

**Community-Based Ecotourism in the
Great Himalayan National Park**

Maureen A. DeCoursey
2936 Florence Street
Berkeley, California 94705 USA
Email: 104230.2334@compuserve.com

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CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 WHAT IS COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM (CBET)?	3
2.1. Environmental Codes of Conduct and Master Plans	4
2.2. A Survey of Strategies	4
3 THE CURRENT STATUS OF TOURISM IN GHNP	6
3.1. Visitation and Use	6
3.2. Seasons	8
3.3. Policies, Regulations and Current Initiatives	8
3.4. Tourism Impacts	14
4 THE RESOURCE BASE FOR CBET IN GHNP	18
4.1. Stakeholders	18
4.2. Main Attractions	23
4.3. Infrastructure	27
4.4. Summary of Major Constraints	32
5 A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT	35
5.1. Staff and Expertise	35
5.2. Ecotourism Product Development	36
5.3. Marketing	39
5.4. Role of Park Administration	40
5.5. Entry Fees and Financial Sustainability	40
5.6. Local Capacity-Building	41
5.7. Handicrafts and Related Income Generation Activities	44
5.8. Resource Protection	45
5.9. Visitor Services	50
APPENDICES 53	
1 TOR and Research Method	
2 List of People Interviewed	
3 Questionnaire	
4 Sample Codes of Conduct	
5 Case Study in CBET: Guatemala's Scarlet Macaw Trail	
6 CBET Resources	
7 Cost Analysis for Community-Based Tourism in Kinnaur	
8 Treks in GHNP	
9 Monitoring	
10 ACAP Map	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This consultancy took place for one month in June 1998. The Terms of Reference were to advise the Park Director on various aspects of ecotourism and to design a visitor strategy, including guidelines for using ecodevelopment funds for ecotourism development. These tasks have been completed to the fullest extent possible within the very short time allocated for this assignment. Findings and recommendations are included in this report.

Tourism is now the number one industry in the world. It employs more people and generates more revenue than any other type of business. It has also created major environmental and socio-economic problems in the process, including pollution of various kinds, deforestation, loss of habitat, overcrowding, economic and cultural dislocation, inflation, and local resource shortages. In short, it has not been sustainable, and has done little to improve local living standards or protect the environment.

“Ecotourism” emerged as a response to these issues. Often misconstrued as simply taking a holiday in a nature, watching wildlife, or engaging in an outdoor sport, it is distinguished from conventional tourism in that it employs measures to reduce negative impacts on the natural and cultural environment. “Community-based ecotourism” (CBET) takes the definition one step further. It ensures that the benefits, both social and economic, are realized by local communities.

As a conservation tool, CBET can be a powerful incentive to protect the environment. It can reduce pressure on protected areas by providing nearby communities with less-consumptive options for income and employment. If local people receive direct economic benefits from a protected area, they are less likely to resent its presence and more inclined to support management activities. CBET can also act as a deterrent to animal and plant poaching by increasing the presence of outsiders (making it more difficult to carry out these activities without being detected) and by shifting the value of wildlife to being worth more alive (as a tourist attraction) than dead. Outside of protected areas, CBET offers a sustainable land use that can support the broader goals of forest, agriculture, and open space preservation. By upgrading local infrastructure to meet the needs of tourists, the living standards and resource use practices of local communities can also be improved, especially in the areas of public health, sanitation, energy, and waste management. In this way, CBET can function both as a conservation and rural development strategy.

Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) and the surrounding Ecodevelopment Zone (EZ) have excellent potential to be developed as a CBET destination. Discussions with local villagers indicate that community interest in tourism is very high but they lack the skills, knowledge and support to develop it. From a product perspective, the jagged peaks and steep valleys provide

brehtaking mountain scenery, the wildlife viewing opportunities are good, the forests are expansive and relatively intact, recreational opportunities are diverse, and local cultures are alive and quite interesting. It is quiet, uncrowded, and unpolluted - in fact it is the only place left in the Kulu Valley that has not been overcome by the rapacious tourist development that has plagued the area as a whole, one of India's major Himalayan tourist destinations. From a conservation perspective, CBET can engage a wide cross section of people, and given the other factors mentioned above, it is the most promising strategy to reduce plant collection and poaching inside the park.

Major constraints, however, keep the potential from being realized. These include:

- no business/management plan or guiding policy, and the lack of qualified personnel to develop and implement it;
- limited accommodations and poor local management capacity;
- no environmental protection systems, especially waste management, energy conservation measures, and building codes;
- inadequate visitor information and services (trail maps, list of accommodations, attractions and natural history information, guides, ecotourist guidelines, etc.)
- lack of awareness about the positive and negative impacts of tourism, exposure to appropriate models, and structured participation among stakeholders (e.g. the host communities, GHNP administration, tourists, and the tourism industry).

Visitation in GHNP and the surrounding area is low at present, however there are strong indications that it will not stay this way for long. More people are discovering the area as the other destinations in the region lose their appeal. Thus, it is a crucial time for strategic planning to protect the beauty and environmental quality of the area and to keep the benefits in the hands of the local people. In light of these circumstances, I strongly urge GHNP administration to focus a significant portion of its ecodevelopment work on CBET development.

Major recommendations are summarized below.

Staff and Expertise Requirements (3+)

Ecotourism Coordinator. A coordinator should be hired for the remainder of the project. The TOR can be based on activities outlined in this report. Dr. Purva, Research Associate with the Department of Geography at JNU, is recommended. She has the necessary background in ecotourism and conservation (recently completed a 2-year course on these subjects in the USA with the US National Parks Service) as well as experience in GHNP.

Ecotourism Trainers. Ecotourism is a specialized field and there is no one person or organization in India with the total package of information and expertise required. The Mountain Institute, an international NGO with several CBET programs in the Himalayan region is recommended for this purpose.

Interpretation and Conservation Education Specialist. The Information Center and Interpretive Center require professional expertise to design, construct and install displays, to develop a conservation awareness program for local communities and tourists, and to produce a series of publications.

Ecotourism Product Development

Basic Approach. Three main types of products are recommended: extended stays in selected villages near roadheads in the EZ, village-to-village “ecotreks” in the EZ and park periphery, and limited treks to the park’s interior. Related activities includes fishing, mountain biking, and experiencing local culture. Except for the treks to the park’s interior, all activities should be focused in the EZ and periphery of park.

Successful CBET is contingent on improving the capability of local residents to own, manage and market ecotourism enterprises. To implement the strategy outlined in this report, local people should be trained as guest house operators, guides, porters, cooks, transportation workers, souvenir producers/sellers, etc. A Wildlife Watchers Program should also be initiated in which guides and porters receive standardized cash bonuses directly from tourists if they help them to see selected wildlife species. This can act as a negative incentive to hunting and put peer pressure on those who continue to poach.

The GHNP area is best suited to low and medium budget tourists. The typical visitor in these categories places a premium on peaceful, scenic and unpolluted surroundings and is are satisfied with simple accommodations. Local villagers can most easily adapt to this style of tourism and the environmental impact tends to be lower. Luxury and mass tourism are not compatible with environmental conservation nor local economic development, and should be avoided.

Product development should be a cooperative effort between local communities and GHNP administration. GHNP administration can play a catalytic and facilitation role by organizing local ecotourism working groups, tourism planning research, awareness-building programs and trainings. They can also provide financial and technical support for infrastructure development such as road and trail improvements, accommodations, waste management systems, etc.) Villages known to have a high impact on the park should be especially targeted for involvement. Women, also, should be given special consideration since they will most likely perform a substantial amount of the labor.

Village Stays. Shangarh, Goshaini, Bhatard and Barnagi are potential pilot project villages. They are accessible by road and attractive from a tourist perspective. Village stays are geared toward families and focus on enjoying the peaceful, unpolluted surroundings and experiencing village life. Recreational activities include day hiking, fishing, and mountain biking.

Village-to-Village Ecotreks. At least one is recommended for each valley. These treks are relatively short (< 7 days) and of easy-medium difficulty, depending on how far one goes. They are geared toward the active traveler and require a moderate level of fitness. Overnight stays in villages and natural areas are included. In the Sainj Valley, the route from Shangarh to Dela Thach and back has potential, and in the Tirthan Valley, Goshaini to Nada Thach is the likely candidate.

Treks to the Interior of GHNP. These treks are geared for the tourist with a keen sense of adventure, interest in wildlife and/or mountain environments. They require a high level of physical fitness and the ability to withstand difficult conditions. Because they include some of the of the best wildlife areas in the park, such as the headwaters of the Sainj and Tirthan rivers and the high ridges that separate them, they should be regulated more strictly.

Infrastructure Development

Accommodations. All guest houses and campgrounds should be simple, small-scale, and supported by environmentally-friendly technologies. To increase the number of accommodations, the park should provide low interest loans and technical expertise to help villagers build additional rooms or renovate existing facilities. The park should also upgrade some of its own facilities (those that are located on the main trekking routes) and improve reservation and access systems. Leasing selected facilities to local people for tourism purposes should also be considered.

Roads and Trails. The roads to Shangarh should be improved, but only for small vehicles and tractors. Large trucks and buses should not be accommodated on either road as this will encourage mass forms of tourism which are not compatible with conservation and/or local economic development. Trekking routes should be regularly maintained and posted with trail signs, especially at junctions and trailheads.

Capacity Building

Observation Tour to Nepal. Exposure to appropriate models is needed to help villagers create a vision for their own communities. Nepal has some of the best CBET projects in the region as well as a large number of information and training resources; a visit to the Annapurna Conservation Area or Langtang National Park is strongly recommended. A group of 20 villagers (10 from each valley) is suggested, comprised of at least 4 women, 4 youth, 4 local leaders,

and 8 people currently engaged (or planning to be) engaged in tourism (guest house owners, porters, etc.). The trip should last approximately one week and take place during the winter months.

Ecotourism Working Group. One in each valley is recommended to start. These groups are needed to create a forum for constructive dialogue between stakeholders and to coordinate planning, training and other ecotourism development activities. They can also serve as a mechanism for mitigating future conflicts.

Training Program. At least two initial trainings are required: one for guest house owners and one for porter-guides. Both will last approximately five days. They should take place in the field, be "hands-on", and include a simple manual. Specific training topics are listed in Section 6.3.3.3.

Porter Union and Equipment Cooperative. One in each valley should be organized to help tourists connect with responsible local porters, standardize wages and services, provide insurance in case of accident, and help enforce ecotrekking regulations. The equipment cooperative is needed to supply porters with sleeping bags, kerosene stoves and other accessories to reduce their environmental impact and professionalize their services.

Resource Protection

Environmental Codes of Conduct. Host communities, tourists, and the tourism industry need to be aware of their role and responsibility in protecting the GHNP area. Voluntary codes of conduct are the most effective way to achieve this. Examples of codes can be found in Appendix 4.

Master Plan. This is needed to guide CBET in the short, medium and long term so that development can take place in a systematic fashion. Key features: controls over outside investment and ownership; park zoning; building codes (location, size, architectural style, alternative energy and energy-efficiency); pollution and waste management; resource monitoring program; stakeholder responsibilities and environmental codes of conduct. Both policy and management plans should be endorsed at the panchayat level to give it legal credibility.

Visitor Services

Information Center (Larji) and Interpretative Center (Sai Ropa). Education and awareness are critical to the success of CBET in the GHNP area. Both visitors and residents need to understand the value and uniqueness of the area, the problems, and each person's responsibility

in helping to protect it. The Information Center and Interpretive Center both play key roles in this respect; they are the initial contact point for most tourists and set the tone for their visit.

Information and facilities which should be available at both locations include: Tourist Code of Conduct, interpretive displays about the park and the EZ, a directory of tourist amenities in the area (lodging, food, attractions, recreational opportunities, porter/guide services, etc.), and a recycling center. A small shop (ideally operated by a community member) can sell snacks and drinks, locally-made handicrafts, park souvenirs and publications, and eco-friendly items such as iodine tablets, durable water bottles, and solar batteries/chargers.

Publications. Three publications are recommended: "How to be a Good Ecotourist" posters and leaflets; an interpretive map of the park and EZ with trekking routes, villages, time/distance information, points of interest, etc., and a small guidebook to the plants and animals of the GHNP area (to be used as a tourist souvenir as well as an environmental education textbook for local schoolchildren).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP), situated in the upper catchments of the Sainj and Tirthan Rivers in the state of Himachal Pradesh, is one of India's most outstanding mountain parks. Stretched across 765 square kilometers with altitudinal range of 1300 to 6100 meters above mean sea level, it has some of the largest and most intact forest and alpine ecosystems in the state. It also contains the best representation of Western Himalayan flora and fauna in the country. Notable mammals include tahr, musk deer, goral, black bear, brown bear, blue sheep, and snow leopard. Over 300 bird species have been recorded, including several rare pheasants. GHNP is one of only two national parks in the world with a population of the Western Tragopan. Floral diversity is equally impressive, including over 30 medicinal and aromatic species with a long history of use in the ancient herbal healing system known as Ayurveda. The World Conservation Monitoring Center has identified the Western Himalaya as one of the five centers of plant diversity and endemism in India in need of urgent protection.

High, almost impassable mountain ranges and perennial snowfields border the park on the north, east and south. Access is from the west, where the valleys open to house over 16,000 people in 200 scattered hamlets. The park itself has no permanent habitation, but the Sainj and Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuaries, located in the lower reaches of the two river valleys and surrounded by the park on three sides, have a small number of isolated settlements. At present, the sanctuaries are managed as defacto parts of the park and will eventually be officially integrated. GHNP has yet to be notified pending the resolution of certain historical use rights to resources inside its boundaries. There are no roads inside the park, but two seasonal tracks reach within walking distance of its borders.

Human pressures on GHNP are substantial. The surrounding communities are primarily subsistence farmers who have used the park for centuries for grazing domestic livestock, hunting, collecting forest products, and making religious pilgrimages. While there appears to have been a certain degree of historical coexistence between humans and biodiversity in the area, the transition from a subsistence-based economy to one emphasizing cash has wreaked havoc on park ecology, and many species have been severely overexploited. The main source of cash income for local residents is now the harvest and sale of wild plants, and to a lesser degree, bird and mammal products. Recent reports indicate that thousands of tons of over 25 different species of wild plants are collected on an annual basis (Tandon 1997; DeCoursey 1997). The highest earners are morel mushrooms (*Morchella* spp.) and *Jurinea macrocephala*¹. Several species are threatened with localized extinction and at least three have been listed by

¹ Calculated as quantity x price. Morels are not as abundant, but the price is very high. Conversely, the price of *Jurinea* is quite low but it is collected in large quantities.



the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES): *Dioscorea deltoidea*, *Dactylorhiza hatageria* and *Picrorhiza kurroa*. Musk glands, goral and pheasant meat, bear gall bladder and leopard skins are also valuable commodities.

To reduce these pressures and mitigate park-people conflicts, the Indian Government, with support from The World Bank, initiated a five-year Ecodevelopment Program in 1994. The goal was to reduce consumptive forms of dependence on the park by introducing social and economic development programs compatible with conservation. These efforts are concentrated in an Ecodevelopment Zone (EZ) which has been established on the western edge of the park and extends up to 5 kilometers from its boundary. The EZ covers approximately 113 small villages comprising 1600 households, with a population of 11,000 people. A number of local committees have been set up to work with park staff and carry out conservation and development activities in the villages.

This report is an assessment of the potential for community-based ecotourism (CBET) as one component of ecodevelopment in GHNP. It is divided as follows:

- Section 1—Introduction
- Section 2—What is Community-Based Ecotourism?
- Section 3—The Current Status of Tourism in GHNP
- Section 4—The Resource Base for Community-Based Ecotourism in GHNP
- Section 5—A Strategy for Development
- Appendices.

Names and contact information for individuals and organizations mentioned in the report and can be found in Appendix 2 (People Interviewed) or Appendix 6 (Resources). Note that the phrase "GHNP area", used throughout this report, refers to the park and the EZ together. From a tourism perspective they are best considered as one planning and administrative unit.



