998 in response to the growing prospect of tourism as a new sector of poverty reduction within the parameter of the local culture and natural environment in Chitral and Northern Areas in reference to the renowned Khow and Kalash cultures in terms of festivals, local music, nature trails, mountaineering and wildlife watching as a potential tourism product in Chitral district. Since 2002, CAMAT has received UNESCO funding and technical support to promote ecotourism by protecting traditional culture on the one hand and the natural environment on the other.

**ECOCLUB.com: Which are the main goals of your organisation and what do you consider to be your major achievements so far?**

- The main goals of CAMAT are to reduce poverty through eco-tourism as a new sector of development through adding economic incentives to protect the traditional culture and natural environment. CAMAT's major achievements are as follows:
- Revival of Jashan-e-Chitral [Chitral festival] after its discontinuation for 25 years.
- Revival of Jashan-e-Qaqlasht [Qaqlasht festival] in upper Chitral
- Revival and protection of Kalash woodcarving
- Protection of Kalash culture by organizing cultural programmes down country
- Protection of Kalash environment by installing dustbins in Rumbur
- Organizing cultural events during annual Shandur Polo Festival

- Highlighting Chitral’s culture through UNESCO film ‘Between Sky and Mountains’
- Capacity building of hoteliers through elaborate training programmes
- Capacity building of local musicians and to add economic incentives to traditional music and to generate culture-based income for the locals.
- Promotion of Chitral’s culture during Shandur Polo Festival every year in July

**ECOCLUB.com: To ethnologists, the Kalash are a fascinating cultural relic, with their 12 gods & goddesses dating perhaps all the way back to the era of Alexander the Great, with Chitral town being used as a base camp for researchers from around the world. The Kalash are clearly a tourist 'attraction' but what does tourism do for them? In your website it is worrying to read that "the Kalash get very little economic benefit from tourism"!**



Kalash woman in traditional dress.

The Kalash community is the real tourism attraction in the North West Frontier Province, Northern Areas, let alone district Chitral. Their unique way of life, festivals, music, folklore, ancestor worship and the myth that sheds lights on their primitive culture are a huge magnet. The Kalash are believed to be the descendants of the soldiers of Alexander the Great, hence their fascination for ordinary tourists, but most importantly they are a potential source of attraction for ethnologists to conduct studies on Kalash culture and tradition that would definitely highlight Kalash culture and promote a healthy trend of ‘cultural tourism’.

In relation to the question of tourism benefit to the Kalash people, at the moment they are far from benefiting from tourism as mostly non-Kalash people control enterprises. However, CAMAT is making efforts to transfer the economic benefits of tourism to the Kalash community by:

- Developing and promoting traditional guesthouses
  - Organising cultural events outside Chitral to enhance the livelihood opportunities for the Kalash community, apart from highlighting their culture
  - Providing information on Kalash culture to tourists visiting the CAMAT office in the Mountain Inn, Chitral town
  - Building the capacity of Kalash hotel owners
  - Revival of traditional Kalash woodwork as unique tourism products
- Protection of Kalash environment by installing dustbins and raising environmental awareness.
  - Media campaign highlighting Kalash valleys as ‘must visit’ destinations

**ECOCLUB.com: What measures are in place to prevent the endangered tribal communities of the Chitral area becoming a sort of a 'human zoo' for tourists and researchers?**



Chitral Fort, once seat of the royal Family of Chitral, and site of a famous siege in 1895.

The real problem with the traditional cultures is that they are endangered, notwithstanding their uniqueness and striking difference from what we call ‘modern cultures’. They provide a great magnet for tourists, who come to see and study these cultures, without contributing to the economic benefit of the locals. For instance the endangered Kalash community in three of the Kalash valleys are certainly reduced to a ‘human zoo’ position, without getting any economic benefit from their culture. This causes frustration among the Kalash people and renders them susceptible towards the uniqueness and importance of their own culture. Instead they are prone to think about a quick transformation of their culture. For CAMAT, in such a situation, it becomes inevitable to undertake measures to protect the traditional cultures and environment through the involvement of stakeholders and adding economic incentives to the cultural events and music and to encourage ecotourism such as wildlife watching so that livelihood earning opportunities for the locals, particularly for guesthouse owners, can be created. To this end,

training programmes for music troupes from both Khow and Kalash communities are being organized and an enabling environment to the musicians and traditional sportsmen is provided through festivals, which not only gives economic benefits to these people, but also help highlight the traditional culture of Chitral. CAMAT has also been imparting capacity building training to hoteliers, tour guides, porters and drivers.

**ECOCLUB.com: Are you trying to develop Community Tourism & Ecological Tourism in the Chitral Area, or, as an association, are you happy to represent any type of tourism in the light of the current difficult circumstances?**

CAMAT has been working via a UNESCO project to promote community-based ecotourism to improve the livelihood of the locals by protecting the traditional culture and natural environment. However, we are encouraging numerous types of tourism, such as adventure, wildlife, cultural and study tourism etc. Through different varieties of tourism, CAMAT can be in a position to enhance the prospect of economic benefits for the locals through tourism, which is one of the new sectors of economic development. However, CAMAT's potential area is ecotourism.

**ECOCLUB.com: Historically mountainous, inaccessible Chitral has seen off many invading armies and colonisers, but has always been a mosaic of civilisations. In theory Tourism can contribute to peace building & intercultural understanding. In practice, do you have practical examples of how tourism in the Chitral area is currently contributing to intercultural understanding, at this difficult time and place, so close to the theatres of war?**

Chitral is really a mosaic culture and the people of Chitral believe in cultural diversity, peace and friendliness. Chitral has many things to display in terms of rich cultures, unspoiled natural environment, and archaeological sites, natural trails, wildlife, and snow-capped peaks for mountaineers. It has 13 different cultures and languages within the fold of its different valleys. CAMAT believe that tourism can really contribute to intercultural understanding and enable tourists to understand things in the given destination. CAMAT has made efforts to provide information to tourists through brochures, personal contacts and pictures. It is felt that tourists who visit Chitral always leave with a positive impression about the peacefulness, hospitality, scenic beauties and natural environment of Chitral. This further feeds into augmenting the prospect of a tourism influx in the years ahead.

**ECOCLUB.com: Your organisation has been the recipient of sizable foreign aid from multilateral bodies and private foundations. Could you have managed without this foreign aid? What would you say to those who believe that this type of aid to businesses may create a false sense of security and lead to disaster when foreign donor funds abruptly dry out, as it has not allowed business structures to 'cut their teeth'?**

CAMAT is a non-profit non-loss tourism development association, which receives funding from UNESCO to promote community-based eco-tourism by protecting the traditional cultures and natural environment in the mountainous region of Chitral. CAMAT has always taken into consideration the fact that dependence on funding sources could be a hurdle for sustainability of the association. CAMAT has taken the following measures to meet sustainability of its activities:

- By raising funds for cultural events through Cultural Committees during different cultural events
- By involving volunteers in culture and environment protection activities
- By developing guesthouses in the Kalash valleys and other parts of Chitral
- By providing services to registered hotels and Jeep owners

For the year 2006 onward sustainability of the activity has been one of our major areas of consideration.

