

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Our Ecotourism Society, guardians of responsible tourism in India is buzzing with activities and new developments. In this new edition of the ESOI Newsletter, we present a glimpse of this, while reminding our readers of the zeal that every member of ESOI possesses towards achieving environmental sustainability.

Steve Borgia

EVENTS & DEVELOPMENTS



ESOI called in to assess ecotourism sites in Haryana

The Ecotourism Society of India was approached by the Principal Secretary (Forests), Haryana, Amit Jha to carry out an assessment of a number of tourism sites in Haryana to study their potential for ecotourism related activities. The ESOI team that led this initiative included Rakesh Mathur,

Jose Dominic, Seema Bhatt and Sandeep Kumar. These experts on ecotourism made field visits along with Haryana Forest Department officials in order to suggest appropriate measures for strengthening ecotourism, and nature conservation and awareness activities in the state. The visit was made from February 28 to March 3, 2015, during which nine sites were surveyed. Many of the sites already have established infrastructure while the brief was to also look at the potential of new sites such as Bhondsi and Masani.

National Investors' Meet for Rejuvenating Degraded Forests

In order to reverse the considerable decline in the inflow of tourists (about 27% since 2011-12) in Kanha, Bandhavgarh and Pench Tiger Reserves in Madhya Pradesh, the Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism Development Board (MPEDB) has launched two major initiatives – Buffer area tourism and Tiger safari. While the former aims to enhance the buffer for tigers by developing a strong prey base along the core boundary, the latter will ensure an area of about 500 ha of buffer land in which tigers and other animals can be easily viewed by tourists.

In addition to these, MPEDB is working on launching a third new initiative for rejuvenating degraded forests to create secure wildlife habitats for tigers and to develop ecotourism on the PPP mode. These initiatives were discussed at the National Investors' Meet on April 2, 2015 in Bhopal, to finalise the approach, in consultation with private investors.

NEWS & UPDATES

Former ESOI President receives the 'Citation of Merit'

At the 111th Explorers Club Annual Dinner to celebrate famous and distinguished explorers from around the world, the 'Citation of Merit' was awarded to mountaineer and explorer, Mandip Singh Soin for his outstanding work in mountaineering, notably for an unmatched spirit of adventure and exploration spanning six continents.

Mandip is the Founder of Ibex Expeditions in India, a pioneering adventure, safari and luxury travel

company. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, UK and the Explorers Club, USA.

Read more about this at www.adventuretravelnews.com/



Workshop in Dehradun

Seema Bhatt attended a workshop from February 27-28, 2015 on 'Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes of the Himalayas' at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun. This workshop was organised by the UNESCO Category 2 Centre, WII and the Ecotourism Wing, Uttarakhand Forest Department. It brought together stakeholders in ecotourism in the Himalayas and provided a platform for brainstorming sessions and experience sharing to foster sustainable nature tourism in the Garhwal Himalayas.

Nature guide training at Kas Plateau

Anirudh Chaoji

The Kas Plateau, which is a World Heritage Site (UNESCO 2012) is an area of botanical significance. Its 350 species of flowering plants attract thousands of visitors every monsoon. However, this results in biodiversity loss and habitat destruction due to lack of awareness among the tourists, interpretation



signage and trained guides.

Since local guides can play a crucial role as guardians of the plateau, Pugmarks Eco Tours, in association with Rufford Scholar, Prerna Agarwal and Maharashtra Forest Department - Satara Territorial Office organised a training workshop for 10 local guides on August 1, 2014. The participants were trained to develop plant and other taxa

identification skills, effective communication and interpretation skills, and to use tools such as field guides, hand lens and smart phones. These locals have been transformed into eco guards and protectors of the plateau.

ESOI speaks up for women in Bhutan

The Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) jointly organised a seminar on Women Empowerment and Ecotourism from August 31 to September 1, 2014. Mandip Singh Soin and Rakesh Mathur were invited from ESOI as speakers at the event. Soin spoke on good eco practices globally and Mathur presented on safe, honourable and sustainable tourism, while emphasising the need for women empowerment and how it can enhance ecotourism efforts.

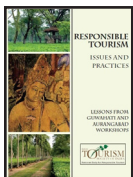
Guide training in the buffer areas

In Protected Areas (PAs), Pugmarks has been conducting guide training programmes for the neighbouring forest communities. This initiative is aimed at involving the local communities in ecotourism. So far, trainings have been conducted for guides in the buffer areas of Tadoba, Pench and Sahayadri Tiger Reserves, in addition to Kaas and Bhimashankar.

These trainings have enabled the youth to work closely with the forest department and actively participate in protecting the PAs. They modules include knowledge about the forest, communication and interpretation skills, interesting story and anecdote sharing skills, animal scat analysis, camera trapping, art of tracing and sharp observation skills in the forest.



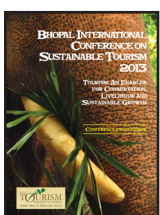
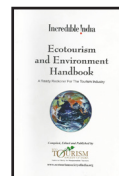
PUBLICATIONS

**Responsible Tourism: Issues and Practises**

The book is a compilation of learnings from the Guwahati and Aurangabad workshops held in 2012, published with the support of Madhya Pradesh Ecotourism Development Board. Postage and handling: Rs.100/-

Ecotourism and Environment Handbook

The handbook is a collation of ideas, guidelines, articles and contacts in ecotourism, with over 290 pages. The printing was funded by the Ministry of Tourism and an additional 1,000 copies by Sita. Postage and handling: Rs.150/-

**BICST 2013**

The book is compilation of proceedings at the Bhopal International Conference on Sustainable Tourism held in April 2013 and contains invaluable learnings and experiences of eminent global speakers and practitioners. Postage and handling: Rs.100/-

Hail Himalayas goes the 'responsible tourism' way

Hail Himalayas, a luxurious ecotourism resort in Himachal Pradesh has the perfect blend of ecology and the latest technology. This can be seen in their electric system which is entirely operated by a Touch Screen Human Machine Interface (HMI) and a Programmable Logic Controller (PLC). This has been done to save energy and bring efficiency into the system. This could perhaps be the only technological innovation in the country in the arena of ecotourism.

A new beginning can be made through small initiatives, on the path of responsible tourism.

Write to admin@ecotourismsocietyofindia.org to avail of these complimentary publications.

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2. Jose Dominic
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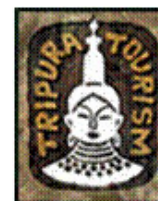
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2. Toby Sinclair
3. Anil Kumar Sharma

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