2. WHAT IS COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM?

Community-based ecotourism (CBET) is a form of tourism that links local enterprise development with environmental conservation. Ecotourism, often misconstrued as simply taking a holiday in a nature, watching wildlife, or engaging in an outdoor or adventure sport, is distinguished from conventional tourism in that it employs measures to assure that the negative impacts on the natural and cultural environment are minimized and mitigated. “Community-based” ecotourism takes the definition one step further. It ensures that the benefits, both social and economic, are realized by local communities. In this way, CBET is simultaneously a mechanism for rural development and for conservation.

CBET supports conservation in park and protected areas by providing a potentially benign (in terms of environmental impact) source of income and employment for communities living in the periphery. Local people are more inclined to support biodiversity conservation and follow park rules if they have a direct stake in maintaining park quality. A local tourism industry based on the park provides such a stake. By improving local facilities to meet the needs of tourists, the living standards of the whole community can also be enhanced especially in the areas of health, sanitation, waste management and environmental protection. The park, instead of creating economic and social hardship in nearby communities, becomes a community asset. CBET can also help reduce poaching by shifting the value of certain wildlife species to being worth more alive (as a tourist attraction) than dead. Simply having more outsiders in the area can reduce illegal activity and other destructive practices by making them more difficult to carry out without being detected.

Key features are:

- small-scale;
- use of environment-friendly technologies and practices;
- main services delivered by community members - minimal leakage of benefits to outside;
- increased awareness and cooperation among stakeholders, and
- compatible with local socio-cultural norms.

Experience from ecotourism projects in other parts of the world suggests that a number of conditions must also be in place for CBET to be successful. Perhaps most importantly, local people must have a significant degree of control if ecotourism is to benefit them. Outside investment must therefore be limited and/or regulated to foster local enterprise development and protect community interests. Finally, CBET ventures must be commercially viable and utilize principles of sound business planning.



2.1. ENVIRONMENTAL CODES OF CONDUCT AND MASTER PLANS

Two of the most powerful ecotourism tools are (1) a code of conduct and (2) a master plan. These are briefly described below.

2.1.1. Code of Conduct

The code of conduct is a set of operational guidelines for tourists and tourism operators (hotel operators, trekking companies, etc.) that gives specific instructions to minimize negative environmental and social impacts. They are written in a positive, educational tone, inviting everyone to be part of the solution instead of the problem. They should be action-oriented and easy to observe through supportive infrastructure. To reach the largest possible audience, they need to be widely available in various published formats such as free leaflets and posters. Sample codes adopted by Pakistan, Nepal, and other parts of India are included in Appendix 4.

2.1.2. Master Plan

The master plan is a guiding document that helps local communities develop ecotourism enterprises in a systematic fashion and assures that such development is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. They are a combination of business, land management, resource protection and economic development strategies. They work in tandem with a policy framework that supports local people as the primary beneficiaries and protects the quality of the resource base.

Creating and formalizing appropriate codes of conduct are a solid “first step” in the planning process. Any number of relevant topics can be added including local ownership/access rights, regulations pertaining to outside investors, zoning, building codes (size, location, architectural style) and environmental safeguards (waste management, sanitation systems, forest conservation, alternative energy, etc.) To have maximum effectiveness, master plans should be approved by local authorities (VDC or panchayat) and eventually obtain official status at the state level.

2.2. A SURVEY OF STRATEGIES

There is no one “recipe” for successful CBET. Each program is a reflection of the natural and socio-cultural resource base, demands of the tourism market, and the ability and interest of stakeholders. Some typical strategies are:



- village to village trekking tours or homestays, where local communities host tourists in their private houses, small guest houses or campgrounds that employ environmentally-friendly technologies.
- endangered species tours, where an element of biodiversity in need of protection is developed as a tourist attraction, such as the Scarlet Macaw Trail in Guatemala (see Appendix 5).
- reinvesting entry or permit fees, special taxes on tourism enterprises, or funds donated by tourists or tour operators directly into community development or environmental management schemes.
- partnerships with professional ecotourism operators for training and facilities development in exchange for exclusive rights to a given area for a set period of time.





3 THE CURRENT STATUS OF TOURISM IN GHNP

3.1. VISITATION AND USE

Park records and discussions with park staff indicate that visitation inside GHNP is low. Mr. Nagesh Kumar, Park Director, estimates that less than 500 people per year visit the EZ and/or the park (pers. comm). Dr. Gaston (pers. comm.) estimates that less than 10 groups visit some part of the park annually.

A review of permit records at the three range offices show that the Tirthan Valley receives the most visitors at present. This is due in part to more consistent record keeping at the Sai Ropa Range Office; records from the Sainj and Jiva Nal Range Offices are virtually non-existent. Only two permits had been issued from the Sainj office and none had been issued from Jiva Nal, although staff from both offices reported that there had been tourist activity in the past. It is important to remember that permits reflect park visits only; many tourists remain in the EZ for the duration of their stay and are therefore not counted.

The tables below contain selected visitation statistics from the Tirthan Valley. From 1992 to 1998 (June), the Tirthan Valley received approximately 110 visitors. The majority were Indian (school groups in particular) who take day trips or short treks to the park's border. Most visitors came in the months of May and June, coinciding with school holidays throughout the northern part of the country and the beginning of the hot season.

It is interesting to note that the number of groups staying less than three days and over one week are roughly equivalent. This suggests that two types of excursions (short visits to the park periphery and extended treks to the interior) have similar levels of appeal, although to different populations — more foreign tourists appear to visit the interior of the park. Foreign tourists mainly come from Europe, the largest international market for India as a whole. Film crews also occasionally come to the area for shots of tahr, pheasants and other wildlife.

Permits Issued at Sai Ropa Range Office (Tirthan Valley)

Year	Party/Number (Origin*)	Time of Year	No. Days
1992	1. 1 (i)	Jun	20
	2. 1 (i) 2 (f-UK)	Sep	5
Totals	2 (f) 2 (I) 4T		25
1993	1. 5 (f)	Mar	2
	2. 2 (f), 1 (i)	Sep	8
	3. 1 (i)	May	3
	4. 1(f-UK)	May	9
Totals	8 (f) 2 (I) 10T		22
1994	1. 1 (f-UK)	May	3
	2. 15 (i-school)	Jun	1
	3. 7 (i)	Jun	9
Totals	1 (f) 22 (I) 23T		13
1995	1. 3 (i), 2 (f)	May	3
	2. 2 (f- EUR)	Jun	3
	3. 4 (f)	Jun	10
	4. 3 (i)	Jun	2
Totals	8 (f) 6 (I) 14T		18
1996	1. 3 (f)	Nov	1
	2. 1 (f-CAN)	Mar	2
	3. 2 (f-CAN)	Jun	9
	4. 3 (f-USA)	Jun	4
	5. 3 (f-USA)	Oct	8
	6. 1 (f)	Oct	6
	7. 2 (f-UK)	May	9
Totals	15 (f) 0 (I) 15T		39
1997	1. 2 (f)	May	3
	2. 3 (f-FRA)	Jun	8
	3. 2 (f-EUR)	Jun	5
	4. 2 (f-ISR)	Aug	4
	5. 1 (f)	Dec	2
Totals	10 (f) 0 (I) 10T		22
1998	1. 2 (f)	Jan	15
	2. 2 (f)	Apr	15
	3. 3 (i), 2 (f)	Apr	1
	4. 4 (i)	May	1
	5. 23 (i-school)	May	1
	6. 2 (f-UK)	May	8
Totals	8 (f) 30 (I) 38T		41

*i-Indian, f-foreigner (details given if available)



Selected Summary Statistics

Category	Number	Comment
Total # recorded visitors	110	
Indians	62	Over 1/2 = 2 school groups
Foreigners	48	Rank: Unknown 26, UK 8, USA 6, EUR 4, FRA 3, CAN 3, ISR 2
Length of Stay x # of Groups	14	Does not include stay in nearby villages.
≤3 days	5	
4-6 days	12	
≥ 7 days		
Month x # of Groups		
May/June	10 each	Coincides with school holidays
Aug	4	
Mar, Sep, Oct	2 each	
Nov, Dec, Jan, Jul	1 each	

3.2. SEASONS

Tourists mainly come to GHNP in the spring and fall months. Other seasonal aspects of visitation and use are outlined in the table below.

Dec-May	Trekking in villages and lower areas of the park possible. Wildlife in low altitudes. Several local festivals.
March-May	Mushroom collection season. Pheasant mating/egg-laying. Beginning of hot season in plains; school holidays.
May-June	Trekking to alpine areas possible. Hot, clear weather.
June-Oct	Commercial plant collection. Migratory livestock herds in high altitudes.
Jul-Aug	Monsoon season limits visibility. Alpine areas and high passes accessible, although there is increased trail danger from intense rainfall.
Sept-Nov	Best season overall. Trekking to park interior, alpine areas and over high passes possible. Clear skies, mild temperatures. Good fishing.

3.3. POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND CURRENT INITIATIVES

The following section outlines some of the local, regional and national activities that (may) affect CBET development in the GHNP area. These include policies, regulations, programs and private sector initiatives.

3.3.1. Park Administration

3.3.1.1. Policy and Regulations

There is no tourism management plan for GHNP, but there are some general rules and regulations. These are described below.

Entry Permits: The main management mechanism is the requirement of entry permits. These are issued at the range office in Larji (for Jivan Nala), in Sainj (for the upper Sainj Valley) and in Sai Ropa (for the Tirthan Valley). A nominal fee (IR 2/Indian/day, IR 4/foreigners/day) is charged. Additional fees are levied for the use of still and video cameras (IR 2-4/day and IR 1000/day, respectively). Tourists are also required to indicate on the permit the reason(s) for their excursion. Five categories are listed: a) investigation or study of wildlife and purposes ancillary of incidental thereto; b) photography; c) scientific research d) tourism; e) transaction of lawful business with any person residing in the sanctuary.

There are several drawbacks to the permit system, outlined below.

- (1) The Sainj and Larji Range Offices are far from the park's border, making it inconvenient to obtain a permit if one is staying in the EZ. This is especially true for day hikes and short trips.
- (2) If the range officer (RO) is not present, the permit cannot be issued and the tourist cannot visit to the park. This is reportedly a common problem as the ROs are often absent from their posts and no one else has the authority to issue permits in their absence.
- (3) The categories listed on the permit overlap and thus do not give a clear picture of use. For example, a tourist could be an amateur naturalist who is interested in wildlife and who takes photographs. Pertinent information such as intended route, total number of people in party (including local staff) and other aspects of visitation are not included.

Use of Park Accommodations: The park manages a number of facilities in the park and EZ, including, two rest houses, 14 patrolling huts, and an 8-room research station (Shakti). Anyone wishing to stay in the rest house or research facility needs written permission from the Park Director. If there are no tenants or if there is extra room, the decision is often left to the caretaker's discretion. Patrolling huts are left open for anyone to use.

Problems with this system include:

- (1) condition of facilities vary widely and there is no published inventory to assist potential visitors in trip planning;



(2) except for the rest house in Shangarh, there are no full-time caretakers or regular maintenance. Keys may be difficult to obtain if the responsible person is not present.

(3) permission can be difficult to obtain if the Park Director is not available;

(4) communications between Park Director's office, range offices and other park facilities is unreliable.

Guides: A GHNP staff member is required to escort groups in the park. (This is not strictly enforced).

Use of Local Porters: Trekking groups are strongly encouraged to use local porters, although this is not an official policy.

3.3.1.2. *Current Initiatives*

The park has a fledgeling tourist development program. The three main initiatives are:

Tourism Development Areas: The park has designated the village of Shangarh in the Sainj Valley as a tourist development area and initial discussions with community representatives have been held. To improve accessibility to the park, two seasonal roads have been constructed: one from Ropa to Shangarh and the other from Goshaini to Rolla in the Tirthan Valley. Both roads are slated to be paved in the near future.

Visitor Center and Information Center: Construction of a Visitor Center (including accommodations) at Sai Ropa and an Information Center at Larji have recently been completed. Exhibits and other aspects of interior design are being organized.

Publicity: A promotional brochure was completed last year and is available at the range offices, park headquarters and the Himachal Pradesh Tourist Information Office in Kullu.

3.3.2. **Communities in the EZ**

3.3.2.1. *Policies and Regulations*

Most villages have had little experience with tourists so do not have specific policies *per se*, however a few of the more accessible villages have adopted some basic visitor rules. In Shangarh, for example, tourists who camp in the public *devta* (local god) grounds are required to pay a camping fee and a photography fee; fees go to the village fund. Tourists are also asked to keep the area clean throughout their stay. In Shakti, the highly orthodox village

inside the wildlife sanctuary, people who wear leather or eat meat are not allowed. There has been some attempt to require the use of local porters in both the Sainj and Tirthan Valleys, but this has not been officially sanctioned.

3.3.2.2. *Current Initiatives*

Even though there is high local interest in tourism development there are few independent initiatives. Activity is mainly focused on a few guest houses, some sporadic employment as porters and guides, and craft production.

At present there are 2-3 private guest houses in the Tirthan Valley and one in Shangarh (another one is under construction.) All are owned by local community members and operate on an informal basis; there is no outside advertising or coordination between them. At least two owners have recently taken loans from the HPTDC and GHNP to upgrade their facilities. (See section 4.3.2. for a complete list of lodging options in the area.)

Two years ago a businessman from Rajasthan purchased land in the Tirthan Valley (Goshaini) with the intent to build a tourist resort. Villagers reported that 20 to 40 double-occupancy cottages are planned. This is the first development of its kind in the area, and approval by the community is still forthcoming. The legalities of outside investment/ownership are unclear, as are the benefits to the community. This development will definitely set a precedent and should be closely monitored. In terms of the prospects for CBET, there are several potential problems, described below.

(1) By entering the market before the local community has a chance to create their own infrastructure, this development will capture a significant portion of tourist revenue and reduce the earning potential for residents.

(2) Contrary to popular thinking, the jobs created would be short-term and minimum wage, at best. Skilled outside labor would surely be brought in to manage daily operations and perhaps for construction as well.

(3) Since there are no construction guidelines or environmental safeguards, the size and style of buildings, sewage treatment system, and waste management are left up to the owner's discretion.²

² The site is located on a steep, unstable hillside, approximately 100 meters above the Tirthan River, that is prone to landslides. Safe sewage treatment facilities are nearly impossible under such conditions. A seasonal road previously constructed by the forest department has already destabilized the slope and there is every indication that further construction will exacerbate existing erosion problems.



If the situation in nearby Manali is any indication, this development could seriously compromise the prospects for CBET as well as the greater goal of conservation and sustainable development. If not regulated properly, a facility of this size could easily come to dominate the life of the small valley by increasing traffic, noise, and pollution. The increased demand for water and electricity could cause local shortages, and the architectural heritage of the area — an important tourist attraction and cultural value in its own right — would be diminished.

3.3.3. State and National Government

3.3.3.1. Policies and Regulations

Attempts to review state tourism policy were not successful due to the time constraints of this consultancy. In the GHNP area, the only state regulation encountered was the requirement of a fishing license for public areas along the Tirthan and Sainj Rivers. Licenses are available for a nominal fee at the government fish farm in Nagani (near Goshaini) and Fisheries Office in Larji.

In general, government tourism policy at both the state and national level has been dominated by a philosophy of quantity over quality. Environmental protection and community development have not been priorities. Building codes, zoning laws, environmental mitigation and other regulations to control the negative impacts of tourism are rarely observed, if they exist at all. Government departments or community development organizations with the necessary expertise to ensure sustainability, such as the district forest offices and local NGOs, are not involved in planning or policy development.

The natural environment, the major “draw” in the Himalayan region, has been seriously degraded by this lack of foresight and the focus on quick financial returns. As a result, many of the premier destinations have become noisy, polluted, and over-crowded jumbles of concrete structures, and there has been a distinct down-turn in the quality of the tourist experience. Local residents have typically retained only a meager portion of the benefits yet have been made to bear the greater share of the costs in terms of reduced quality of life, inflation, power and water shortages, air-water-noise pollution, accumulation of litter, a loss of cultural traditions, soil erosion, watershed management problems, and increased social tensions. Nearby Manali is a prime example.