**ECOCLUB.com: Issues of NGO accountability & transparency have become important in the 'west'. Do you feel accountable to your donors, to the members of your association, or to the people of Chitral? And in what ways do you measure your organisations' performance and contribution?.**

Personally I don't like the over-expenditure issues associated with the majority of NGOs. The big problem with NGOs has always been high expenditures with almost no outcomes. Donors often pay scant attention to the small details and only follow the broader frame of operation, which is presented to them as a 'make believe document'. Taking into consideration the above facts and after practical observation, CAMAT has based its activities with minimal funding from UNESCO—the only source of funding for the association. We present details of all expenditure to the Board of Directors—the honorary set up—which supervise and provide guidance for management activities. We measure the success and influence of our association through Tourist feedback forms, BoD Satisfaction Remarks, voluntary services of Cultural Committees, voluntary services of Chitral Polo Association, registered with CAMAT, productive interaction with district administration and interaction with local communities, cultural troupes and environment protection societies in the entire district.



Snow Leopard - inhabits the mountains of central Asia and the Indian subcontinent, ranging from 1,800 metres in the winter to about 5,500 metres in the summer

**ECOCLUB.com: If CAMAT had absolute power in Chitral to put one thing right which one would it be and why?**



Booni Zom : The “Good God” Peak (6,542 m)

CAMAT would have redoubled its efforts to protect the culture of the endangered Khow and Kalash communities, which we feel is the vital tourism product and a world class cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the Kalash culture is dying out under the pressure in the fast changing prospect of globalization.

**ECOCLUB.com: How can interested readers assist CAMAT in implementing its goals? Is the area actually safe for tourists and when is the best time to visit?**

CAMAT is a non-profit non-loss association working for the promotion of ecotourism in Chitral and is implementing a UNESCO project on ecotourism. Some of its activities are revival and promotion of cultural festivals, protection of natural environment, capacity-building initiatives, and media campaigning through cultural movies, linkage development and advocacy campaigns. We would

welcome like-minded international entities involved in tourism to work with CAMAT on the above agendas. Chitral is really safe for tourists and the best time to visit is from April to October. During this time tourists can take in cultural festivals, wildlife watching, trekking, horse riding and visit archaeological sites and shop in Chitral’s main market.

**ECOCLUB.com: Finally, what are your organisation's plans for the immediate future?**

CAMAT would like to strengthen its activities, which it has undertaken for the last 5 years, as we feel that the improvement in eco-tourism really lies within these initiatives, and strengthening them further will definitely contribute to enhancing the prospect of tourism in the Northern Areas, let alone Chitral and NWF Province.

**ECOCLUB: Thank you very much.**



The famous Polo Festival at Shandur – ‘Highest Polo ground on earth’ at 3,700 m.  
Polo is believed to have originated in neighbouring Persia 2,500 years ago.

## ECO PAPER

### Ecotourism in Post-Conflict Peace-Building: A New Tool for Reconciliation?

By Nikolas J Strong-Cvetich<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Jason Scorse, PhD<sup>2</sup>

#### Abstract

*This paper lays out three hypotheses as to how ecotourism, through its unique economic incentives, can help to build cooperation among formerly conflicting groups. The case study of the Mountain Gorillas and ecotourism collaboration in the Virunga-Bwindi region of Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo provide a detailed account of how collaboration in ecotourism between former warring parties is contributing to the success of gorilla conservation, development, and the foundations for sustainable peace. Other examples of how ecotourism could help with post-conflict reconciliation in Kashmir and the Ethiopian-Eritrean recovery are also discussed.*

#### **I. Introduction**

Ecotourism is gaining increased credibility among both the international economic development and the international conservation sectors. The Ecotourism Society in 1991 defined ecotourism as: “responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of the local people”.<sup>3</sup> This definition has been accepted by such organizations as Conservation International (CI) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Ecotourism bridges the gap between economic development and environmental preservation by creating economic incentives for environmental conservation through tourism. Ecotourism has become a very effective policy tool for reducing poverty and stemming natural resource degradation and biodiversity loss.<sup>4</sup> This is also one of the fastest growing markets in the world as the Virunga Massif Sustainable Tourism Development Plan reports, “Many important ecotourism destinations were experiencing double digit average annual growth between 1986 and 1998 (e.g., Ecuador 17%, Costa Rica 32%, Belize 25%, Botswana 19%, and South Africa 108%).”<sup>5</sup>

In addition to providing a means of protecting important ecological areas and generating revenue for local peoples, ecotourism may also serve another important function: to reduce the impetus for conflict and build stable cooperative relationships among rival groups.

This paper proposes that ecotourism should be added to the burgeoning field of environmental peacemaking. Many scholars once viewed the environment primarily as a source of conflict, positing that resource scarcity and environmental degradation often lead to violent competition<sup>6</sup>. Environmental peacemaking theorists propose an alternative theory, that the mutual challenge and trans-boundary nature of environmental problems creates scenarios in which cooperation is more beneficial than conflict. As Ken Conca writes in his seminal paper, *The Case for Environmental Peacemaking*, “Overlapping ecosystemic interdependencies might provide a chance to create opportunities for shared gains and establish a tradition of cooperation.”<sup>7</sup>

Specifically, ecotourism can build cooperative relationships in three distinct ways:

- 1) Ecotourism creates unique, mutually beneficial economic incentives for cooperation and nature conservation.
- 2) Shared natural heritage can be a strong motivator for cooperation and trust building, as can shared management and work experience.
- 3) Ecotourism may be particularly amenable to grassroots efforts that circumvent top-down, bureaucratic impasses, and lead to positive spillover effects in other areas.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Section II discusses how the current environmental peacemaking and “Peace Park” literature fails to adequately address the economic factors that hamper post-conflict reconciliation and trust building, Section III outlines the theory of how ecotourism can assist in post-conflict reconciliation, Section IV provides a case study by

<sup>1</sup> MPA Candidate 2007, Monterey Institute of International Studies, [nikolas.strong-cvetich@miis.edu](mailto:nikolas.strong-cvetich@miis.edu).

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Graduate School of International Policy Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, [jason.scorse@miis.edu](mailto:jason.scorse@miis.edu).

<sup>3</sup> [www.ecotour.org](http://www.ecotour.org), Accessed: 2/16/07

<sup>4</sup> UNEP. “About Ecotourism”. <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/ecotourism/home.htm>, Accessed: 2/17/07

<sup>5</sup> Epler Wood M., Wight P. and Corvetto J. “International Markets, Business, Finance, & Technical Assistance Models for Ecotourism in Developing Countries”. A Report for IFC/GEF/SME Program. Washington DC: 2004 in Mehta, Hitesh and Christine Cate. “Virunga Massif Sustainable Tourism Plan”. *International Gorilla Conservation Program*: 2005. p. 22

<sup>6</sup> Homer-Dixon, Thomas. “Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict”. *International Security*. 1994. 19(1): pp: 5-40.