Thankfully, ecotourism is beginning to register on the public radar screen. The Government of India Tourism Action Plan (1994-95) mentioned ecotourism but no policies or guidelines were put forward (D. S. Khatri, pers. comm.) A Himalayan Tourism Advisory Board has reportedly been set up in New Delhi and some discussions on ecotourism have been held, but likewise, few tangibles have emerged. From the private sector, several initiatives are reportedly underway

in the states of Kerala, Orrisa, and Karnataka but specific details are not known. It may be useful to find out more about these undertakings before developing a program for GHNP.

3.3.3.2. *Current Initiatives*

HPTDC Hotel at Jalori Pass: HPTDC is planning a large hotel at Jalori Pass, a well-known scenic area near the EZ. This is the first facility of its kind in the region and will set a precedent for future development.

Loan Program: The Office of Tourism and Civil Aviation has instituted a low-interest loan and incentive program to improve accomodation and related tourist facilities in the state. At least two residents in the EZ have taken advantage of it so far.

Road Construction: The dam that is planned between Aut and Pandoh will re-route the main road into the Kullu Valley through Larji, the intersection of the Sainj and Tirthan Valleys and the gateway to GHNP. This will undoubtedly bring more tourists into the area and could substantially increase park visitation and local revenues.

3.3.4. **NGO Initiatives**

There are no NGOs working on tourism in the GHNP area, however there are several initiatives in other parts of the Indian Himlaya which may be useful resources. The Himalayan Environment Trust (HET) in New Delhi has compiled a Code of Conduct for visitors (included in Appendix 4) that is published in the Lonely Planet Guidebooks, one of the most popular set of tour guides to India for international travelers. HET has also organized clean-up campaigns in the Gangotri area, but they do not appear to be active in the Kullu Valley at present.

At least five NGOs currently have or are considering community-based tourism/ecotourism projects in the Indian Himalaya. The Central Himalayan Rural Action Group (CHIRAG) in Nainital, U. P., and the Rural Center for Human Interests (RUCHI) in Sirmour District, H. P. have agreements with student and special interest travel groups from abroad. These groups stay in the villages the NGOs are working in and participate in some sort of educational or community service program. International Development Enterprises (IDE), based in New Delhi, conducted a feasibility analysis for a community-based tourism program based on a similiar concept in Kinnaur, H. P. (A cost analysis for this program is included in Appendix 7.) The Ladakh Ecological Development Project and the Sikkim Biodiversity Conservation Project³

³ An undertaking of The Mountain Institute (TMI), an international NGO with regional headquarters in Kathmandu. TMI works in mountain countries around the world and has been operative in the Himalaya for almost two decades. Their aim is to protect mountain environments and cultures. They are currently involved in protected area management programs (which include an ecotourism component) in Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet. They are perhaps the best regional resource for mountain ecotourism.



both have comprehensive community-based ecotourism projects. These programs are part of larger rural development and biodiversity conservation schemes that emphasize environmental management, local capacity-building, and cultural conservation.

3.4. TOURISM IMPACTS

Tourism has had substantial environmental and socio-economic impacts in the Indian Himalaya. These include deforestation, soil erosion, water pollution, loss of biodiversity, inflation, overcrowding, economic marginalization, and cultural dislocation. Tourism impacts in the GHNP area are low at present, but if the situation in nearby Kullu and Manali is indicative, they could quickly reach alarming levels if development is allowed to proceed an ad-hoc fashion. The following section highlights current and potential tourism impacts in the GHNP area.

3.4.1. Environmental Impacts

Litter: Non-biodegradable litter (plastic wrappers, cans, water bottles, etc.) is almost non-existent in the park, although there is some build-up in the EZ from local consumption. There is no litter or waste management system as such, although visitors are asked to clean up after themselves.

Water and Soil Contamination: Surface water is contaminated primarily by human and livestock excrement, household detergents, fertilizers, and agricultural chemicals. Local respondents reported that the number of fish has decreased over the years, which could adversely affect plans to develop the area as a fishing destination. Other aspects of water and soil contamination are outlined below.

- **Poor Sanitation**

Most villages in the EZ use the “open latrine” as their main toilet. This is not suitable for tourists, and is responsible for several public health hazards as well. In several villages, idyllic camping areas and river banks were infested with human feces. Proper sanitation greatly enhances tourism appeal in a given area and improves the health of the community as a whole.

- **Improper Use and Disposal of Agricultural Chemicals**

Conventional agricultural development has been promoted in the region in order to increase production of commercial crops such as apples. Indiscriminate use of fertilizers and pesticides, however, has contributed to water pollution and may eventually effect the range and viability of plant and animal species in the area, including those in GHNP. Broad spectrum chemicals not

only degrade the environment but may cause some species to become locally extinct, especially birds and insects. In the Nepal Himalaya, for example, the number of bees and butterflies has been declining in many hill areas, reportedly due to the large-scale application of pesticides in the lowlands. These insects are some of the most important pollinators in Himalayan ecosystems, and the production of wild honey has been markedly reduced. The diversity and abundance of insects, fish, birds and other wildlife in the park and EZ could suffer a similar fate unless appropriate measures are taken.

Forest Degredation: Forest health can be adversely affected by tourism mainly through excessive fuelwood cutting (as a result of greater energy demands) and timber extraction (for construction). Trekking parties (both trekkers and support staff) tend to rely on firewood as their primary source of cooking fuel, and porters use it for warmth during the night. Many Himalayan communities already suffer from fuel shortages due to deforestation and population pressures, and tourism places an even greater strain. This problem is especially acute at high altitudes where slow-growing species dominate. Related issues include soil compaction and vegetation trampling due to concentrations of pack animals or improperly managed camping areas.

In the GHNP area, there are several woodfuel and forest issues which could be exacerbated by an increase in tourism. There are no reports of fuelwood shortages in the EZ at present; however local plant collectors (and to a lesser extent, herders) are allegedly having localized impacts in the park, especially in the higher altitudes. Illegal timber harvesting for commercial sale is reportedly a common occurrence in both the EZ and the park as well. The traditional open hearth stoves are not efficient and waste a considerable amount of fuelwood, and trekking groups are not required to use alternative fuels.

Preventative measures must be undertaken early in the tourism development process to keep these issues in check. These include fuelwood and timber management, the introduction of alternative energy and energy efficiency technologies, and general forest conservation measures. Villagers currently use gas, kerosene, wood or a combination; however, the farther away from the roadhead (and closer to the park) the greater the dependence on firewood. Kerosene is readily available at most roadhead villages, although special permits are required to obtain more than allotted amount if it is to be purchased at the subsidized rate. Non-subsidized kerosene can be purchased freely and gas cylinders are available in Bhanjar and Sainj.

Erosion: Mass erosion is a fact of life in the Himalaya, yet there has been little effort to control it in the park or EZ. On the contrary, haphazard construction of roads and buildings, destructive logging practices, and a lack of riparian management have exacerbated it. Flooding continues to destroy trails, bridges and homes every year.



3.4.2. Socio-Economic Impact

Income Generation: Even though tourism is poorly developed in the GHNP area, it appears to make an important — if sporadic — contribution to household incomes for the few families that are involved. Estimates of tourism-based income relative to total household income range from a small fraction to almost 1/2 (R. Bharti, pers. comm.). Some typical prices for tourism goods and services are:

- Lodging: IR 100-400/day, depending on standard and services provided.
- Porterage: IR 100-150/day plus food, depending on time of year (20-25 kg total)
- Prices are higher in certain months due to seasonal labor demands and opportunity costs, e.g. August-September (agricultural work) and March-May (mushroom collection).
- Ponies/Mules: IR 150/day (40 kgs.)
- Woven shawls and related items: (IR 500-2000, depending on quality).

Less than a dozen people in the EZ are estimated to be directly involved in tourism on a regular or part-time basis. They are mainly guest house owners/operators, porters, mule drivers, shop owners and craftspeople (weavers). Guest house owners tend to be the wealthier, more educated members of the community, with enough land and disposable incomes to make the necessary investments. Porters come from the poorer sectors of society: they are typically cash and/or land poor, and are likely to be involved as collectors in the wild plant trade as well. Shop owners benefit because tourists and tour groups often purchase supplies and other items locally. Some villages, such as Shangarh, charge camping fees which are deposited into a community fund. Women do all the weaving, but it was not possible to obtain specific information on the economics of this enterprise due to the time constraints of this consultancy.

For tourism to reduce pressure on the park, the communities currently engaged as harvesters in the wild plant trade must be directly involved. Tourism-based wages and income must also compete favorably with wild plants and other consumptive sources of income in the area. To give an idea of the amount of income required for tourism to have a positive effect, the following figures are useful for comparison. A recent study conducted in the Sainj Valley by researchers from Jawaharlal Nehru University found that household incomes from the sale of wild plants (both mushrooms and medicinals) ranged from IR 2000 to 6000 annually, depending on the number of family members involved (Dr. Zutshi, pers. comm.) This amount, however, probably represents the lower end of the true amount given the reluctance of villagers to divulge information about personal finances. Mr. Pradeep Choudhary, GHNP research sociologist, estimates average incomes in the EZ (from all sources) are as follows:



% Households	Average Cash Income (IR)
65	15,000-30,000
20	>30,000
15	<15,000

Gender: Like most South Asian villages, men of the GHNP area control the economic life of the household and are the primary decision makers. Yet local women, being *paharis* (hill people), are less restricted than women of the lowlands and as a consequence can be more independent, self-assured and influential. This is definitely an asset in terms of CBET development, although care must be taken to avoid increasing their labor burden. Some typical labor breakdowns observed in the area are listed below.

Household Activity	Actor (m, w, c)*
Daily household and farm labor	w, c
Fodder collecting	w, c
Mushroom collecting	w, c
Weaving	w
Outside labor	m
High altitude plant collecting (<i>jaributi</i>)	m
Tourism Activity	
Guest house operators	mw
Guest house owner	m
Payments and accounting	m
Cooking	m, w, c
Housekeeping	w, c
Portering	m
Rest house chaukidhars	m

* m=men, w=women, c=children



4 THE RESOURCE BASE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM

The CBET resource base is comprised of the human, biophysical and cultural resources of GHNP area. Protection and enhancement of these resources hold the key to sustainable tourism: if the resource base is degraded, tourism will suffer, and the supports to biodiversity conservation will disappear.

“Human resources” is another term for stakeholders. It refers to the existing pool of local expertise, authority, and manpower, e.g. people who are currently involved in some aspect of the local tourism industry or who would like to be in the future. Biophysical resources include flora, fauna, scenery, climate, clean air and other environmental features. Cultural resources cover the various aspects of human social organization in the area, for example religion, agriculture, architecture, traditional medicine, dance, crafts, and other forms of artistic expression.

4.1. STAKEHOLDERS

CBET is a multi-faceted undertaking that requires expertise and cooperation on many fronts. Since it overlaps the mandates of different government departments and private industries, a concerted effort is needed to include relevant organizations in the planning process. Thus, identifying stakeholders and creating a sense of partnership among them is a crucial first step towards successful CBET development. In the GHNP area, at least nine can be distinguished:

- tourists (domestic and foreign)
- the host communities in the EZ
- travel agencies and tour operators who conduct business in the area, or wish to
- government tourism agencies
- GHNP Administration
- Wildlife Institute of India
- SAVE (a local NGO based in Sainj)
- Seraj District Forestry Office
- Himachal Pradesh Fisheries Department

4.1.1. The Tourists

CBET requires tourists to take an active role in the protection of the environment and community development. Education is crucial in this respect: tourists must be made aware of their impact, both positive and negative, socio-economically and ecologically, and given specific guidelines to follow. This is especially true for the average Indian tourist, who has had little exposure to

responsible tourism and has a tendency to bring the bad habits of the city (pollution, litter, demanding attitudes) into the hills.

Tourist numbers are quite low at present in GHNP and the EZ. Mr. Nagesh Kumar, Park Director, estimates that less than 500 people visit the area annually. The majority of tourists are Indian, although a significant number of foreign tourists come to the area and tend to stay for longer periods of time. The latter are typically on extended tours of South Asia and come to the GHNP area from the more well-known destinations in the Kullu Valley. The types of tourists encountered during this consultancy included meditators, artists, nature lovers, writers, trekkers, anglers, and those who simply want to “get away from it all” and live a simple village life. They value a serene, scenic and unpolluted environment, and are comfortable with basic accommodations and amenities. The park itself attracts only keen nature and outdoor enthusiasts due to its rugged topography and lack of amenities while the EZ appeals to a broader range of tourists. The Tirthan area is especially attractive to Indian families due to its easy accessibility and inexpensive accommodations.

Visitors can be further classified into two groups: those who are part of an organized group and those who are traveling independently. This is important information for determining how best to market the area.

4.1.1.1. Group Tourists

Villagers in the Sainj and Tirthan Valleys reported that both foreign and domestic groups came in the past but on a very irregular basis. Some visited for one day only, others stayed for longer periods as part of a trek or an extended residence in a particular village. At present there are three types of group tourists visiting the GHNP area: commercial, school, and private specialty groups. Most bring their own cooks and staff but buy provisions locally and employ local porters and/or guides, if needed.

Domestic : Only one commercial operator, Asian Adventures (Delhi), brings groups regularly to the Tirthan Valley. They base their excursions out of a guest house in Goshaini and take short day trips into the park and the Jalori Pass⁴ area. Commercial operators from Manali also come to GHNP (mainly the Tirthan area) but only on a sporadic basis.

⁴ Jalori Pass is a major regional tourist attraction located approximately 30 kilometers from the EZ. It offers exceptional alpine scenery that is easily accessible by car. Sightseeing, mountain biking and visiting nearby pilgrimage sites are popular activities.



School groups from the Kullu Valley are a major user of the park at present, mainly in the Tirthan Valley. They come to this side of the park presumably because of easier road access and better accommodations. They stay for a period of 1-3 days in park accommodations, although meals are often provided by a local guest house operator in Goshaini. A research group from Jawaharlal Nehru University has come for the past two summers as part of a master's degree course in geography. They stay for approximately 2 weeks, based out of the park rest house in Shangarh.

Angler groups are also common, especially in the fall. During the summer of 1997, a paragliding group from Dharamsala conducted a beginner's course in Shangarh where all the students camped in the *devta* ground. A few private trekking parties also visit the park.

International: In the past, commercial groups of British tourists organized by West Himalayan Holidays (Manali) used to trek from Sarahan, over the Bashleo Pass, up the Tirthan Valley and over the high ridge to the Sainj Valley. The company, however, closed down several years ago and since then no foreign groups have come to the area. Small private groups, also from the U.K., used to rent a local house in Lapah (near Shangarh) for extended periods.

As a stand alone destination for most international groups, the GHNP area is not especially attractive given the competing locations in the area such as Ladakh and Zaskar. Specialty tourists, however, such as birders and wildlife enthusiasts, are more likely to visit because of the chance to see an endangered species in a relatively untouched environment, or as part of multi-destination tours of Indian parks. The lack of appropriate accommodations is the major drawback for international group tours.

4.1.1.2. *Independent Tourists*

Independent tourists, both foreign and domestic, are the most common type of visitor to GHNP area. Most stay in the EZ and take day trips into the park, although some come specifically for an extended trek inside the park and spend little time in the EZ as such.

Independent tourists stay mainly in local guest houses. They eat what their host offers or cook for themselves using their own equipment. At least one guest house operator has a separate kitchen for tourists to use if they wish. If they go into the park, they hire local porters as guides and either sleep in their own tent or in any number of official and unofficial shelters. Here, they either cook for themselves or make some sort of arrangement with their porters.

4.1.2. **The Host Communities**

The host communities are defined as those villages and villagers in the EZ that have direct interaction with tourists. As hosts, they have the responsibility to provide a safe, clean, high-

quality experience for the tourist. In return, they have a right to a reasonable remuneration for their services and to ask for cooperation in respecting local traditions and the natural environment.

Shangarh, in the Sainj Valley, and Goshaini and Bhatard, in the Tirthan Valley, are key host communities. They handle most of the tourist traffic at present and are staging points for excursions into the park. They are also most likely to be the first communities affected by future tourism development: what happens here will surely set a precedent. Villages along the main trekking routes and/or close to the park's borders are also potentially important host communities because it is these areas that tend to have a greater impact on the park and so should be primary targets for CBET and other ecodevelopment interventions. These include, but are not limited to, Lapah, Bah, and Majhan in the Sainj Valley; Tinder, Nahi, Lagcha, Pekri, Ropa, Shalinga, Talinga, and Galingcha in the Tirthan Valley.

Shakti and Maraur, two villages in the Sainj Wildlife Sanctuary with less than 12 households total, require special consideration. The inhabitants are highly conservative Rajputs who have strict prohibitions against interacting with non-Rajputs, especially people who eat meat or wear leather. Providing tourist services such as food and lodging may be contrary to their traditional beliefs and therefore not feasible, at least initially. This may be an obstacle in other households and villages as well.

Sainj and Bhanjar, two large villages that fall just outside of the EZ, should also be regarded as host communities and involved in CBET planning because of their strategic location and the fact that most of the local political power is concentrated there. Sainj is particularly important because there is no reliable road service to Shargarh at this time and tourists may need overnight accommodations there before venturing onward.

4.1.2.1. Local Special Interest Groups

Host communities can be further broken down into special interest groups. These include guest house owners/operators (present and future), restaurant (*dhaba*) owners/operators, porters, and handicraft producers. Local leaders, eco-workers, and members of village organizations such as *devta* committees, ecodevelopment committees, youth clubs and mahila mandals (women's groups), are also potentially important stakeholders.

4.1.3. The Private Sector (Trekking Companies, Tour Operators and Travel Agencies)

Reputable travel and tour operators are key groups to involve because of their important role in marketing the area and the skills and resources they possess. They mediate between the tourist, the local communities and the environment and control the style and quality of the



tourist experience. Their goal is to maximize profits, which is directly related to the quality of the product they are selling—in this case the natural and cultural environment. Thus, they have a direct stake in maintaining a quality product base.

If brought in from the beginning, commercial operators can support CBET by helping to develop (and subsequently observing) the code of conduct, training and employing local people, marketing the area, and providing sound business advice on product development. They can also help improve facilities and provide financial or in-kind support for conservation and restoration work. In return, they could be granted certain types of concessions, e.g. exclusive access to special areas or other types of preferential treatment. A list of reputable foreign and domestic operators that could be engaged as potential partners is included in Appendix 6.

4.1.4. Government Tourism Agencies

Two agencies oversee different aspects of tourism in the state of Himachal Pradesh: the Himachal Pradesh Tourist Development Corporation (HPTDC) and the Office of Tourism and Civil Aviation. HPTDC is a parastatal organization that manages numerous hotels and tourist information offices across the state, including one in Kullu and one in Manali. They are also planning to build a large hotel in the Jalori Pass area. The Office of Tourism and Civil Aviation, based in Shimla, is responsible for planning, policy and industry development.

4.1.5. GHNP Administration

As ecodevelopment facilitator and funder, GHNP administration plays the most crucial role, at least initially, in CBET development. It can provide (1) training and technical assistance; (2) financial assistance (loans, grants, etc.); (3) install appropriate environmental management infrastructure; (4) develop education and awareness campaigns for stakeholders, and (5) help to market the area. Inside the park, GHNP administration is responsible for trail and building maintenance, resource protection, and emergency services.

At present, there is no structured tourism development program and policy, although a few promising projects have been initiated (e.g. Visitor Center, Information Center, Tourist Development Areas.) All are handled by the Park Director.

4.1.6. Wildlife Institute of India

The primary research institute in GHNP and the EZ is the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). Researchers have been studying biological and socio-economic aspects of the park and surrounding villages for the past four years. While their primary responsibility is research and monitoring, WII expertise could be used for tourism planning as well, including:

- master plan development (carrying capacity studies, zoning, monitoring);
- interpretation, awareness and information programs;
- village workshop facilitation.

4.1.7. The Society for the Advancement of Village Economies (SAVE)

SAVE is the only NGO operating in the GHNP area. It is based in the Sainj Valley and has a broad rural development mandate. While it does not have any experience with tourism, the goal of sustainable community uplift is compatible with the goals of CBET. The staff also has an established working relationship with many communities in the EZ.

4.1.8. The Seraj Divisional Forestry Office (DFO)

The Seraj DFO manages two rest houses just outside the EZ and is responsible for aspects of resource management outside the natural park, including the EZ. Since the ecodevelopment approach is new to India, the roles and responsibilities of the DFO and Wildlife Offices have not been clearly articulated in this respect, and there continues to be much overlap in their management mandates. As such, they are key players in CBET.

4.1.9. Fisheries Department, Larji

This government office issues permits, manages a fish farm, and sponsors a local fishing derby on a regular basis.

4.2. MAIN ATTRACTIONS

The main attractions in the GHNP area are:

- large expanses of relatively intact forests and alpine meadows with few settlements.
- diverse flora, including many medicinal plants.
- good wildlife viewing opportunities, especially for pheasants and mammals, several of which are endangered or threatened.
- superb mountain scenery.
- serene, unpolluted and uncrowded environment.
- interesting local culture, especially architecture, religion (*devtas*, forest gods, pilgrimage sites), dress, songs, dances, stories, festivals, village lifestyles.
- many recreational opportunities: trekking, fishing, day walks, nature study, painting, meditation, mountain biking, paragliding.
- the last easily accessible area in the Kullu Valley to possess these features.



4.2.1. Recreational Opportunities

The most popular tourist pastime is simply staying in the local villages of the EZ and enjoying the peaceful rural surroundings. Day hikes, fishing, visits to Jalori Pass (from the Tirthan area) and to local bazaars comprise the majority of activity for most people. Some tourists also make excursions into the park, where day hikes, short overnight treks, and extended treks into the interior are possible. There is reportedly one hot springs at Neuli although it is undeveloped at this time. The table below describes the potential for selected outdoor and adventure sports in the GHNP area.

4.2.1.1. Trekking

Sport	Comments
1. Trekking	Has excellent potential. See below.
2. Fishing	Tirthan River is best, especially above Bhanjar.
3. Bird Watching	Best area is along the Tirthan River up to Rolla. Very good at/near high altitude pastures.
4. Wildlife Viewing	Excellent possibilities for multiple-day trips exist in both the Tirthan and Sainj Valleys. Traffic on paved roads is light, and there are several bridle paths throughout the EZ that are suitable for off-road touring.
5. Mountain Biking	The devta ground in Shangarh has been used for beginner classes.
6. Paragliding	None reported, presumably due to poor access and difficult approaches. Better in the adjacent Parbati Valley.
7. Mountaineering and Rock-Climbing	Not commercially feasible due to high level of difficulty and unreliable flow levels.
8. Rafting and Kayaking	

Several treks of varying length and difficulty are possible both inside and outside the park. Those that stay in the EZ and outskirts of the park tend to be shorter (1-3 days) and easier, suitable for a person with an average level of fitness. Those that go inside the park are more challenging and require at least 10 days to complete. They should be undertaken only by people with the appropriate equipment, skills and sense of adventure.

The use of local guides/porters is required in many areas because of the lack of maps and trail signs. The terrain can also be quite steep and difficult for inexperienced trekkers: several trails have been destroyed in places from past flooding. The Sainj Valley trail above Shakti and between Neuli and Bah, for example, has several landslides and is not suitable for tourists at this time. There are no specific trekking regulations in the park other than the entry permit requirement. Rescue services and reliable communication systems are not available.

The most popular trekking areas are the Tirthan Valley and Bashleo Pass. The trails originate mainly in Goshaini or Bhatard. The Sainj area is less known, although it has excellent potential for day hiking and short treks in the periphery of the park. Shangarh is the obvious village to stage most excursions here, but until the road is improved, treks in the Sainj or Jiva Nala area will begin in Sainj Village, Ropa or Neuli. Virtually all people contacted for this assessment felt

that the Jivan Nala area is too steep and rugged for the average trekker, although there is one trek which has potential: Majhan to Manikaran Valley via Gratipat and Pulga. There is also a potential route from the nearby Kanawar Wildlife Sanctuary (Garahan Nala) to GHNP via the head of the Huvla Nala, but it is not well used. Fall is the best season for trekking, however excursions in the EZ and lower altitudes of the park can occur year-round. High altitude treks are possible between early summer and fall only.

Several potential treks are described below. Note that the information presented is based on second-hand sources and should only be used as a general guide.

Route	Length (days)	Difficulty	Comments
<i>Tirthan Area</i>			
Goshaini-Thari-Goshaini	1	moderate	Outside park. Day-hike to top of hill with small temple and good views.
Bhatard-Sarahan via Bashleo Pass	1-2	moderate	Outside park. Easy access to alpine zone.
Goshaini-Karongcha-Goshaini	1-3	easy	From EZ to park border. Best birding in the park. Potential nature/interpretive trail. Park accommodations available at Karogncha
Goshaini-Nada - Goshaini	5-6	moderate	In EZ and periphery of park. Can be routed through high-impact villages and scenic natural areas.
Goshaini-Shangarh via Rolla, Shilt and Dela	7	very difficult	Inside park. Excellent mountain scenery. Sensitive wildlife area.
Deuri-Shangarh via Kalwari Valley, Sirikot and Dela	7	difficult	Mostly in EZ. Excellent forest and mountain scenery. Route heavily used by local people to collect walnut tree roots and other forest products.
Goshaini-Shangarh via Nada, Gumtero, and Dela	7	very difficult	Inside park. Excellent mountain scenery. Sensitive wildlife area.
Goshaini-Tirth (Hans Kund)-Goshaini	10	difficult	Inside park. Route goes up north side of valley and down the south. Many campsites and unofficial shelters. Sensitive wildlife area. Popular pilgrimage route.(shrine at Hans Kund.)
Bhatard-Srikund Mahadev via Galyard, Jaun, Danda and Kunsha	10	difficult	Outside the park. Famous high-altitude pilgrimage site.



Sainj Area			
Route	Length (days)	Difficulty	Comments
Sainj-Shangarh via Deuri, Nahi and Suchen	1-2	easy	In EZ. Follows old bridle path through lovely forests, a holy pond, and pictureque villages. Several campsites and one rustic lodge (Palogi).
Shangarh-southern ridge-Shangarh	1	moderate	In EZ. Day hike to the ridge above the village. Spectacular views.
Shangarh-Dela-Shangarh via Lapah, Shakti and Humkani	7	moderate-difficult	In EZ and edge of park. Excellent scenary and wildlife viewing opportunities. (Dela only accessible in summer and fall. Sensitive wildlife area, also.)

4.2.2. Cultural Attractions

4.2.2.1. Religion

A wide assortment of Hindu temples, tree shrines, and sacred grounds is found throughout the EZ. Each village also has a local god known as *devta*. These deities have a fascinating history and play an important role in village affairs.

There are at least three important pilgrimage spots in or near GHNP: Raktisar, at the headwaters of the Sainj River; Hanskund, at the headwaters of the Tirthan, and Sirikund Mahadev, a lake just outside the southern border of the park. The latter is part of a famous pilgrimage circuit that includes Kinnaur Kailash and Mt. Kailash in Tibet. All three sites are regularly visited by locals and non-locals alike, particularly men, and are only accessible in the summer and fall months Hindu custom dictates that no leather articles are allowed anywhere in the immediate vicinity.

4.2.2.2. Festivals

Village *melas* (festivals) occur year-round. They are colorful, multiple-day affairs where gods from different villages are brought together. One can watch the human spokesperson for each god (*gur*) go into a trance and tell stories, give advice, and answer questions for local villagers. Local songs and dances are also performed, and villagers dress in the best traditional costumes. Respectful observation by outsiders is welcomed. A partial list of local melas is included below.

Month	Village
April	Tinder, Bhatad, Chipni
May	Bhanjar
June	Shangarh
August	Galiyard, Meshar
September	Goshaini, Nahi

In several high-impact villages near the edge of the park (Pekri, Nahi, Tinder, and Phredi) there is a special festival for four days in February called *Fagli*. This is a secular festival with masked dances and lots of merry-making. There is also a month-long festival starting in mid-January which emphasizes visits with relatives and special foods. A yearly fishing competition, sponsored by the Department of Fisheries, is also held along the Tirthan River in the fall. The famous Dushera Festival, held in the town of Kullu during October, is a major event for the whole region.

4.2.2.3. Local Architecture

The EZ has some of the best and most extensive traditional architecture remaining in the Kullu Valley. The homes, especially, are quite attractive, built out of local wood with expansive upstairs verandahs, arched facades and slate roofs. Many have intricate carvings on the outside.

4.3. INFRASTRUCTURE

4.3.1. Roads and Trails

No roads lead directly to the park boundaries. The closest roadheads are at Goshaini in the Tirthan Valley (± 6 kilometers to the border at Karongcha), and Neuli in the Sainj Valley (± 5 kilometers to the border at Bah). Main access is by foot only via the western boundary, although it is possible to enter from the north via a difficult trekking route from the Parbati Valley. Visitors to the Sainj Valley must enter via Shangarh (3 kilometers from Neuli) and Lapah due to trail damage between Neuli and Bah.

Many parts of the EZ are accessible by roads. There is regular taxi and bus service to Ropa, in the Sainj Valley, and Bhatard, in the Tirthan-Palchangad Valley, from the greater Kullu area.



4.3.1.1. *Park Roads*

Two roads are under construction which will improve access to the park: one from Ropa to Shangarh in the Sainj Valley, the other from Goshaini to Ropa in the Tirthan Valley. The road to Shangarh is currently passable only in the dry months and only with 4WD vehicles.

4.3.1.2. *Park Trails*

Main trails in the EZ tend to be well-maintained because of continual use by local villagers. Trails inside the park, however, are used less often and are damaged by floods and landslides. There are no signs and many minor trails, shortcuts and detours. Without a local guide it would be easy for the average trekker to get lost. In the Sainj Valley, portions of the trail beyond Shakti and the section between Neuli and Bah have been washed away and are too dangerous for tourists. Several bridges have washed away in the upper Tirthan Valley as well. GHNP field staff are responsible for trail maintenance inside the park, employing local people and outside laborers as needed.

Trekking tourism will require improvements in the trail system, but they should be planned judiciously to avoid an inadvertent increase in plant harvesting and hunting by local villagers.

4.3.2. **Accommodations**

There are four main categories of accommodations in GHNP and the EZ: private guest houses (including informal room/house rentals), forest rest houses, park facilities, and "other". Most require some level of self-sufficiency (e.g. sleeping bags, food, tent, or all three). Each has its own reservation and access system, and there is very little coordination among them. The table below provides a summary of accommodations in the EZ and park.

Sainj Area		
Type of Accommodation	Village	Comments
Private Guest Houses	Shangarh (1)	Mr. Gedari Lal Mr. Vikram Singh (under construction)
Forest Rest Houses	Sainj (1)	Clean and well-maintained.
Park Rest Houses	Shangarh (1) Lapah (1)	Shangarh is clean and well-maintained; Lapah is in poor condition.
Patrolling Huts	Dela, Humkani, Shakti, Maraur, Majhan, Parkachi	Dela in good condition; Humkani destroyed by arson; Shakti in poor condition; others unknown.
Other	Shakti (2-3)	Forest guard houses (2); 8-room research center (not completed).

Tirthan Area		
Type of Accommodation	Village	Comments
Private Guest Houses	Goshaini (2)	Raju Bharti's is excellent and could be used as a model for the area. Mrs. Ravinder Kumar's is very basic.
Forest Rest Houses	Bandol (1)	Clean and well-maintained. Access via 4WD road or 20 minute walk from roadhead near Goshaini.
Park Rest Houses	Sai Ropa (1)	Adjacent to Interpretive Center (under construction).
Patrolling Huts	Karongcha, Nada, Shilit, Chalogcha, Kolipoi, Majhoni Gumtero, Jatoli	Karongcha is new but there is no maintained latrine. Condition of others unknown.
Other	Goshaini (1)	Abandoned buildings - nice location but improvements are required.