<sup>7</sup> Conca, Ken “The Case for Environmental Peace-Making”. Ch. 1 in Conca and Dabelko, eds *Environmental Peacemaking*. Johns Hopkins University Press: 2003.

examining the role of ecotourism in the gorilla conservation efforts of the Virunga-Bwindi region between Rwanda, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Section V explains how this analysis can be applied to other post-conflict situations such as the Kashmir and the Ethiopian-Eritrean recovery, and Section VI presents the conclusions.

## II. Literature Review

Environmental security is a relatively new area within the field of international relations. The field has been dominated by the liberal vs. realist theories of the causes of conflict and the factors that prolong them. Only recently have scholars started to extend the field of conflict studies into new areas. Early work, like that of Johan Galtung<sup>8</sup>, began examining the link between resource issues and conflict. Others such as Thomas Homer-Dixon<sup>9</sup> and Nils Petter Gleditsch looked at the role of population growth and scarcity as impetuses of conflict. Ken Conca disputed their central claim, contending that “environmental problems also create incentives for cooperation and collective action<sup>10</sup>”. His work provided the impetus for the larger discourse surrounding environmental peacemaking. Similar to ecotourism, environmental peacemaking is also loosely defined. Geoffrey Dabelko posits that there are four phases in which environmental peacemaking can be transformative<sup>11</sup>:

- 1) The environment as conflict prevention
- 2) The environment as a lifeline in times of conflict
- 3) The environment as an essential ingredient to peace agreement
- 4) The environment as post-conflict trust builder

This last area, the environment as a post-conflict trust builder, has spawned a significant sub-body of initiatives and literature surrounding the creation of Peace Parks, which are trans-border protected areas that intend to build cooperation through mutual management of protected areas<sup>12</sup>. Much of the literature on these parks concentrates on the management of conflict and conservation, with the economics of the park and ecotourism only addressed peripherally. The role of economic resources and beneficiaries are not mentioned as goals of Peace Parks; they are largely left as unexamined variables in the environmental peacemaking literature.

A more thorough examination of the role of ecotourism in building collaboration within the area of environmental peace-building is needed. Similarly, despite the ongoing research, ecotourism has not been fully explored as a tool for peacemaking and cooperation.

Ecotourism, which was coined in the late-seventies, is considered as distinct from nature-based tourism. At the onset of ecotourism research, many scholars argued over the definition and criteria. Even after the International Ecotourism Society coined the definition, there was still disagreement over what the definition actually meant. Donald G. Reid of Guelph University in Canada wrote extensively on this particular question in his article *Defining Ecotourism*<sup>13</sup>. Martha Honey helped to operationalize the definition in her book *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?*, by setting seven criteria that ecotourism projects should try to meet. According to Honey, ecotourism should<sup>14</sup>:

- 1) involve travel to natural destinations
- 2) minimize impact
- 3) build environmental awareness
- 4) provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- 5) provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people,
- 6) respect local culture
- 7) support human rights

Nowhere in her criteria is cooperation or promoting peace mentioned. Only a small number of scholars have addressed the peacemaking potential of tourism, largely because these investigations have only examined the exchange between host and visitor.<sup>15</sup> No one has looked at the peacemaking potential of ecotourism between rival groups in post-conflict regions.

## III. How Ecotourism Can Assist In Post-Conflict Reconciliation

<sup>8</sup> Galtung, Johan. *Environment, Development and Military Activity: Towards Alternative Military Doctrines*. 1982. Oslo: Norwegian Univ. Press.

<sup>9</sup> Homer-Dixon, Thomas. “Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict”. *International Security*. 1994. 19(1): p. 5-40.

<sup>10</sup> Conca, Ken. “Environmental Cooperation and International Peace”. In Gleditsch and Diehl, eds. 2001: p. 225

<sup>11</sup> Dabelko, Geoffrey. “Environmental Pathways to Peace-Making”. Presentation.

[www.wilsoncenter.org/events/docs/Dabelko%20Wilson%20Center%20EP%20without%20pics%20for%20web.ppt](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/events/docs/Dabelko%20Wilson%20Center%20EP%20without%20pics%20for%20web.ppt). Accessed: 2/21/07.

<sup>12</sup> Sandwith, Trevor. “Is it worth the effort and expense? Challenges for implementing transboundary conservation” presented at: *ITTO/IUCN International Workshop on Increasing the Effectiveness of Transboundary Conservation Areas in Tropical Forests*, 17-21 February 2003, Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

<sup>13</sup> Reid, Donald G. *Ecotourism Development in Eastern and Southern Africa*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press, 1999. p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Honey, Martha. *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who owns Paradise?*. 1999. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. p. 22-24

<sup>15</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Summit on Peace through Tourism <http://www.iipt.org/3rdglobalsummit/presentations/EducationForum2005.pdf>

As Geoff Dabelko suggests, “sustainable development is critical to ensuring global security, and peace is required for effective development.”<sup>16</sup> Ecotourism can be an essential tool for helping to integrate development and economic incentives into environmental peacemaking efforts. Ecotourism has this potential for several reasons.

First, conservation can create incentives for cooperation and trust-building through the interdependence created by the nature of ecosystems. The effect of collaborative conservation also creates economic interdependence due to the revenue from ecotourism. Once livelihoods can be tied to cooperation, the incentive to fight can be reduced significantly. Nowhere do we see this illustrated more clearly than during the 1924-1994 conflict in Ireland; tourism was essentially the only area where the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland collaborated across the border. Eric G.E. Zuelow describes the role of tourism during this period: “Even when a virtual cold war existed between the respective governments, the potential financial gain offered by tourism usually trumped political concerns and brought people together<sup>17</sup>.” (This case doesn’t relate directly to ecotourism, but it is clear that tourism was one area in which it was mutually beneficial for the two sides to work together.)

Ecotourism also can create many other forms of economic interdependence, as revenue from conservation moves to different sectors of the economy and different regions. Ecotourism attracts visitors to a central location, but once they arrive, visitors tend to visit other sites and services, which may cross former adversarial boundaries.<sup>18</sup> For example, there is an ecotourist operation in Croatia that brings tourists across the border into Bosnia for river trips on the Neretva, which flows through both countries.<sup>19</sup> This operation creates a situation in which cross-border collaboration is necessary to take advantage of the potential revenue stream. Also, both groups have an incentive to care for the environment between the two countries because it serves as the major tourist attraction. Croatia, through tourism, is expanding cooperation to include other former adversaries such as Montenegro as well. In a study of cross-border tourist flows, Richard M. Lagiewski reports (with respect to Croatia and Montenegro): “This information, that both sides of the border feel working closer within the tourist sector and the governing bodies that influence it, is a necessary and positive first step towards greater collaborations.”<sup>20</sup>

This form of cooperation is especially valuable in post-conflict situations, where many people’s livelihoods have been shattered by the conflict, and they often must rely on the unsustainable use of natural resources. This can perpetuate conflict, as resources become increasingly scarce and the catalyst for conflict remains. Ecotourism, especially if managed at the local level with the majority of the revenue going to benefit local people and local conservation needs, can help to diffuse the cycle of conflict and unsustainable resource use.

A second way in which ecotourism builds trust amongst people is through mutual management of natural resources. As Alexander Carius states: “The joint management of shared resources can be not only a way to keep both parties talking, but the key to negotiating a resolution<sup>21</sup>”. This logic is not new, but in past studies it has only referred to the management of natural resources and scientific data-gathering activities. Little has been said regarding the effects of economic development through ecotourism on peacemaking. This is where much of the Peace Park literature falls short; it only considers the management aspects of threats to plants, wildlife, and human wildlife interaction, not the economic angle.

A third way in which ecotourism can create long-term cooperation in post-conflict situations is its emphasis on grassroots cooperation. Ecotourism is generally considered “low politics”, which means it is a lower political priority and not considered an issue of national security on a states agenda for cross border relations.<sup>22</sup> As Dabelko contends, “When environmental issues are a low political priority, they can offer an oasis of cooperation within a larger conflict. In this case, environmental issues do not threaten the most contentious issues in the relationship and thereby may provide a safe first step for dialogue<sup>23</sup>”.

In effect, environmental collaboration may be a means to circumvent barriers to post-conflict reconciliation erected by stubborn leaders at the top. Again, examining the Irish example, because tourism was not a “hot button” issue between the leadership of

<sup>16</sup> Dabelko, Geoffrey. “From Threat to Opportunity: Exploiting Environmental Pathways to Peace”, Prepared for: “Environment, Peace and the Dialogue Among Civilizations and Cultures” May 9-10, 2006, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/news/docs/pathways.pdf>. Accessed: 2/17/07

<sup>17</sup> Zuelow, Eric G.E. “Ingredients for Cooperation: Irish Tourism in North South Relations, 1924-1998”. *New Hibernia Review* (10.1) p. 39

<sup>18</sup> Yakobo, Moyini and Berina Uwimbabazi, “Analysis of the Economic Significance of Gorilla Tourism in Uganda”. *International Gorilla Conservation Project*. 2000.

<sup>19</sup> “Trebizat river canoe safari”, [http://www.huck-finn.hr/canoeing\\_trebizat.htm](http://www.huck-finn.hr/canoeing_trebizat.htm). Accessed 2/15/07.

<sup>20</sup> Lagiewski, Richard. “Tourism in the Cross-Border Region of the Southern Adriatic”. *Rochester Institute of Technology*. 2004. <https://ritdml.rit.edu/dspace/bitstream/1850/1603/1/RLagiewskiConfProc11-2004.pdf>. Accessed. 3/2/07 p.10.

<sup>21</sup> Carius, Alexander. “Environmental Peacebuilding: Conditions for Success”. *Environmental Change and Security Program Report*. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars .2006. Issue 12. p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> “It is often implied that “high politics,” concerned with diplomatic and military affairs, is more important than “low politics,” dealing with such mundane and unimportant matters such as trade and investment.” From: Baldwin, David A. *Economic Statecraft*. Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1985. p.63

<sup>23</sup> Dabelko, Geoffrey. “From Threat to Opportunity: Exploiting Environmental Pathways to Peace”, Prepared for: “Environment, Peace and the Dialogue Among Civilizations and Cultures” May 9-10, 2006, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/news/docs/pathways.pdf>. Accessed: 2/17/07

the two sides they were able to collaborate for many years in the realm of tourism with less scrutiny from the government than in other areas.

Ideally, ecotourism seeks to enhance the conservation of the local area through limiting the numbers of tourists who visit. On one hand, this can limit the potential revenue for the local people in the short-term, but it is essential for both long-term economic and environmental sustainability.

In his ground breaking work, RW Butler outlines the Tourist Area Life cycle model, in which he argues that:

“Visitors will come to an area in small numbers initially, restricted by lack of awareness, facilities and local knowledge. As facilities are provided and awareness grows, visitor numbers will increase. With marketing, information dissemination and further facility provision, the area’s popularity will grow rapidly. Eventually, however, the rate of increase in visitor number will decline as levels of carrying capacity are reached. These may be identified in terms of environmental factors...”<sup>24</sup>

Butler divides the theorized cycle into six stages: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and decline. By definition, ecotourism requires limiting the number of tourists so as to maintain the ecological integrity of the local natural resources. Many tourist destinations eventually become oversaturated, as more and more operators seek profit, which leads to stagnation and eventual decline. Ecotourism, therefore, can provide not only long-term environmental benefits, but long-term economic returns. This however requires significant planning and ultimately limited the number of operators, which again, creates a strong incentive for cooperation.

#### IV. The Virunga-Bwindi Case Study

Spanning Rwanda, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), The Virunga-Bwindi region has experienced many years of devastating war (some stats on duration and casualties), One of the most diverse regions of the world, it encompasses four national parks: Virunga National Park, Volcanoes National Park, the Mgahinga Gorilla National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National. This afro-montane ecosystem (a type of mountain forest native only to the region) is host to a variety of endemic species, the most widely recognized and highly threatened of which is the mountain gorilla. The region contains all of the remaining 706 mountain gorillas in the world.

The region is marred by poverty, having experienced intense violence and conflict for the past decade and a half. Made up of several different ethnic groups the violence commenced in 1994 during the Rwandan genocide. As Hutus fled the country and ended up in refugee camps, many exploited the natural resources in the parks in order to survive<sup>25</sup>. The incursion of Hutu refugees and ex-militia members into the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo heightened tensions in the region. This eventually led to another great war in 1997 in the Great Lakes region, involving Rwanda, Uganda and the DRC.



<sup>24</sup> Butler, RW "The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Resource Management. *Canadian Geographer* 24. 1980. p.6

<sup>25</sup> Lanjouw A., A. Kayitare, H. Rainer, E. Rutagarama, M. Sivha, S. Asuma, and J. Kalpers.. “Beyond Boundaries: Transboundary Natural Resource for Mountain Gorillas in the Virunga-Bwindi Region”. Washington, D.C., U.S.A.: Biodiversity Support Program: 2001

### The Virunga-Bwindi Region<sup>26</sup>

Currently, there is an agreement and management plan to protect the gorillas and develop collaborative ecotourism projects across the whole region. As the Virunga Massif Sustainable Tourism Plan describes the goals of the project:

“The Tourism Development Plan for Virunga Massif provides a framework for the development of sustainable tourism in the three countries and for the key stakeholders to contribute to the development process. It is anticipated that the Plan will: (a) provide a long term vision for enhancing tourism; (b) provide structured and guided development process for tourism facilities; (c) ensure inclusion of the local community in the planning, development, implementation and benefit sharing process; (d) ensure increased revenues from tourism; (e) ultimately ensure improved conservation and management of the natural resources and (f) enhance collaboration among gorilla parks in Uganda, DR Congo and Rwanda.”<sup>27</sup>

Though not formally addressed in this document, this collaborative attempt at ecotourism management is significant not only to the success of gorilla conservation, but also for meaningful peace-building and the larger stability of the region. The collaborative gorilla tourism management effort serves to meet these goals of enhancing cooperation and trust in five important ways.