*The list is primarily based on second-hand information and is not final.

In terms of CBET development, small-scale facilities owned by local villagers have the best potential in this area and should be encouraged. Benefits go directly to the community and the scale is compatible with the environmental and social characteristics of the area. Traditional homes can readily accommodate two or more guest rooms or be converted into small lodges. The design and construction, however, need to consider the privacy needs of both tourists and residents alike. To give an idea of the capital costs and rate of return for village-based tourism, a financial analysis for a similar undertaking in the nearby district of Kinnaur is included in Appendix 7.

4.3.2.1. Guest Houses

Guest houses in the GHNP area are comprised of extra rooms in private homes or separate buildings near the owner's home. They range from rustic to quite well-appointed, suitable for low to medium budget tourists. Most provide food or have separate kitchens for tourists to do their own cooking.

There are three guest houses in the EZ that accommodate tourists on a regular basis: two in Goshaini and one in Shangarh (an additional one is under construction). Other informal facilities exist. A family from Lapah, for example, rented one of their houses to a group from the UK



several times in the past, and in Palogi Village (between Sainj and Shangarh on the bridle path), an entrepreneur from Sainj recently constructed a rustic lodge with the help of some tourists from Switzerland.

4.3.2.2. *Forest Rest Houses*

Two forest rest houses are available for use by tourists: one in Bandol (above Goshaini in the Tirthan Valley) and another in Sainj. Reservations can be made in advance through the District Forest Office (DFO) in Banjar, and written permission from the same office is required to stay. If there are no occupants, it is up to the watchman's discretion. Both are clean, well-appointed and maintained. The watchman can usually provide food for an extra fee.

4.3.2.3. *Park Facilities: Rest Houses, Patrolling Huts, Research Station, etc.*

There are two park rest houses in the EZ and 14 patrolling huts in the park. The rest house in Shangarh is in good condition with a toilet, kitchen and two rooms for sleeping. The one in Lapah is neglected and does not have toilet facilities. Reservations and written permission are obtained through the Park Director, although this is not strictly enforced.

Patrolling huts are rustic shelters that are scattered about the park along the main trails. Anyone with a park entry permit is entitled to use them. Huts closer to the park's border and the EZ tend to be in relatively good condition, while those in the interior are in varying stages of disrepair.

Accommodations at all are quite primitive, and many trekkers would prefer to use a tent unless huts can be regularly maintained. In their current condition, huts are primarily suitable for cooking, emergency shelters, and local use.

Several other park facilities could be developed to accommodate tourists. These include an 8-room research station and two forest guard quarters in Shakti, the interpretive center in Sai Ropa, and the abandoned building near Goshaini.

4.3.2.4. *Other*

This category includes numerous camping areas, caves, and crude shelters built by migrant shepherds and plant harvesters. There are no formal campsites *per se*, but there are many traditional rest stops and selected temple grounds (e.g. Shangarh) used for this purpose.

4.3.3. *Guides and Porters*

A small number of local men have been employed as porters for commercial trips and as porter-guides for private trekkers. This is arranged on an informal, ad-hoc basis by shopkeepers,

guest house operators or park staff who send a message to certain known villages once a request is made. Whoever is interested responds, and payment is made directly to the porter himself.

For most treks the ratio of porters to tourists is about 1:1. There are no set guidelines, services or wages. Some trekkers prepare their own food, some have porters cook local food, some do a combination. Daily wages range from IRS 75-150/day (USD 1.80-3.50), depending on the season and whether or not food is provided.

In the Tirthan area, porters mainly come from the villages of Ropa, Jinnear, Tinder, Lagcha, and Fareadi (for the Bashleo trek). These villages, being closest to the park, tend to be quite poor and highly dependent on park resources. Many are actively involved in the wild plant harvest.

A number of commercial companies mentioned that porters in the GHNP were difficult to work with and they preferred to bring their own. This poor reputation is reportedly due to bad experiences in the past (drunkenness, unfriendliness, unreliability) and the fact that the average local load of 20 kg is smaller than what is considered an average load for commercial trekking elsewhere in the Himalaya (30 kg.)

4.3.4. Information and Interpretation

Published tourist information about the park and facilities in the area is limited. A small brochure was produced last year, but it only contains very general information. There is no detailed map of the park or the EZ; the Indian Survey maps are not available in the area and are somewhat obsolete besides. Most people find out about the area, including accommodations and recreational opportunities, through word of mouth. GHNP is not featured in any guidebooks; tourists (and many tour operators) have little idea that it exists. To help make GHNP more visible to the public, an Information Center and Visitor Center are under construction. These are briefly described below.

Information Center: The Information Center at Larji will provide basic information about the park and direct visitors to accommodations. It is centrally located near the intersection of the Sainj and Tirthan Valleys, approximately 5 kilometers off the main Kullu Valley Road at Aut. Construction is almost completed and plans to operationalize it are underway.

Visitor Center: The Visitor Center, located in the Tirthan Valley adjacent to the range office in Sai Ropa, is envisioned as a community center for local villagers as well as natural history museum. The structure has just been completed and the displays, educational programs and other interpretive materials are forthcoming.



4.3.5. Emergency Rescue

There are no emergency rescue facilities in the park and field staff have little training on this topic. A radio system connects the three range offices with the Park Director's office at Samshi (Kullu) but it is not reliable enough to handle emergencies. There is a minimally-equipped hospital in Bhanjar, the largest village in the Tirthan Valley, but the best facilities are located over 80 kilometers away in Kullu. (Dr. Ram Ghandinagar is reputedly the best doctor in the region. He has an office in Kullu.)

4.3.6. Food Supplies

Most villages in the EZ (except Shakti, Maraur, and perhaps others) grow the majority of their own food and supplement it with oil, rice and other staples purchased in roadhead markets. There are also two fish farms located near Nagani in the Tirthan Valley. Tourism development could inadvertently stress these supplies and cause local price inflation if not carefully planned and monitored.

4.4. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CONSTRAINTS TO CBET

Lack of Local Ecotourism Expertise: The building blocks for a viable CBET industry are all present in the GHNP area but there is no one individual or organization, including park administration, with the necessary experience and resources to develop a program.

Lack of Local Capacity and Master Plan: Villagers in the EZ lack basic business, management, and technical skills to develop tourism. Many people also lack the extra income to make the necessary investments in equipment, construction, furnishings, etc. There is also no master plan or guidelines to direct tourism development in a systematic fashion and to protect local rights as well as the natural environment. In terms of the park, there is no zoning or other management protocols to protect sensitive plant and wildlife resources from the effects of increased human contact.

Lack of Infrastructure: In terms of physical infrastructure, the main obstacles to increasing ecotourism in the GHNP are the lack of appropriate accommodations and reliable access/transportation systems in the EZ (e.g. road, porters, mules, etc.). There are also no environmental management systems to handle the increased number of people especially with respect to sanitation, litter, and woodfuel consumption.

Lack of Awareness: There is a general lack of awareness among stakeholders about the role of tourism in economic and community development. This includes the negative socio-economic and environmental effects of conventional tourism as well as alternative models of development. This was observed among villagers, park staff, and state tourism representatives.

State and national policy makers also lack this understanding and/or the will to support more sustainable, community-based tourism.

Tourists, as primary users of the park and EZ, also lack an awareness (or concern) about their effect on local communities and the environment, and their role in conserving it for future generations. They also lack proper behavior guidelines. This is slowly changing as more guidebooks and other forms of media publicize the problems of tourism, but it still has yet to reach the average tourist.

Lack of Supportive Policy and Coordination among Government Agencies: Tourism policy in India does not consider environmental protection or local economic development as priorities. The emphasis is on quantity over quality, with the main goal being revenue generation.

Sustainable tourism is a regional undertaking and cannot be accomplished in isolation from the larger socio-economic context of a given area. In India, there is generally very little coordination between government agencies and/or NGOs that could provide the technical and social inputs needed for sustainable tourism planning. This includes the forestry, wildlife, community development, cottage industry, health and other sectors. In the GHNP area, structured communication and cooperation between relevant institutions (including Park Administration, the Seraj District Forestry Office and HP Tourist Development Agencies) is almost non-existent. This has resulted in missed opportunities and conflicting goals which will continue into the future unless the development process becomes more consultative and transparent.

Inadequate Visitor Services and Management

Entry Permits: Obtaining entry permits can be a cumbersome task. Range offices are irregularly staffed and often far from park boundaries and/or gateway villages in the EZ. Only the range officers are authorized to issue permits and no one has the authority to do it in their absence. The permits themselves do not solicit enough information to be useful for planning and management, for example intended route, party size (including porters), total number of days, organized group vs. independent, etc.

Checkposts and Trail Patrols: Park staff rarely go into the park and the checkposts are not manned on a regular basis. This seriously hampers their ability to control tourist activity, much less wild plant harvesting and poaching. The Bah Checkpost in the Sainj Valley is also poorly situated as majority of foot traffic now goes through Shangarh and Lapah.

Park Accommodations: Cumbersome reservation systems, irregular staffing and substandard amenities limit the utility of park accommodations. Initial permission can be difficult to obtain, many buildings are poorly maintained and/or underutilized, and watchmen are not reliably available.



Visitor Information: There is a lack of published information about the area, especially with respect to accommodations, trails, attractions, and porter services. There is no detailed map of the park and EZ highlighting trails, points of interest, villages, peaks and related information.

Park Rules: Specific rules pertaining to tourist use of the park (e.g. use areas, litter, sanitation, firewood, plants and animals, camping, trekking, etc.) have not been developed.

Socio-Cultural Factors

At least four socio-cultural factors should be taken into consideration when designing a CBET program. These are briefly outlined below.

Strained Park-People Relations : Park-people relations are poor due to a lack of trust and productive engagement in the ecodevelopment program since its inception. Local people have yet to see tangible benefits, especially villagers from the high impact communities in remote areas near the park's boundary.

Conservative Hinduism: Some communities in the area have very strict prohibitions against interacting with, much less serving, people who eat meat or wear leather (e.g. most trekkers).

Party Politics : Communities in the EZ are politically divisive, and will work to undermine a program just because the opposing party supports it. There are many tensions and rivalries as a result.

Illiteracy: Many villagers of the EZ (youth included) are illiterate, especially those that live away from roadheads.

5. A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

5.1. STAFF AND EXPERTISE (3+)

5.1.1. Ecotourism Coordinator

One person should be hired as soon as possible for the remainder of the project. S/he should be experienced with the different aspects of ecotourism and have the ability to organize and carry out projects in a timely manner. The TOR can be based on selected activities outlined in this report.

Candidate: (1) Dr. Purva, currently associated with the Geography Department at JNU, recently returned from a two-year training program on ecotourism and park management with the US National Park Service.

5.1.2. Interpretation and Conservation Education Expert

An experienced organization/individual should be contracted to conceptualize the approach and design/install displays in the Interpretive and Information Centers.

Candidates: (1) The Center for Environmental Education (Gujarat?)

(2) Ms. Francis Klatzel, Interpretation Specialist, The Mountain Institute (Kathmandu). Ms. Klatzel was formerly with the Canadian Department of National Parks and has worked in museum development in Nepal and Bhutan.

5.1.3. Ecotourism Trainers

Experts in the practical aspects of CBET need to be contracted to conduct a series of trainings in the EZ for village leaders, guest house operators, porters and other local people interested in tourism. Since CBET is a highly specialized subject and quite new for India, there are no national experts as such.

Candidates: (1) The Mountain Institute (TMI), Kathmandu. TMI is the best CBET resource in the area with programs in Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet and Nepal. Contact: Ms. Wendy Lama, Ecotourism Specialist.



- (2) Ecoplan:net. Ecoplan:net is the first international consulting firm dedicated to ecotourism planning and development. They are based in the USA and have conducted village-level projects in Asia and the Americas. Contact: Ms. Leslie Jarvie, Executive Director.

5.2. ECOTOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

5.2.1. Basic Strategy

The basic strategy for CBET in the GHNP area is to develop and market locally-owned and operated tourism enterprises that are environment-friendly. Two general types of ecotourism products are recommended: villages stays, centered on selected communities at or near roadheads in the EZ (e.g. Shangarh in the Sainj Valley and Deuri, Goshaini, Barnagi, and Bhatard in the Tirthan Valley), and village-to-village "ecotreks", which are essentially walking tours through villages and natural areas in the EZ and the park periphery. A limited, strictly regulated number of wilderness excursions to selected areas in the park's interior is also recommended.

These products can be augmented by other activities such as fishing, mountain biking, day hikes, attending local festivals, and simply experiencing "life on the farm". In fact, the EZ itself could be marketed as an informal environmental education experience, where people (especially urbanites and children) can learn about life in a mountain village and enhance their understanding of India's environmental problems and ways to solve them. For ecotreks especially, a "Wildlife Watcher" program could be developed where visitors agree to pay standardized cash bonuses directly to porter-guides if they see a particular animal, especially an endangered or threatened species. This can help increase the value of wildlife to local people in a direct fashion, and create peer pressure on those who hunt.

This approach creates and fosters direct links between tourism, conservation and local economic development. As guest house operators, porter-guides, craftspeople and related support staff, local villagers are the main service providers and beneficiaries. The simple, but quality, accommodations and services envisioned is well within the local capacity to carry out, at a size/scale which is socially and environmentally-friendly. With proper development and marketing, this can provide a viable alternative to herb collecting and help to deter poaching, the main pressures on the park at present. By concentrating the bulk of tourism activity in the EZ and margins of the park, human disturbance in critical areas of the park remains low.

5.2.2. Product Description

5.2.2.1. Village Stays

As mentioned above, village stays take place in selected hamlets in the EZ that are accessible by road or an easy walk. They are destination locations in the sense that tourists will spend the majority of their time there. The emphasis is on the peaceful, quiet, unpolluted and scenic environment. This will appeal to low-impact visitors, for example artists, mediators, writers, nature-lovers and those who want to experience life in a mountain village. Families can also be accommodated. Recreational, sightseeing or cultural excursions can be made available as appropriate.

5.2.2.2. Ecotreks

Several options for village to village and park treks are described below. This is not a comprehensive list; more research is needed to assess their viability and accuracy. All routes are highlighted on maps found in Appendix 8.

The process of trekking tourism development would greatly benefit from the input of professional operators. A field expert from the industry should be engaged to ensure that the needs of the market are met, that appropriate marketing mechanisms are in place, and that the latest field practices for socially and environmentally-responsible treks are incorporated. A possible option is to recruit one or more reputable operators to participate in a turnkey program whereby they receive exclusive rights to operate in the area for a given period of time in exchange for training of local people and related infrastructure development. Contact information for resource people and organizations is found in Appendix 6.

Village to Village Ecotreks

The dual objectives of village to village ecotreks are to give the tourist a high-quality, “off-the-beaten-path” experience that is safe and well-organized, and to give local communities a direct source of cash income. The types of treks envisioned are relatively short excursions (< 7 days) that pass through scenic villages and natural areas of the EZ and park periphery which are available for use year-round. They are easy to moderate in difficulty, appropriate for people with a basic level of fitness. To the extent possible, they should be designed as circuits and include villages known to have a significant impact on the park.

To appeal to the broadest range of visitors, treks can be self-guided (with map and proper trail signs) or utilize local porter-guides. Trekkers can have their choice of staying in villages, using a tent, staying in shelters in developed camp areas, or a combination. At the very least trekkers



will need their own sleeping gear; those planning to camp will need a stove, basic cooking utensils and possibly a tent. Eventually these items could be available for rent locally as the demand increases.

While there are several possible routes, one in each valley is recommended initially as a pilot project. Suggestions are included below. All treks require more research to assess their feasibility and to determine what facilities or improvements are required such as pit toilets, cooking shelters, etc.

Location	Route	Comments
Tirthan Valley	Goshaini to Nada Thach	This trek could incorporate conveniently-located and attractive villages, for example Dingcha and Tinder on the southeast side or Shalinga, Lagcha, Nahi and Pekri and on the northwest side.
	Bathard to Sarahan and Bagipul via Bashleo Pass,	A well-known trek with easy access to alpine areas and completely within the EZ.
	Bhatard to Galingcha	No details.
	Bathard to Bashleo and Srikund Mahadev*	A traditional pilgrimage only accessible in summer and fall. Difficult, remote and longer duration. Completely in EZ.
Sainj Valley	Sainj (Shangarh) to Dela Thach	Trekkers could start at the old bridle route in Sainj or at Ropa and walk to Shangarh. From here they would go to Lapah, Dela, Humkani, Shakti, Lapah, and back to Shangarh (or the reverse). The section from Lapah to Dela will need to be broken up into two segments because it is too long and steep for the average trekkers
Traverses	Deuri to Sirikot, Dela, and Shangarh	Others are possible but may be too dangerous (poor trails) or sensitive (wildlife).

* These treks are also described in section 4.2.1.1.

Park Treks

These treks go to the headwater regions of the Sainj and Tirthan Rivers and pass through some of the best wildlife areas of the park. (Refer back to Section 4.2.1.1.) As such they should be strictly limited and monitored. The following guidelines are recommended until further studies can be undertaken (e.g. carrying capacity, sensitive locations and times, etc.)

- Groups only, with no more than 100 people per year in each valley, including porters.
- Local porter-guides and outside operators must be registered and approved by the park based on their participation in an ecotrek training course or a demonstrated ability to follow ecotrek procedures as outlined in the code of conduct.
- Treks must not extend beyond 14 days.
- Outside tour operators must employ a specified number of local villagers and provide on-the-job training as porters, guides, cooks and related field staff.
- All groups must stay at least 2 nights in EZ villages during their trip.

5.3. MARKETING

The Indian tourist market is big, and getting bigger every day. While it represents the best potential for increasing tourism in the GHNP area, certain sectors are compatible with CBET while others are not. The best sectors to target are adventure, wildlife and education. Tourists in these categories tend to be more interested in CBET because as a group they are satisfied with simple accommodations, value a quiet, unpolluted environment and authentic experiences, and are interested in learning something about the area. International travelers with similar inclinations, especially those already in the Kullu Valley, should also be targeted. They often have more flexible schedules than domestic tourists and can spend more time in a given area.

CBET in the GHNP area should cater to medium budget tourists because of the ready market (domestic and foreign) in the greater Kullu Valley and the higher likelihood that a broad spectrum of local people could be trained to meet the standard of service required. "Ganja" tourism, popular in other parts of the Kullu Valley, should be avoided because it is illegal and has a potentially negative social effect on the community, especially village youth. Luxury tourism and mass tourism are also not compatible with the goals of conservation and local economic development due to their high environmental and social impact and excessive leakage of cash dividends.

Focusing on specific tourism markets will keep the quantity of tourists to a manageable level and encourage the kind of visitor that is most likely to support ecotourism, thereby reducing the negative impacts on the environment and local economy. By creating a product that



emphasizes environmental and social responsibility, the GHNP area can capitalize on the degradation and overcrowding in other parts of the Kullu Valley and carve a unique market niche that is truly sustainable. The area can be marketed via advertisements and articles in nature magazines and tour guides, and through wildlife clubs, reputable operators in Manali and Delhi, and government tourist information offices.

5.4. ROLE OF PARK ADMINISTRATION

Park Administration can foster CBET development by working in partnership with community members to supply the needed training, technical and financial assistance, and resource management infrastructure. Once these are in place, they can help market the area by providing information to visitors, including a user-friendly map, specific details about area attractions and activities, a list of villages with accommodations (with price, standards, access and other information), and directions on how and where to secure porters.

In the park itself, trails, lodging facilities, and waste management infrastructure all require proper maintenance, especially along ecotrek routes. Some upgrades and/or additional construction may also be required. Permitting and reservation systems for rest houses and other type of government accommodations also need restructuring to make them more efficient, convenient and reliable.

An option to consider is leasing selected park buildings to individuals or local villages to operate tourism enterprises. The rest house in Lapah, the research center in Shakti, the abandoned buildings near Goshaini are all possible choices. These buildings are seldom used and with some minor improvements could provide adequate accommodations.

5.5. ENTRY FEES AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Park entry fees should be restructured to contribute directly to conservation and ecotourism facilities development in the park and EZ. The current price is too low to make a significant contribution; a reasonable increase is justified if the money goes to directly to support the park and/or local community. Experience in other countries shows that tourists are willing to pay more money if they are assured that it is going towards a worthwhile cause.

All visitors aside from local residents, religious pilgrims, and traditional herders, should be charged. The fee can be waved/discounted for school groups and individuals conducting official work sanctioned by park authorities (e.g. research, volunteers, etc.), and adjusted according to the length of stay. Camera and video charges should not be levied; these are almost ubiquitous tourist accessories and use is difficult to regulate. Instead, the basic entrance

fee should simply be increased. Commercial photography/filming, however, should have prior permission by the park authorities and be charged in accordance with set guidelines (amount/day).

5.6. LOCAL CAPACITY-BUILDING

CBET is contingent upon local people having the skills to develop, operate and market ecotourism enterprises. Training, education, and institution-building, then, are major components of product development. Recommended activities include:

- Observation Tour to Nepal
- Ecotourism Working Groups
- Training Program
- Porter Union/Equipment Cooperative
- Income Generation and Cultural Conservation

These activities are described in detail below. They should be open to all who are currently engaged in, or have any interest in, tourism. Women should be encouraged to participate given their important role in household labor. Young adults should also be involved as they are often engaged in wild plant collection simply because there are no other viable cash-earning opportunities in the area. They also represent the future of village life in all respects.

5.6.1. Observation Tour to Nepal

Observation tours are the most powerful form of education and awareness-building for villagers. Since many of the concepts and practices are unfamiliar, observation tours give the community a first-hand experience with CBET and help to create a common vision. Villagers cannot be expected to participate productively in planning and development unless their knowledge base is increased through exposure to appropriate models.

It is strongly recommended that a group of people from the EZ undertake a study tour to Nepal for this purpose. Nepal has the best CBET programs in the Himalayan region and has similar environmental and social constraints. There are many information and training resources, and several organizations which could host such a tour including The Mountain Institute and The Annapurna Conservation Area Project. The Ecotourism Coordinator or other qualified individual should organize and lead the tour. A maximum of 10 people from both the Sainj and Tirthan Valleys should be invited to participate. The group should be strategically put together to include representatives of local stakeholder groups as detailed in the following table:



Category	Potential Candidates	Number
A. Local Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of Ecodevelopment Committee, Devta Committee, VDC, etc. 	2
B. Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in tourism at present, member of Mahila Mandals, etc. 	2
C. Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduates from Metric Course, ecoworkers, youth club members 	2
D. Tourism Entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest house operators, porters and craftspeople, especially from high-impact communities. 	3-4

Participants should be capable, responsible and dynamic. They should be willing to act as local resource persons and to share what they learned through informal meetings with peer groups. Ideally they would become charter members of local tourism working groups.

5.6.2. Ecotourism Working Groups

Local working groups, at least one in each valley, are key institutions to guide CBET development in the short, medium and long term. They provide a forum for planning, education, training, trouble-shooting and conflict mitigation. A core group of participants would include guest house owners/operators, porters, guides, and representatives from the following organizations: park administration, WII, local NGO (if present), Ecodevelopment Committees, and VDC/ panchayat. People from high impact villages should be strongly encouraged. As tourism grows, sub-committees may be appropriate, organized around a single theme or interest group. Selected working group activities are included below.

Stakeholder Meetings: Introductory sessions on CBET in GHNP. Clarify needs, aspirations, roles, rights, responsibilities of all stakeholders. Representatives from HP Tourism and responsible travel and reputable trekking agencies should be invited to participate.

Codes of Conduct: Formulate and publicize.

Tourism Charter/Management Plan: This should be a simple guiding document that is feasible and equitable. Based initially on the Code of Conduct, the charter can be expanded with greater knowledge and experience. Ideally the charter should be ratified by the panchayat then moved forward for official notification at the state level.

Other points to consider including in the charter are:

- restrictions on outside ownership and investment;

- regulations on size (# of rooms), location (environmental suitability), and density of development;
- architectural guidelines;
- food and lodging price standards to avoid counter-productive competition (can have low, medium and high standard facilities for equitable and maximum participation by all segments of society);
- regulations against indiscriminate signboard placement along roads;
- minimum requirements for guest houses, campgrounds and other tourist facilities, e.g. waste management systems, latrines, and woodfuel conservation measures.

5.6.3. Training Program

At least two training programs are needed initially, one for guest house owner/operators and one for porters and guides. English or literacy are not prerequisites; trainings should be practical and “hands-on”, incorporating informal education techniques. A simple manual and other take-home materials should be included. Each training should take approximately five days and be followed by extension, trouble-shooting services and perhaps other trainings on specific topics. Suggested topics are listed below.

Guest House Training

- Room construction and furnishings
- Hospitality and housekeeping
- Cooking and kitchen management
 - meal preparation and presentation
 - cleanliness and hygiene
 - organization and time management
 - water purification
- Pricing and accounting
- Sanitation (including environmentally sound toilet construction)
- Waste management and pollution control
- Tourist Needs and Expectations
- Environmental issues and conservation
- Woodfuel conservation (stoves, cooking schedules, etc.)
- Basic first aid

Porter-Guide Training

- Job responsibilities
- Behavior



- Routes
- Ecotrek practices - sanitation, fuel, water, pollution control
- Cooking
- Tourist needs, desires
- Useful English
- First aid and emergencies
- Equipment operation and care

5.6.4. Porter Union and Equipment Cooperative

Some sort of union or society for porter-guides should be considered in order to:

- standardize wages and services;
- provide insurance in case of accident;
- provide quality assurance to trekkers, and
- decrease environmental impact through education, training and enforcement mechanisms.

As demand for porter-guides increases, an equipment cooperative may also be useful. Most villagers are poorly equipped for extended treks to high altitudes and do not have the resources to purchase the equipment needed to practice eco-friendly trekking. A preliminary list would include kerosene stoves, fuel carriers, kitchen gear (pots, plates, utensils, water jugs) sleeping bags, tents, plastic tarps, rope, and backpacks. Once operative, members could invest a certain portion of their wages that would be matched by the park or other donors to cover maintenance and make new purchases as needed.

5.7. HANDICRAFTS AND RELATED INCOME-GENERATION ACTIVITIES

As tourism increases so do the opportunities for other types of tourism-based enterprises. This includes producing and marketing local handicrafts, specialty food items, and other souvenirs. Cultural performances also come under this category. In addition to direct income generation, supporting the development of such enterprises can have the added benefit of strengthening lagging cultural traditions. This must be done judiciously, however. Commercializing aspects of culture can also lead to their trivialization.

Handicrafts and other locally-produced items can be sold through guest houses, local shops, the Information Center and the Visitor Center. A list of villages with cultural programs and a festival calendar could also be produced and made available at the same locations. The viability of such enterprises is a function of demand, and since the present demand is low,

these activities may be best suited to a later phase of tourism development. Specific recommendations follow.

5.7.1. Handicrafts

In the business of handicrafts, developing a market niche market is key. Therefore, items that are unique to the EZ will have greater value than those commonly available in the Kullu Valley such as woolen shawls, socks, caps, and selected apple products. These items are available everywhere in the region and it is difficult to compete under such conditions. A sample of traditional handicrafts with development potential include:

- “Patoos”. A patoo is a large piece of hand-woven wool fabric that is the traditional dress for women of the area. They are quite colorful and often have intricate designs; the older ones are especially attractive because they use natural dyes. The “Jiju-Rana” design has particular appeal because it is named for the Western Tragopan Pheasant, the highly-endangered bird for which the park was initially established to protect. This tradition is dying out in other parts of the Kullu Valley, so there is an opportunity to keep this art form alive and develop a unique market niche at the same time. Using the basic weaving style, a number of other items could also be produced.
- Mountain honey.
- Wood carvings with deodar scraps
- Herbal products such as incense, sachets and teas.

5.7.2. Cultural Programs

There are active *mahila mandals* (women’s groups) and youth clubs in almost every village. Many reportedly have reputations for singing and dancing abilities. These skills could be used to develop informal cultural programs for tourists that visit their villages. Tourists can leave a donation for such performances, which can be placed into a community fund.

5.8. RESOURCE PROTECTION

A major thrust of CBET is to protect the natural and cultural resources of a given area. Environmental management infrastructure and regulations must be in place before the numbers of tourists increase to avoid the degradation seen in Manali, Nainital and other Himalayan destinations. The Codes of Conduct (Appendix 4) are an excellent starting point for developing such protocols in the GHNP area. Additional recommendations follow.



5.8.1. Waste Management and Pollution Control

5.8.1.1. Litter

Litter control is a key management activity and should be a priority for park managers. Efficient infrastructure and appropriate technology is necessary, supported by vigorous education campaigns directed at tourists as well as local communities. Every guest house, campsite, patrol hut and park facility should have a waste management system and post directions in a public place for visitors to follow. Periodic "Clean-Up Campaigns" may also be useful, but the preferred option is to take care of the problem before this is necessary. As mentioned earlier there is little trash accumulation in the park and EZ at present; a strong, well-conceived policy must be adopted early on to keep it this way. The slogan "reduce, reuse, recycle" is appropriate.

Trash can be divided into organic, burnable and non-burnable (non-biodegradable). Organic (food scraps) can be buried or fed to domestic animals. Burnable materials (paper products, cigarette butts, etc.) can be burned on site or in small pits designated for this use. Plastic bags and wrappers DO NOT fit into this category: when burned they release toxic fumes which destroy the ozone and are dangerous to humans when ingested. Non-burnable, non-biodegradable trash include plastic bottles, bags and wrappers, glass, and metals (food tins, foil, soda cans, etc.) These items are the most difficult to deal with and have become the scourge of many tourist areas in the mountains.

In the GHNP area, a system to dispose or recycle non-biodegradable waste is an absolute necessity. Research on recycling centers and environmentally-friendly disposal technologies, such as incinerators and crushers, should be undertaken. What cannot be disposed locally will need to be shipped to the nearest recycling facility. Strategically-located villages and/or range offices can be designated as recycling/disposal centers where trekkers, guest house operators and other villagers can bring their waste material for proper disposal. A similar system has been initiated in Nepal's Sagarmatha National Park with good results.

Plastic water bottles require special consideration due to their ubiquitous presence in trash heaps around the country. They are not normally recyclable, although there is reportedly a new facility in Rajasthan that accepts them (Mr. Mohit Aggarwal, pers. comm.) A total ban on sales in the EZ and/or use in park might be warranted. Iodine tablets and reusable canteens, filtered water from guest houses and park facilities, and spring water should be promoted until a proper disposal system can be initiated.

5.8.1.2. Sanitation and Water Contamination

Toilet facilities in the park and in many villages of the EZ are virtually non-existent. Villagers commonly defecate in a designated place near the edge of the village, in their agricultural fields or directly into rivers and streams. This situation, compounded by the manure from free-ranging domestic livestock, creates a potent breeding ground for numerous water-borne parasites and diseases, which together account for some of the most serious public health hazards in the Himalaya. Concentrations of human waste, whether in the field or in a poorly maintained toilet, are also a major “turn-off” to tourists. Clean, functioning and properly located facilities are a definite asset and will increase the market value of any guest house or public facility, in addition to the health and environmental benefits.

Villagers also traditionally wash clothes and other items directly in the river using chemical detergents, and apply fertilizers, pesticides, and other agrochemicals close to water sources. These practices reduce the oxygen content of the water and create a toxic environment for fish and other amphibious creatures. There may also be numerous secondary effects once certain substances enter the food chain.

A concerted effort to protect water sources from further contamination should be part of CBET development. This is required not only to improve community health but to protect the diversity and abundance of species that inhabit the area and to make it a safe and enjoyable place for tourists. A sound infrastructure is needed so that tourism development does not exacerbate existing water quality problems; in fact, tourism can be used as an stimulus to modify local practices. Preventative measures are described in the Code of Conduct (Appendix 4). Additional suggestions specific to the GHNP area listed below.