First, collaborative ecotourism management creates economic interdependencies between former adversaries by reducing capital investment costs (fixed costs) and creating a revenue-sharing agreement at the local level. As the International Gorilla Conservation Program (IGCP) states: “regional tourism is understood in this sense as collaborating with the neighboring countries to reduce costs and the investments required to develop the resource, and facilitating regional travel for tourists who wish to spend time exploring the region as a whole<sup>28</sup>”. The revenue sharing scheme is dependent on the preservation of the gorillas, for without them the tourism revenue will disappear. In Uganda, from 1994 to 1999, gorilla tourism netted foreign exchange earnings of approximately US\$7.7 million, generated US\$15.4 million of sales for the economy, contributed US\$4.77 million in government tax revenues, supported close to 1,700 person years of jobs, and contributed US\$6.93 million to the national income<sup>29</sup>. The following chart demonstrates the rates at which local people benefit from tourism in the Virungas area:

	Relative works in forest	Benefit from tourism	Benefited from tourism in past
Batwa Bwindi	1.67	23.33	33.33
Batwa DRC	0.00		0.00
Batwa Echuya	0.00	0.00	0.00
Batwa Mgahinga	0.00	0.00	6.67
Batwa PNV	14.29	8.33	0.00
Bwindi	20.32	32.92	4.61
Echuya	19.73	5.41	0.68
Mgahinga	25.81	87.84	38.71
PNV	3.18	10.89	5.03
Virunga	6.25	10.81	6.92

30

Obviously some areas benefit more than others, but this revenue stream enhances peace-building efforts by creating mutual economic dependencies across borders.

Second, because the gorillas are a source of economic development in the region, warring parties are forced to cooperate and collaborate to ensure the survival of this threaten species. This was illustrated by the presence of the rebel groups at the bargaining table for **Gorilla Protection Accords**.<sup>31</sup> The governmental and international organizations recognized the importance of including rebels, as they had the potential to disrupt tourism and gorilla conservation, and the rebel groups agreed to participate in conservation activities because they recognized the enormous economic value and precarious existence of the gorillas.

Third, the economic interdependence created by gorilla tourism reduces the impetus for conflict between the former rivals, and the international recognition of tourism brings a higher degree of visibility to the reconciliation efforts more generally. As

<sup>26</sup> Mehta, Hitesh and Christine Catee. “Virunga Massif Sustainable Tourism Plan”. *International Gorilla Conservation Program*.: 2005.

<sup>27</sup> WWF. *Management for Mountain Gorillas in the Virunga-Bwindi Region*. Washington, D.C., U.S.A.: Biodiversity Support Program. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/bsp/publications/africa/126/chap2.htm>. Accessed: 2/19/07

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>29</sup> Yakobo, Moyini and Berina Uwimbabazi, “Analysis of the Economic Significance of Gorilla Tourism in Uganda”. *International Gorilla Conservation Project*: 2000.

<sup>30</sup> Mehta, Hitesh and Christine Catee. “Virunga Massif Sustainable Tourism Plan”. *International Gorilla Conservation Program*.: 2005. p. 15

<sup>31</sup> Owen, James. “Congo Rebels Agree to End Gorilla Slaughter”. *National Geographic News*. Jan.25<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/01/070125-gorillas-congo.html>. Accessed: 4/29/07 and

Wiedemann, Amy. “Interview with Nikolas Strong-Cvetich and Jason Scorse”. *African Wildlife Federation*. 4/3/07.

Charles Besançon, UNEP consultant to the IGCP, notes (based on a conversation with a park guard during a fact-finding mission to the areas):

“I want to tell you a fact that you will not hear anyone talk about. We all know this but never talk about it. Not two kilometers away from here are hundreds of Rwandan Soldiers [in the PNVi-Sud – Mikenko Secteur of DRC]. They are there to secure this region from DRC invasions. The reason no one discusses them is that they are happy these guys are there. In other places where soldiers are posted, there are attacks at night and locals are harassed and sometimes tourists, but in this region, because of the gorillas, and the international interest in the gorillas there are no attacks and the military forces actually create security instead of the other way around.”<sup>32</sup>

This illustrates the peace-building effect of the dynamic between gorillas, tourists and armed groups. More importantly, this highlights another effect ecotourism has in reducing tensions and maintaining security; it helps to draw outside attention to issues surrounding the conflict and creates an additional disincentive for conflict through enhanced international scrutiny.

Fourth, the experience of co-managing a natural resource serves to create and sustain peace in the region. The Gorilla Project has set out to standardize rules, service practices, and interpretation guidelines in gorilla tourism across all of the parks in the three countries. These joint training sessions have helped to cultivate common objectives and shared experience, which are required for building trust across previously warring factions. A recent WWF report acknowledges as much: “Having the same rules in each tourism site will strengthen collaboration and reduce competition among the three countries, which jointly have developed the harmonized tourism rules and regulations<sup>33</sup>”. This shared goal creates new pathways toward reconciliation that are found only through collaborative work.

Finally, in order to successfully meet the needs of the guests and ensure the survival of the gorillas, rival groups must work in close contact with each other. As has already been witnessed within Rwanda, both Hutus and Tutsis have had to work together closely on the day-to-day operations, which acts as another pathway in the post-genocide reconciliation process.<sup>34</sup> Not only is collaboration on conservation important, but also on the logistical aspects of tourist management. Part of this collaboration was nascent during the 1994 conflict, when remarkably, Hutus and Tutsis worked side-by-side for the protection of Gorillas, as both groups recognized the economic and cultural value of the gorilla’s existence.<sup>35</sup>

## V. Other Examples Of Potential Ecotourism-Peacemaking Connections

### Kashmir and Siachen Glacier

Ever since the split of Pakistan and India in 1940, the mountainous area of Kashmir has remained contested and the two countries have fought bitterly over who has the rights to this piece of land. The area is home to a number of endangered and threatened species, such as the snow leopard.

Indian and Pakistan have fought two wars over Kashmir in 1947 and 1972. After the fighting of the Seventies a “Line of Control” was drawn surrounding the glaciers, which still remains the source of tension today<sup>36</sup>.

Throughout the region there are natural and cultural commonalities, which could be used to begin building cooperation. In both countries there is a strong history of mountaineering; the region contains K2, one of the world’s most famous summits. Collaboration around K2 could prove fruitful and steps in this direction are already occurring. As Giuliano Tallone documents<sup>37</sup>:

“...a joint Indian and Pakistani mountaineering expedition, organized by Roger Payne of UIAA (International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation) and IUCN, organized a Symbolic Peace Climb (August 24-29, 2002) involving Indians and Pakistanis, with a series of climbs in the Aletsch Glacier area, and highlighted the Siachen issue.”

Ecotourism, with a focus on mountaineering and trekking, managed at the local level, could help to build trust and cooperation between Indians and Pakistanis in the Kashmir region. There are already visions of a collaborative Peace Park, in which a number of scholars have advocated ecotourism as a funding mechanism<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Besançon, Charles. “PCIA Virunga-Bwindi Region, Field Visit 2 - Trip Report” International Gorilla Conservation Project. [http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2006/security\\_igcp\\_field2\\_2005.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2006/security_igcp_field2_2005.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Lanjouw A., A. Kayitare, H. Rainer, E. Rutagarama, M. Sivha, S. Asuma, and J. Kalpers. 2001. Beyond Boundaries: Transboundary Natural Resource Management for Mountain Gorillas in the Virunga-Bwindi Region. Washington, D.C., U.S.A.: Biodiversity Support Program. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/bsp/publications/africa/126/chap2.htm>. Accessed: 2/19/07

<sup>34</sup> Wiedemann, Amy. “Interview with Nikolas Strong-Cvetich and Jason Scorse”. *African Wildlife Federation*. 4/3/07.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Giuliano Tallone, “Siachen Peace Park: A Case Study for the Valorisation of High Mountain Ecosystems” Transboundary Protected Areas in the Governance Stream of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa, 12-13 September 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

In the case of Siachen and Kashmir more broadly, ecotourism can contribute significantly to the reconciliation process in three distinct ways. First, it will create a source of income that can be tied directly to cooperation and stability, which can serve to jumpstart more formal peace processes. Second, because mountaineering routes are based on ecological conditions and aesthetic considerations that cross political boundaries, cooperation in ecotourism could offer a larger set of options to tourists, and thus increase the earnings potential of both Indians and Pakistanis. This would allow the carrying capacity of any given ecotourism operation to expand significantly, should both sides of the border be consistently accessible. Third, managing and taking pride in the natural heritage of the area can create a sense of unity and shared purpose.

### **Ethiopia and Eritrea**

After a two-year war from 1998-2000 in which 100,000 Ethiopian and Eritreans were killed fighting over a 400 square kilometre piece of land, the two governments still maintain cold relations. This war was fought by two leaders who were from the same ethnic group, spoke the same language, practiced the same religion, and fought as allies in a previous war. The war devastated the economies of both countries and severely degraded the environment.

Ethiopia and Eritrea form one of Africa's birding hotspots, possessing 861 species, including 30 species endemic<sup>39</sup> Currently, there are numerous bird-watching enthusiasts who are waiting eagerly for the development of ecotourist facilities and the cessation of tensions between the two countries<sup>40</sup>.

Considering the uniqueness of the resource and the preexisting demand, implementing community-based ecotourism along this border region and between the two sides would be able to serve several needs at once. It would provide much-needed economic development and it would necessitate cooperation between the groups in both countries, as the birdlife is not constrained by political borders.

### **VI. Conclusions**

This paper has described why ecotourism should be taken seriously as another potential tool to promote environmental peacemaking. We have provided both a framework for how to think about ecotourism in post-conflict situations, as well as examples of ongoing successes and areas where the potential exists for ecotourism to help with peacemaking efforts.

However, ecotourism does face significant obstacles that may limit its effectiveness.

Ecotourism is only applicable in the first and final stages of the conflict continuum (avoiding conflict and post-conflict trust building). It cannot be applied to situations where the conflict is ongoing since tourists cannot be expected to visit war zones.

A second challenge regards revenue sharing among local communities and the degree of local involvement in the management processes. Because of the rather loose and unquantifiable definition of ecotourism, the degree to which locals are involved in the decision-making and receive revenue is specific to the individual project. Often foreign investors or the domestic elite provide the necessary capital, leaving the locals, who are most often more heavily impacted by the presence of conflict, out of the loop. This can also fuel pre-existing conflicts, as we have seen in many cases of people versus parks, which can often occur when conservation limits the ability of people to eke out a livelihood from the natural resource base<sup>41</sup>.

Finally, if ecotourism is managed at the local level, there is the possibility that competition for tourists may create larger conflicts over scarce tourist revenue, which is why some higher-level planning may be necessary. Ecotourism limits the number of visitors, which has the potential to create competition between local groups, some of which may have a history of conflict. It is important to note, however, that if all groups have some stake in the revenue stream from ecotourism they will have a strong incentive not to restart the conflict and scare away the tourists.

### **Bibliography**

- Ali, Saleem. "Siachen Peace Park: Moving from concept to reality". International Environmental Security Conference, The Hague, May 11, 2004. [p. 3.](http://www.envirosecurity.org/conference/working/K2PeacePark.pdf)  
<http://www.envirosecurity.org/conference/working/K2PeacePark.pdf>. Accessed: 3/5/07.
- Besonçon, Charles. "PCIA Virunga-Bwindi Region, Field Visit 2 - Trip Report" International Gorilla Conservation Project.  
[http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2006/security\\_igcp\\_field2\\_2005.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2006/security_igcp_field2_2005.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Ali, Saleem. "Siachen Peace Park: Moving from Concept to Reality". International Environmental Security Conference, The Hague, May 11, 2004.

<http://www.envirosecurity.org/conference/working/K2PeacePark.pdf>. Accessed: 3/5/07.

<sup>39</sup> Vivero Pol, Jose Luis. A Guide to Endemic Birds of Ethiopia and Eritrea. 2001. Shama Books.

<sup>40</sup> "Birdwatching tourism ready for take off in Eritrea". 7/17/2006. <http://www.planetark.org/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/37272/newsDate/17-Jul-2006/story.htm>. Accessed: 3/4/07/

<sup>41</sup> Schwartzman, Stephan, Daniel Nepstad, and Adriana Moreira "Arguing Tropical Forest Conservation: People versus Parks" Conservation Biology, Vol. 14, No. 5, Oct., 2000, p. 1370-1374