- All guest houses should be required to have proper toilet facilities as a condition of operation. Simple pit toilets located far from water sources are perfectly acceptable as long as they are properly maintained. A composting toilet, used in Ladakh, Nepal and other part of the High Himalaya, might be even more useful. These are modified pit toilets where leaf litter is used to convert human waste into compost, an important component of soil fertility. The GHNP area has the right climate for this kind of technology, but it may not be socially acceptable. Innovative villagers, however, may be interested and the park itself could build one in a strategic area as a demonstration.
- Ecotrek routes and heavily used areas should have regularly maintained latrines.
- Trekking groups (including staff) in remote areas should be required to dig a communal toilet at overnight camping areas which will be filled upon departure. All toilet paper should be burned and buried. During the day, trekkers should dig their own hole and refill it after use. All toilet holes should be situated at least 30 meters from water sources.



- Farmers in the EZ should be encouraged to use organic farming methods as much as possible.

5.8.2. Forest and Fuelwood Conservation

Deforestation, fuelwood shortages, and erosion — all major environmental problems in the Himalaya — can easily be exacerbated by tourism development unless appropriate measures are undertaken from the beginning. Four strategies are commonly employed: alternative fuels, energy-efficient appropriate technologies, reforestation programs and building codes.

Guest houses operators should be encouraged to use gas, kerosene, and/or electricity as their main source of energy. Where this is not possible, fuel-efficient “backboiler” stoves are recommended. These stoves are based on the traditional hearth design but have a tank in the bank in which water is heated constantly via a copper coil at the base of the flame. Hot water for bathing, cooking and beverages — a major fuel consumer — is readily available from an attached spigot. The stoves are cheap, low-tech, and made of locally available materials. This technology has been successfully employed in many touristed areas of the Nepal Himalaya.

Trekking and camping groups, including porters, should cook on kerosene stoves only. Open campfires should be banned altogether or at the very least strictly regulated. Porters, however, need to be outfitted with proper clothing and equipment so their dependence on campfires is reduced. Stoves, high altitude clothing and other equipment can be made available for a small charge through an equipment cooperative or through guest houses and local shops.

Building codes are needed to ensure that new tourist facilities and roads are not constructed on excessively steep or unstable slopes and are adequately distant from rivers, lakes and wetlands. Guest houses and other buildings should be small in size to reduce the need for timber and to be compatible with the topographical and social characteristics of the area. Special care must be taken not to disturb vegetation along the river corridors, as healthy riparian areas work together forest cover to protect against destructive flooding. Riparian vegetation also enhances fish habitat, which is an important tourism resource in the GHNP area.

5.8.3. Carrying Capacity Studies, Zoning, and Monitoring

The data collected by WII researchers can be used to determine which areas should be off-limits (on a seasonal or a year-round basis) because of their ecological sensitivity. Carrying capacity studies should be initiated to identify other types of use zones and appropriate levels of use. The biosphere reserve model may be helpful in this regard, where the EZ is conceived as a buffer zone which grades into regulated use zones and core areas. Until this research is completed it is recommended that group size be limited to no more than 20 people total at any

one place and time. This includes school groups, which tend to be very large.

As tourism increases, the park should also consider setting up a monitoring program to measure and keep track of impacts (negative and positive) and to determine whether tourism is having the intended effects of local economic development and reduced pressure on the park. This monitoring program should contain biophysical and socio-economic data and be structured in a simple, easy to follow format, suitable for park staff to undertake on an annual basis. Some of the recent research conducted in the area can be used as a baseline, for example, the household-level data collected by JNU and the social, botanical and wildlife data collected by WII. The International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has recently published a list of suggested monitoring parameters which are included in Appendix 9.

5.8.4. Architectural Heritage Conservation

The traditional architecture of the EZ, especially the home design, is a key cultural resource and potential tourist attraction. The EZ is one of a few areas remaining in the greater Kullu region that is still dominated by traditional architecture. Any new buildings, therefore, including those constructed by the park, should subscribe to the traditional style as much as possible. Certainly, some modifications will be necessary to improve strength, durability and comfort, but these should be done in a sensitive manner to preserve this outstanding feature. Natural materials such as wood, stone, thatch, and mud should be utilized as opposed to the ubiquitous, featureless cement that is unfortunately all too popular. Aside from their aesthetic qualities, natural materials have much better insulating capability and thus are more energy-efficient. The HPTDC currently has a low-interest loan program which can help local residents maintain this important resource.

5.8.5. Protecting Open Space, Scenic Roadways and Serenity

These resources are also part of the area's charm and should be viewed as a tourism asset. To conserve the open character of the valleys, tourism development should be clustered in and around existing villages and structures. Size restrictions (# of rooms) will reduce environmental impacts, disperse income into other areas, and keep the number of visitors at any one place to manageable levels. They will also help minimize traffic, noise, and other negatives associated with tourism.

Regulations against the proliferation of signboards and roadside graffiti (especially advertisements for guest houses, consumer products, and like messages) should be enacted. Guest house signboards should be attached to the houses themselves, with small directional signs placed discretely along strategic trails inside villages only. No rocks, cliffs or other natural surfaces should be used for these purposes.



5.9. VISITOR SERVICES

An important function of the park is to provide the tourist with quality information on the area's attractions, amenities, natural history and human cultures. CBET, however, requires the park to go one step further and educate tourists about their role in protecting the area's biodiversity and contributing to local economic development. Tourists are key partners in CBET, and without their cooperation, there is little chance of success. Thus, an educational program aimed at tourists, including specific behavioral guidelines (e.g. Code of Conduct) is a high priority project. This includes widely-distributed publications, displays, videos, talk/slide programs and other forms of educational media.

The park has already made progress in this arena by constructing two facilities specifically designed to provide information and interpretation. It is beyond the scope of this consultancy to give a detailed appraisal and plan for these facilities and other visitor services, however some general suggestions are included below. Interpretation and environmental education are highly specialized fields, so it is strongly recommended that the park contract an expert to oversee the development of this program.

5.9.1. Visitor Center

The Visitor Center should cater to two audiences: the tourists and the local communities. It might best be conceptualized as a "conservation center," implying action in addition to education. Thus, the displays should integrate natural history with personal responsibility, and elucidate the reasons why the area is so important and unique, both from an ecological and cultural perspective. Everyone's role in protecting the beauty and biodiversity of the area should be stressed, including specific ways to turn their enhanced awareness into productive action.

All displays should be simple, easy to maintain, and interactive to the extent possible. Appropriate community groups and individuals (e.g. ecoworkers, school children, mahila mandals) could be asked to design or help with specific displays (and receive compensation as appropriate) to foster a feeling of local ownership. Topics and themes to consider are:

- plants, animals and processes;
- ecodevelopment and the village of the future;
- the value of nature;
- CBET and codes of conduct;
- medicinal plants and other useful flora;
- the links between religion and conservation;
- profiles of local village conservationists;

- a three dimensional schematic map of the park;
- aspects of local culture (architecture, resource use, religion, festivals, etc.)

Display captions should be written in Hindi and English; however, since many villagers are illiterate, the content should be able to convey the intended message on its own. One idea worth considering is to have a limited number of portable tape players available for self-guided tours of the Visitor Center. This is a very effective mode of communication and would be quite enjoyable for local villagers and tourists alike.

A number of photographers have worked in the park area and could be contacted to purchase or donate photos, including Dr. Tony Gaston, Ms. Joanna Van Gruisen (well-known wildlife photographer based in Delhi), the JNU photographer who accompanied the student groups, and the WII scientists that have worked in area.

The Visitor Center should also house a small cafe and shop to sell local handicrafts, eco-friendly items such as plastic water canteens and iodine tablets, and park souvenirs. Ideally this should be operated by someone from the area. Information on accommodations, how to contact porters, local events, trail conditions, and anything that might be of interest to the tourist should be prominently displayed.

5.9.2. Information Center

The Information Center is essentially a scaled-down version of the Visitor Center geared specifically to the tourist. Basic information on attractions, accommodations and other services should be provided. Since this will be the first place a tourist interacts with the area, the Code of Conduct and other aspects of the CBET program should be prominently displayed.

5.9.3. Publications

The park has already produced a brochure with basic information. Additional suggestions are outlined below.

Code of Conduct Leaflet: A small, cheaply produced leaflet with the code of conduct and related CBET information should be widely available at numerous locations throughout the area including the Information Center, Interpretive Center, all guest houses, range offices, and the HP Tourism Information Offices in Kullu and Manali.

Code of Conduct Poster: This should be attractively designed as both a promotional and educational product, written in Hindi and English, and suitable for public display in a variety of locations.



Map: A comprehensive, user-friendly map of the park and EZ is an important component of tourism development. The GIS map previously done by WII could be used as the base, which could then be combined with additional layers containing contour intervals, trails, huts, campsites, villages, park facilities, wildlife areas, peaks, and other points of interest. The map should be accurate and high quality, suitable for use in the field. Written information about natural history, a schedule of local festivals, a description of ecodevelopment, and the code of conduct could be printed on the reverse side. The map should be available for purchase at the Visitor Center, the Information Center and all range offices. Appendix 10 contains a map produced by the Annapurna Conservation Area in Nepal which could be used as a model.

Field Guide: A simple field guide to the plants and animals of GHNP would be useful for the tourist as well the local school children, where it could be used as an environmental education reference. The guide should be amply illustrated with colored drawings (they reproduce better than photos), written in simple language, and portable. Hindi, English and local names should be included, as well as ethnobotanical information and local folklore.

APPENDIX - 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- To advise the officials of Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Unit (GHNPCU) on various aspects of ecotourism.
- To develop/suggest an ecotourism and visitor strategy for the GHNP.
- Suggest/recommend guidelines in using available ecocodevelopment funds for ecotourism investment at GHNP.
- Prepare a report including findings and recommendations.
- Besides presenting a formal report of the study, preliminary insights from the study will be shared with the officials of GHNP and local officials (if any) in meetings. Such meetings will also be part of a process of creating recommendations that can be incorporated expeditiously into the implementation of the Ecodevelopment Project.

METHODOLOGY

This consultancy was carried out using an informal questionnaire circulated prior to visiting GHNP, semi-structured discussions with stakeholders and other knowledgeable people in the field, and site visits. Specific activities included:

- background research on tourism in GHNP (previous studies and recommendations, visitor statistics, facilities, policies, and regulations);
- background research on ecotourism programs, policies, and trends in Himachal Pradesh, India and the Himalayan region as a whole;
- informal observation of the ecotourism market and interviews with members of the travel/tourism industry in the USA and India;
- interviews with stakeholders (community members, GHNP staff, WII staff, NGOs, Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development agencies, outside researchers in GHNP, tour operators, tourists);
- survey of park infrastructure (buildings, accommodations, information resources, communications, visitor services, recreational opportunities, park attractions, waste management systems);
- survey of local community infrastructure (accommodations, management capacity, potential ecotourism products, transportation and access, attractions.
- reconnaissance of a potential "ecotrek" in the Sainj Valley: Ropa - Shangarh - Lapah (1 night) - Dela Thach (2 nights) - Shakti (1 night) - Lapah (1 night) - Shangarh (2 nights) - Sainj (via old bridle path).



APPENDIX 2

LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Date	Name/Title	Address	Comments
16/5	Ms. Wendy Lama Ecotourism Specialist	The Mountain Institute (TMI) Asia Regional Office PO Box 2785, Bhishalnagar Kathmandu Nepal Tel. 977-1-419-356 Fax 977-1-414-902 email: wendy@lama.wlink.com.np	TMI is an international NGO dedicated to conserving mountain environments and cultures worldwide. Ms. Lama is in charge of community-based ecotourism programs in Nepal, Sikkim, and Tibet. The best regional resource for training and program development.
18/5	Ms. Leslie Jarvey Executive Director	Ecoplan:net - Ecological Planning for the Environment and Tourism e-mail:ljjarvie@ecoplannet.org PO Box 527 Graton, CA 95444 USA Tel&Fax:(707) 824-4874	Ecoplan:net is the first international consultancy devoted to the planning, education and promotion of sustainable tourism and "responsible" product development. Involved in projects in South/Central America, Asia, Canada and the US. Excellent resource for policy and project development, training, technical assistance.
18/5	Mr. Sanjay Saxena Director, India Operations	Geographic Expeditions 2627 Lombard Street San Francisco, CA 94123 USA tel (415) 922-0448 Fax (415) 346-5535 email:trekindia@aol.com	Develops, markets and coordinates adventure/ eco-travel in India for a major US firm.
19/5	Mr. Ray Rodney Head of Special Programs	Wilderness Travel 801 Allston Way Berkeley, CA USA 94710 tel (510) 540-0240 fax(510)540-0347 email: info@wildernesstravel.com	Develops, coordinates and markets adventure/eco- travel trips around the world for the North American market.
19/5	Mr. Narendra Gurung Director of Asia Sales	Mountain Travel-Sobek Expeditions 6420 Fairmont Avenue El Cerrito, CA 94530 tel (510) 527-8100 fax (510) 525-7710 email: info@mtsobek.com	Markets and coordinates adventure/eco- travel trips throughout the Himalaya.
28/5	Dr. Tony Gaston Research Scientist	11-174 Dufferin Road Ottawa K1M 2A6 Ph. (613) 745-1368(h), (819) 997-5121 (o) Email: tony.gaston@ec.gc.ca	Expert on GHNP.
29/5	Mr. Raj Singh Owner/Operator	Exotic Journeys 35 Elmthorpe Road Wolvercate Oxford OX2 8PA UK Tel (01865) 554277 Fax (01865) 512583	Noted Indian naturalist and author of several books on birding. Operates trips in the Kullu Valley, with a portion of the profits going to conservation. Excellent resource for developing/ marketing birding trips in GHNP. Works with US and European market.
3/6	Mr. Chris Behr Manager-Himalayan Programs	International Development Enterprises c5/43 Salderjung Development Area New Delhi-110016 Ph. 11-696-9812, 9813, 4632 Email: ide@giasdl01.vsnl.in	Conducted a preliminary financial analysis for village-based ecotourism in Kinnaur District, India
4/6	Mr. Raman Mehta	c/o Dr. Shekar Singh Indian Institute of Public Administration Indraprastha Estate New Delhi 110 002 Ph. 11-331-7309 Email: shekhars@giasdl01.vsnl.net. in	Worked on original IIPA study of GHNP.
4/6	Mr. Hashmad Singh Director of Trekking	Exotic Journeys New Delhi Ph. 616-2737, 617-0221, 610-4448, 617-8685	Indian trekking expert with extensive experience in GHNP.