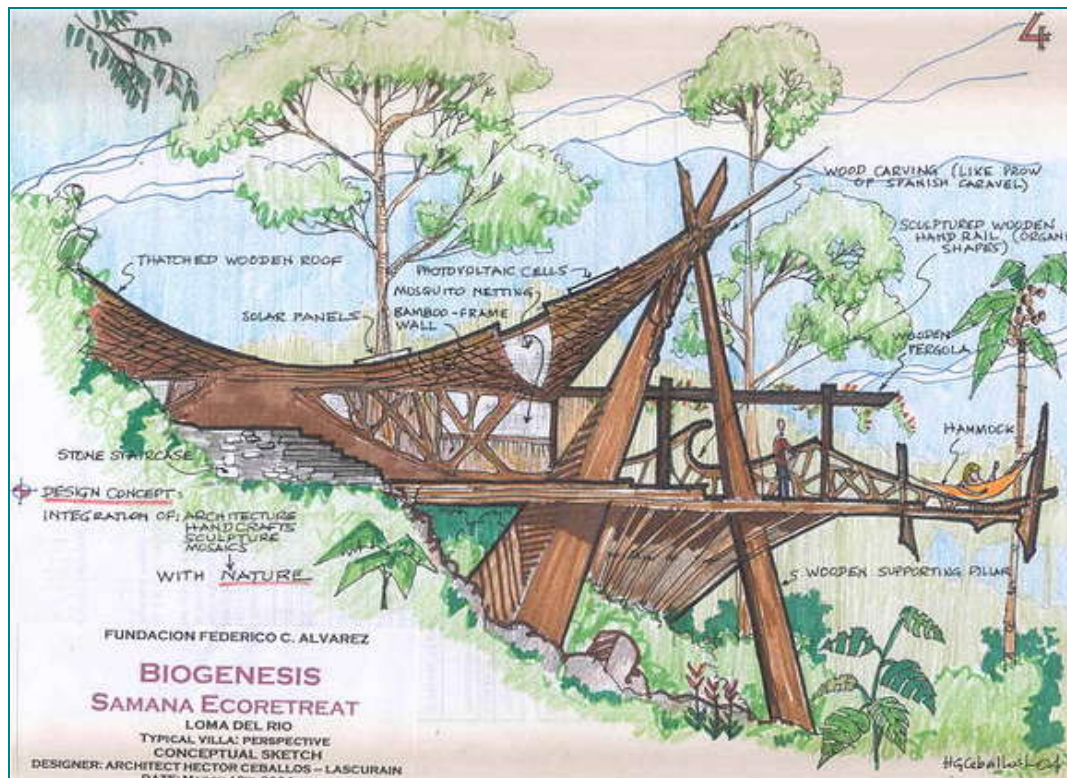
- ["Birdwatching tourism ready for take off in Eritrea". 7/17/2006.](#)  
<http://www.planetark.org/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/37272/newsDate/17-Jul-2006/story.htm>. Accessed: 3/4/07
- Baldwin, David A. *Economic Statecraft*. Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1985.
- Butler, RW "The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Resource Management. *Canadian Geographer* 24. 1980. p.6
- Carius, Alexander. "Environmental Peacebuilding: Conditions for Success". *Environmental Change and Security Program Report*. 2006. Issue 12.
- Conca, Ken "The Case for Environmental Peace-Making". Ch. 1 in Conca and Dabelko, eds.
- Conca, Ken. "Environmental Cooperation and International Peace". In Gleditsch and Diehl, eds. 2001: p. 225
- Dabelko, Geoffrey. "From Threat to Opportunity: Exploiting Environmental Pathways to Peace", Prepared for: "Environment, Peace and the Dialogue Among Civilizations and Cultures" May 9-10, 2006, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran.  
<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/news/docs/pathways.pdf>. Accessed: 2/17/07
- <http://www.ecotourism.org>. Accessed: 2/19/07
- <http://www.ecotour.org>. Accessed: 2/16/07
- Galtung, Johan. *Environment, Development and Military Activity: Towards Alternative Military Doctrines*. 1982. Oslo: Norwegian Univ. Press.
- Giuliano Tallone, "Siachen Peace Park: A Case Study for the Valorisation of High Mountain Ecosystems" Transboundary Protected Areas in the Governance Stream of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa, 12-13 September 2003.
- Homer-Dixon, Thomas. "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict". *International Security*. 1994. 19(1): p. 5-40.
- Honey, Martha. *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who owns Paradise?*. 1999. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. p. 22-24
- Huck Finn Adventures. "Trebizat river canoe safari", [http://www.huck-finn.hr/canoeing\\_trebizat.htm](http://www.huck-finn.hr/canoeing_trebizat.htm). Accessed 2/15/07.
- Lagiewski, Richard. "Tourism in the Cross-Border Region of the Southern Adriatic". Rochester Institute of Technology. 2004. p.10. <http://ritdml.rit.edu/dspace/bitstream/1850/1603/1/RLagiewskiConfProc11-2004.pdf>. Accessed: 3/2/07
- Lanjouw A., A. Kayitare, H. Rainer, E. Rutagarama, M. Sivha, S. Asuma, and J. Kalpers. 2001 Beyond Boundaries: Transboundary Natural Resource Management for Mountain Gorillas in the Virunga-Bwindi Region. Washington, D.C., U.S.A.: Biodiversity Support Program. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/bsp/publications/africa/126/chap2.htm>. Accessed: 2/19/07
- Mehta, Hitesh and Christine Catee. "Virunga Massif Sustainable Tourism Plan". *International Gorilla Conservation Program*: 2005
- Moyini Yakobo and Uwimbabazi, "Analysis of the Economic Significance of Gorilla Tourism in Uganda". *International Gorilla Conservation Project*. 2000.
- Owen, James. "Congo Rebels Agree to End Gorilla Slaughter". *National Geographic News*. Jan.25<sup>th</sup>, 2007.  
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/01/070125-gorillas-congo.html>. Accessed: 4/29/07
- Reid, Donald G. *Ecotourism Development in Eastern and Southern Africa*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press, 1999. p. 29.
- Sandwith, Trevor. "Is it worth the effort and expense? Challenges for implementing Transboundary Conservation" presented at: *ITTO/IUCN International Workshop on Increasing the Effectiveness of Transboundary Conservation Areas in Tropical Forests*, 17-21 February 2003, Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand.
- Schwartzman, Stephan, Daniel Nepstad, and Adriana Moreira "Arguing Tropical Forest Conservation: People versus Parks" *Conservation Biology*, Vol. 14, No. 5, Oct., 2000, p. 1370-1374
- UNEP. "About Ecotourism". <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/ecotourism/home.htm>. Accessed: 2/17/07
- Vivero Pol, Jose Luis. *A Guide to Endemic Birds of Ethiopia and Eritrea*. 2001. Shama Books.
- WWF. Management for Mountain Gorillas in the Virunga-Bwindi Region. Washington, D.C., U.S.A.: Biodiversity Support Program. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/bsp/publications/africa/126/chap2.htm>. Accessed: 2/19/07
- Wiedemann, Amy. "Interview with Nikolas Strong-Cvetich and Jason Scorse". *African Wildlife Federation*. 4/3/07.
- Zuelow, Eric G.E. "Ingredients for Cooperation: Irish Tourism in North South Relations, 1924-1998". *New Hibernia Review* (10.1) p. 39

## ECOCLUB HEADLINES - News from our Members around the world

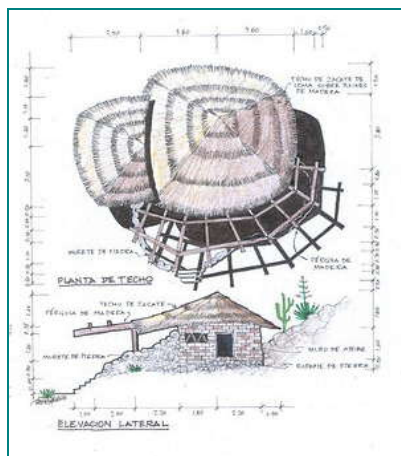
### Marking 25 years of the Ceballos-Lascurain definition of Ecotourism

Mexico City, Mexico – 18 February 2008

July 2008 marks an important anniversary for the global Ecotourism movement: it will be 25 years from the coining and preliminary definition later adopted by IUCN of the term “Ecotourism” by Architect Hector Ceballos-Lascurain, a Mexican environmentalist and ecotourism expert. As part of this commemoration, Mr Ceballos-Lascurain is participating in an online Q&A Forum organised by Planeta.com ( <http://forum.planeta.com/viewtopic.php?t=1147> ). There, ECOCLUB Magazine asked Architect Ceballos if there was now a need for a new, political version of Ecotourism, in synch with the world ecological movement and green parties. Mr Ceballos agreed, adding that this was already the case in many countries and that ‘Ecotourism should not be seen as a fad or a green fashion, politically and socially ornamental but as a top priority sustainable and conservation activity’.



Drawings from recent Ceballos-Lascurain Ecotourism project.



In early February, and as part of the 25-year celebrations, Hector Ceballos was invited by Warner College of Colorado State University to make several presentations in Fort Collins, Colorado, on the development of Ecotourism and ecolodges in Mexico and around the world. The presentations emphasized that Ecotourism is a prime tool for conservation and sustainable development, especially among poor rural populations.



Hector Ceballos is currently involved in the planning and development of two large ecotourism parks (2,100 hectares in total) in two new satellite cities in Baja California and Jalisco where for the first time in Mexico, a housing developer has decided to set apart in both cases 20% of the total land allowed for urban development for conservation and nature recreation purposes. Architect Ceballos is carrying out both master plans and the design of ecolodges, interpretative centers, nature trails, organic farming plots and an alternative technology demonstration area. He is also currently preparing an environmental architectural and master plan for an ecolodge in Mount Kinabalu World Heritage Site, Sabah (Borneo), Malaysia, where he is applying ecotechniques such as solar energy for heating water and providing electricity, natural cross ventilation and ecological waste treatment, as well as a native species botanical garden.

>> For more details:

<http://www.ceballos-lascurain.com>

## Leeds Met launches Responsible Hospitality Management Masters

LEEDS, UK - 1 February 2008

A unique and innovative degree that explores the role of responsible and green practices in the hospitality industry has been launched by Leeds Metropolitan University.

The University's International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) (Web:[www.icrtourism.org](http://www.icrtourism.org)) has launched the Responsible Hospitality Management MSc to meet the growing demand for sustainable and ethical solutions in the international hospitality industry.

Xavier Font, Director of Studies at the ICRT explains: "This is the only course in the world that gives you the skills, knowledge and contacts to change practice exclusively in responsible hospitality, whether you want to develop a community based accommodation project or green a corporate hospitality chain." The Masters course has been developed through the consultancy work of the Centre, including international hotel chains and the Green Tourism Business Scheme in the UK, giving it industry grounding and the ability to teach and explore practical solutions.

The International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) is a post-graduate training and research centre and has played a leading role in the responsible tourism and hospitality movement through research and development work within industry and the government.

>>For additional information please contact Helen Goodwin, News Officer at Leeds Met, on (+44) (0) 113 812 3021 or email H.G.Goodwin [at] leedsmet.ac.uk

About Leeds Metropolitan University:

Leeds Metropolitan University is one of the largest providers of tourism education, research and consultancy services in Europe, ranked as the best University for Tourism in the North of England for 2008 by the Guardian Education Guide, and as the number one green university in the UK by People and Planet.

---

## New 'See Turtles' program from Ocean Conservancy

Beaverton, OR, United States – 15 February 2008

Ocean Conservancy announces its new conservation tourism program, SEE Turtles. The program informs travellers about sea turtle locations where local conservation efforts are underway, resulting in support for sea turtle protection while increasing community resources that help residents thrive and value sea turtles in the wild. SEE Turtles also provides turtle watching guidelines to travellers taking conservation tours to reduce negative impacts on turtles and the host community. Going beyond the mantra of tourists not impacting the environment they visit, Ocean Conservancy suggests that travellers should make an impact – a positive one – through conservation tourism. With six out of seven sea turtle species endangered, SEE Turtles is founded on the premise that the growing business of sea turtle viewing and tourism must be developed with the goal of protecting sea turtles as well as generating revenue.

"Sea turtle populations face serious threats from getting caught in fishing gear and from market demand for turtle meat, eggs and shells. People who are on the ground protecting sea turtles where turtles feed or nest can make the biggest positive impact for the animals through community ties, cultural sensitivity, and simply because of their proximity to turtles," said Dr. Wallace J. Nichols, a senior scientist with Ocean Conservancy and a leading international sea turtle expert. The SEE Turtles program currently focuses efforts on essential sea turtle habitat in Baja California Sur, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Trinidad.

>> To learn more about Ocean Conservancy's SEE Turtles program and to find out where you can visit to contribute to sea turtle conservation, visit <http://www.seeturtles.org>.

---

## Basecamp Explorer launches 'EcoStorm' initiative and workshop

Dharamsala, India - 18 February 2008

The Basecamp Explorer Group, an international ecotour operator, is launching 'EcoStorm, a movement for sustainable tourism destination development'. An inaugural workshop entitled 'Tourism in Peace with People and Nature' will be held March 24th through 28th 2008 Dharamsala, India. Basecamp Explorer believe that truly successful destinations must rest on a strong foundation with three major pillars: People, Planet, and Profit.

Based on more than ten years of hands-on experience and best-practice principles, this workshop will explore the challenges and opportunities associated with each of these three pillars. It will examine each pillar through a set of five core sessions, several field excursions, and exercises lead by experts in the field of sustainable tourism, conservation, and development.

The workshops will take a hands-on approach and are based on a participatory process involving resource people from Basecamp Explorer, as well as experts from a wide network. Some of these include the tourism sector, environmental

organizations involved in tourism-for-conservation and development organizations utilising tourism in poverty alleviation and community development. Each workshop will also include local tourism practitioners and destination stakeholders.

The seminar presenters include: Martha Honey, Director of the Centre for Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD), Washington DC, USA, Arild Molstad, Writer, photo journalist, Norway, Judy Kopher Gona, Executive, Ecotourism Kenya (ESOK), Stefan Norris, International Conservationist, Basecamp Foundation, Norway, Dr Lars Lindkvist, CEO of the Basecamp Foundation, Kenya.

>> Registration ends March 7th 2008

For more details see <http://www.houseofpeaceanddialogue.com>

Bookings and other inquiries can be sent to info [at] houseofpeaceanddialogue.com

**ECOCLUB®, International Ecotourism Magazine™**

**Year 8, Issue 96 - Published: March 6, 2008**

*Free bi-monthly e-Magazine of ECOCLUB®, the International Ecotourism Club™, published at <http://www.ecoclub.com/news> in PDF & HTML form.*

**Submissions:** We welcome your article contributions. Contributor guidelines & benefits can be found at <http://www.ecoclub.com/news/information.html>

**Sponsorship:** Please see <http://www.ecoclub.com/advertise.html> for effective and affordable ways to promote your eco business through this publication and in our website. Custom-made solutions also available.

**Disclaimer:** Any views expressed in this newspaper belong to their respective authors and are not necessarily those of ECOCLUB S.A. Although we try to check all facts, we accept no liability for inaccuracies - which means you should not take any travel or other decisions based only on what you read here. Use of this newspaper is covered by the Terms & Conditions of the ECOCLUB.com Website as stated at <http://www.ecoclub.com/terms.html> and by your *uncommon* sense and good humour!

**Correspondence Address:**

**The Editor, ECOCLUB S.A., PO BOX 65232, Psihico, Athens, 154 10 – GREECE**

Copyright © 1999-2008 ECOCLUB S.A. All rights reserved.

**THINK BEFORE YOU PRINT!**

Join ECOCLUB® at <http://www.ecoclub.com/join.html> for more ecotourism news, specialist resources (Jobs, projects, real estate, publications and others) member discounts and specials.