5/6	Maj. Yadav Managing Director	Wanderlust Travel M-51-52 Palika Bhawan New Delhi 110066 Ph. 687-5200, 602-1800, 611-1889 Email: travel.wonder@access.net.in	Activist in nature an adventure travel development in India
5/6	Mr. Chewang Motup/Ms. Yangdu Gombu Owner/Operators	Rimo Expeditions b-5/6 #4320 Vasant Kunj New Delhi 110 070 Ph. 613-6568, 689-8710 Email: rimo@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in	Experienced adventure travel operator in the Indian Himalaya.
7/6	Faculty researchers: Dr. G. Rawat, Dr. Satyakumar, Mr. D.S. Khati	Wildlife Institute of India PO Box 18 Chandrabani Dehra Dun	Experts on GHNP
9/6	Sh. Hari Singh Range Officer, Larji	c/o GHNP	
9/6	Mr. Nagesh Guleria GHNP Director	Shamshi Kullu	In charge of ecodevelopment and overall park management.
10/6	Mr. and Mrs. Raju Bharti Guest house Owner/Operators	PO Bhanjar Kullu Hills H.P. 175123 tel 0091-0-1-76808	Excellent resource on the area, especially for trekking. Guest house is very well done - could be used as a model for the whole area.
6/10	Mr. Mohit Aggarwal Owner/Operator Asian Adventures	B-9 Sector 27, Noida 201301 Tel 91-11-91524878,74 Fax 91-11-91556991 Email info@indianwildlife.com	Previously worked for WWF India. Operates trips in GHNP/EZ mostly in Tirthan area. Excellent resource person.
11/6	Dr. Unyal, Mr. T. R. Vinod, Mr. K. Ramesh, Mr. P. Choudhury	c/o Wildlife Institute of India PO Box 18, Chandrabani Dehra Dun	GHNP researchers
11/6	Sh. Surinder Guleria Range Officer, Sai Ropa	c/o GHNP	
13/6	(name unknown) Forest Guard	Lapah	
16/6	Mr. Lal Singh Rana Interpreter cum guide	Shangarh Village	Interested in starting a local guide business.
16/6	Mr. Vikram Singh Village Entrepreneur	Shangarh Village BPO Madana, SPO Larji District Kullu 175134	Building a guest house in Shangarh.
13/6-18/6	Mr. Ram Lal Kashap GHNP guide/porter and and fire lookout.	Lapah Village PO Madana, Tehsil Bhagar District Kulu HP	Excellent canddate for guide training. .
16/6	Mr. Krishna Lal Sharma Politician/businessman	VPO Sainj, District Kullu Ph. 79871	Interested in tourism development.
16/6	Mr. Sher Singh Rana Head of Shangarh Devta Committee	Village Katwali PO Madana Sainj Valley, Kullu	
17/6	Dr. B. Zutshi Faculty Researcher JNU	Center for Regional Development School of Social Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi Tel 91-616 7557, 610-7676, 252-459	Head of 2-year socio-economic research program in the EZ.
17/6	Dr. Purva Research Associate JNU	c/o Prof. R. K. Dixit V/10 NCERT Aurobindo Marg New Delhi - 110016 Ph. 011-685-9623 (h) 616-7557, x. 2347 (o)	Completed course in ecotourism and park management with US National Park Service.
18/6	Shri O. P. Guleria Range Officer, Sainj	c/o GHNP	
6/19	Mr. ? Tourist hut caretaker	Palogi Village	Hut owned by Mr. Hiri Lal Pundit, Sainj Village
6/24	Mr. Chandhan Seraj Divisional Forest Officer (DFO)	Bhanjar	
6/25	Mrs. B. Solanki	Himachal Pradesh Tourist	Oversees HP-Kullu tourism



APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE



5 May 1998

Dear Friends of Great Himalaya National Park:

In association with colleagues at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), I will be conducting an ecotourism assessment in GHNP this June. Your experience in the region is a valuable resource in this respect, and an important part of my assignment is to collate the expertise and insights that already exist. To do this, I would be most grateful if you could complete the attached informal questionnaire on different aspects of the park and the potential for community-based ecotourism* (CBET). The questionnaire will be used to guide my consultancy and the recommendations I make thereof.

The questionnaire is six pages long, divided into eight sections: Area Highlights, Visitation, Facilities and Accommodations, Trekking, Management, Local Context, Information Resources, and General Concerns. It is written in an informal, open-ended fashion, so feel free to elaborate. If you have additional information, concerns, or ideas, please don't hesitate to mention them! I know all of you are very busy, and you may not know about every topic being asked about, but if you can answer even a few key questions it would be very helpful. Of course, the more the better!

Probably the best way to complete the questionnaire is to include the original as part of your reply if using email. If not, you can send only the answers to me via fax. Please be sure to number your answers accordingly and make them explicit if several options are given. Email: 104230.2334@compuserve.com. Fax: 415-488-1500.

I will be arriving in India on June 1 or thereabouts. After spending a couple days in Delhi I will either go up to Dehra Dun or out to GHNP directly. I wish I could meet with all of you in person, but my time is very limited (1 month). If you would like to talk to me in person, however, please let me know and I will try to make arrangements.

I truly appreciate your interest, and hope that my report provides useful direction and insight for ecotourism planning in GHNP.

With best regards,

Maureen DeCoursey
Ecotourism Consultant

* I define CBET in GHNP as being nature and/or culture-based, with minimum environmental and cultural impact, and with a significant portion of the benefits (both economic and otherwise) remaining in the communities adjacent to GHNP.



TOURISM IN GHNP

Current Status and Potential for Community-Based Ecotourism

DIRECTIONS: Please review the whole questionnaire before answering any questions - several questions overlap but emphasize different kinds of issues and information. Remember, this questionnaire is informal and open-ended. Feel free to elaborate in any way!

I. AREA HIGHLIGHTS

A. Aside from the viewing the mountain scenery, what other activities are available for tourists in or around GHNP, and where are they located? (e.g. bird watching, wildlife viewing, religious pilgrimage, cultural tours, viewing local craft, mountain biking, rafting, climbing, fishing, etc.)

B. Where (and when) are the best:

-scenic views?

-campsites?

-wildlife viewing/bird watching areas (include type of animal and season)

-example of local cultural activities (festivals, temples, interesting villages, medicinal plants, crafts, etc.)

-wilderness areas?

-mountaineering peaks and/or climbing areas?

-treks?

C. Please list any other locations, events, or special features which could be used to attract ecotourists. Be sure and include the best time/season for such activities.

D. List and describe the hot springs in or near GHNP. Include facilities, camping/lodging opportunities, level of visitation, etc.

E. Are there certain villages in the region that are known for something special? For example, crafts production (fabric and shawl weaving, wood carving, hemp shoes, etc.) special foods, local healers/medicinal plants, special temples, dancing, singing, festivals, etc.?

II. VISITATION

A. Are visitation statistics available? Where?

B. In your estimate, how many tourists visit the GHNP area each year? (<100, 100-500, >500)



C. What kinds of tourists visit GHNP at present? For example: independent or group, international or Indian, etc. Please give rough percentages for each.

D. Please rank the main types of tourism in the area (1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often)

- Multiple-day trekking/camping trips
- Hotel stays
- Private home stays
- Daytime visitation only (staying in Kullu or other tourist center)
- Adventure travel (mountain biking, climbing, skiing, rafting, etc.)
- Religious pilgrimages or festivals
- Other (please explain)

E. What travel agencies are active in the region? Please give name of contact person and address if possible.

F. What are the names of some reputable travel agencies, both in the region and in New Delhi, that may be interested in operating tours to GHNP? Please give name of contact person and address if possible.

G. Generally speaking, how long do tourists stay in the region at present (one day only, a few days, more than a week?)

H. What time of year do tourists come? Are there particular seasons for particular interests?

III. FACILITIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

A. List and describe (including location) of

- Guest/Rest houses in or around GHNP that are open to the public.
- Hotels/restaurants in the Ecodevelopment Zone.
- Villages/private homes that take overnight visitors.

B. Are tourists allowed to stay in DFFC buildings? If yes, what kind of permit/permission is required? Please describe each facility in terms overall condition, location, access, current use, etc. Who manages them and takes care of maintenance? Are there cooking facilities? Nearby water source? Toilet facilities?

Jiwa Nala

Pashi

Gati

Majaan

Subliri



Sainj

- Larji
- Shangar
- Bah
- Majhan
- Lapah
- Dela
- Maraur
- Parkachi

Tirthan

- Banjar
- Sai Ropa
- Karongcha
- Rola
- Nada

C. Emergency Facilities. Are their radio communications in GHNP? Where? Where is the nearest medical facility?

D. Interpretation. Aside from the museum in Larji, please list and describe other are types of interpretation available in/near GHNP. These can include:

- nature trails
- trail signs,
- published interpretive materials on GHNP (maps, booklets, bird lists, cultural/historical information, etc.),

E. Are there other areas where park information can be obtained? If not, where would be good locations?

F. What kinds of interpretation facilities do you think there should be, and where should they be located? Why?

G. Please list and describe exisiting sites which could possibly be integrated into an educational tour about the local communities and the environment in GHNP. Think broadly! This can include (but are not limited to)

- village cultural centers
- medicinal plant home gardens
- good examples of traditional architecture
- interesting forest shrines
- interesting traditional practices.



H. Park Checkpoints-where are they? Are they staffed? When? What are the attendant's responsibilities?

IV. TREKKING

A.. Describe current trekking routes, including time, distance, trek highlights, trail dangers and potential problems.

B. Any other potential routes that might be attractive?

C. How are local people currently involved in trekking? (For examples, guides, porters, cooks, suppliers of pack animals, food, and other items, selling crafts, etc.)

D. Do trekking groups use porters or pack animals to carry their gear? Is this arranged through a local contact? Who?

D. What is their main source of cooking/heating fuel?

E. Is kerosene readily available in nearby bazaars (Banjar, Sainj, Larji)?

F. Are there, or might there be, any conflicts between trekking groups and graziers?

G. What do trekking groups do with garbage?

H. How are the toilet needs of groups managed?

I. Are trails well-maintained and easy to follow? Who is responsible for their upkeep? Where/when are there dangers (landslides, bridge wash-outs, etc.?)

V. MANAGEMENT

A. Is there a tourism management plan?

B. Does the park contain special tourism zones? If yes, where are they are what are the management specifics? Please list any additional areas to be excluded (e.g. sensitive habitats, villages with cultural prohibitions to outsiders, etc.)

C. Do tourists need a special permit to enter GHNP? How/where do they obtain one? Are trekking groups required to register? Where? Are these rules enforced?



D. What other rules pertain to outside visitors? Are they enforced?

E. Are tourist activities monitored in any way?

F. In terms of tourism, what is the role of the GHNP staff? What is the role of the DFO and its staff? Are there other government offices that are involved? What kinds of assistance can these offices provide?

G. Are any more roads planned for the GHNP area? Where?

H. Are there routes into Pin Valley NP, Kanawar WS, and Rupi Bhaba WS from GHNP? When are they accessible?

I. Current level of human impact (both tourist and non-tourist—local) impact: Please describe and give key locations.

- litter
- water pollution (soap, garbage, toilet)
- overgrazing
- excessive firewood cutting
- vandalized camping and lodging areas
- wildlife harassment; poaching.
- socio-cultural conflicts

J. How can the above impacts be better managed? Please be as specific as possible.

K. Should there be an annual visitation limit? How many individuals and/or groups per year?

L. From a socio-cultural or wildlife conservation perspective, should tourism be confined to certain areas or to certain months? Why or why not? Where/when should it be prohibited?

VI. LOCAL CONTEXT

A. Are local people in the ecodevelopment zone involved in tourism in any way currently? (For example, as drivers, guides, trekking staff, hotel/restaurant owners, food suppliers, etc.) If so, please elaborate and give names if possible.

B. Are there any traditional beliefs or customs to be aware of when considering ecotourism development? What are they and what villages are involved?

C. Are there sacred sites, off-limit areas, or off-limit times? Where?



D. What is the local labor availability (for both males and females) during the tourism months (April-June, Sept-Nov)? Could tourism development conflict with important traditional activities such as agricultural work, festivals, or seasonal grazing?

E. Are women involved in tourism at present? If not, how could they be involved? Could tourism development inadvertently and disproportionately increase the workload of village women, without increasing their share of the benefits?

F. Are local politics a constraint? If so, how?

G. Please list all existing local organizations (e.g. youth clubs, community work groups, farmers groups, women's groups, chamber of commerce, etc.)

H. Please list NGOs, INGOs, state, bilateral or private programs (and contact people) operating in the the GHNP area. Do any have projects related to tourism or enterprise development? Which ones should be consulted about ecotourism development?

I. Please list and describe current GHNP community extension programs (e.g. environmental education, enterprise development, women's programs, etc.)

VII. INFORMATION RESOURCES

Please list any resources that pertain to GHNP.

A. Documents (maps, management plans, trekking guides, etc.)

B. Previous tourism studies, assessments, projects done in the region

C. Travel Agencies in Delhi that operate trips in the region

D. HP Tourism (contact persons, addresses)

E. Travel Agencies in HP (Manali, Kullu)

F. Local people: guides, hotel owners, traditional leaders, key people, women's groups

VIII. GENERAL



- A. What are the main constraints to community-based ecotourism in GHNP? (e.g. environmental, political, policy and regulatory issues, lack of local coordinating/implementation body, marketing, lack of infrastructure, marketing, etc.)
- B. What should be the goals of CBET? (Please rank in order of importance.)
- C. What are possible strategies to accomplish this?
- D. Who should be involved, and who (which organization) should assume primary responsibility for implementing an ecotourism project?
- E. What are some possible organizational structures for planning, developing, and managing ecotourism in GHNP?
- F. What is the first step?
- G. How can the benefits (and responsibilities) of ecotourism be distributed equitably in the ecodevelopment zone of GHNP?
- H. What villages are good candidates for ecotourism pilot projects? Why?
- I. Are there examples of successful community-based ecotourism in other part of India? Where?
- J. Keeping in mind the degradation of the environment in Manali and other nearby areas as a direct result of tourism development, how can we be sure that tourism development in GHNP will i) support wildlife conservation, and ii) benefit the target villages in the ecodevelopment zone (and not disproportionately benefit outside entrepreneurs?) What safeguards are needed? How can we avoid this from happening in GHNP as well?
- K. Are there other people that should answer this questionnaire? Please give name and contact address.

APPENDIX 4
SAMPLE CODES OF CONDUCT
***Not on disk-hard copy in report only**

APPENDIX 5

“THE SCARLET MACAW TRAIL”

**(Made available by Ms. Leslie Jarvie, Ecotourism Consultant,
Conservation International, and Executive Director, EcoPlan:net)**

The Scarlet Macaw Trail, locally known as “La Ruta Guacamaya”, is a venture of Conservation International through its ProPetén project in the Petén, Guatemala. This project will hopefully prove to be a future model for successful and sustainable ecotourism development that is used as a mechanism for conservation.

ProPetén is working within the Maya Biosphere Reserve, a 4 million acre protected area in northern Petén, to introduce and give technical support to sustainable development projects. The goal is to prevent further destruction of the Petén forest and wetlands through equitable economic growth without depletion of the natural resources. ProPetén believes that this is viable only through the development of economic activities that sustain local communities and businesses without destroying the forest.

Local participation in all of ProPetén’s projects is essential and part of the criteria for development. The means for a better life without destruction of the forest must be found, but without genuine support from local communities, nature conservation is not possible.

Another goal of ProPetén is to save the endangered scarlet macaw. Sightings of the scarlet macaw are becoming less and less frequent, leading to its registration on endangered species lists worldwide. There are two fundamental reasons why this majestic bird is disappearing: the destruction of its habitat and the poaching of chicks for sale into lucrative foreign markets.

The area surrounding the archaeological site of El Perú represents a well known breeding ground and offers visitors the opportunity to properly observe the scarlet macaw. As an ecotourism attraction, the birds’ value becomes redefined. The presence of tourists in nesting areas make it much more difficult for the local poachers to succeed in stealing these precious birds. Simultaneously, this promotes a different consciousness among poachers and the region’s inhabitants in regard to becoming protectors of the birds’ habitat rather than destroying it. Visitor presence also deters the looting that the El Perú archaeological site has been subject to for decades and discourages the encroachment of colonists on the Laguna del Tigre National Park, of which El Perú is apart.



The Scarlet Macaw Trail was designed as an ecologically sensitive trip that has been strategically planned and developed to generate alternative sources of income for the local inhabitants living in the Petén. The success of this program will help to stop the advance of the agricultural frontier within the Maya Biosphere Reserve and simultaneously help to protect the endangered scarlet macaw and the El Perú archaeological site.

Project Rationale

Tourism is only one component of ProPetén which seeks to provide alternatives for conservation through viable mechanisms for sustainable development. The idea is that tourism projects will work with other components such as community development and enterprise development. Collaboration between projects will give needed support to the communities and promote diversification of activities which makes the communities less vulnerable to market swings and other business risks. Examples of other enterprise development in the MBR are:

- * the production center
- * immersion language school
- * xate
- * chicle extraction
- * sustainable forestry techniques

These enterprises are all components of the SMT tourism product.

Goals and Objectives

1. To start the project with small scale activities to insure:
 - * acceptance by the communities
 - * economic viability
 - * acceptable levels of environmental impact
2. The longer term vision included:
 - * defining possible diversification of tourism facilities
 - * coordination with other community enterprise development
 - * coordination with regional tourism development plans
3. Long term development goals included:
 - * a center for scientific research and environmental education

The authority and capacity of the local communities to direct tourism development along the routes was a central issue in the creation of a long-term strategy for the routes. It was



essential that a management structure be in place to ensure the minimum environmental impacts and maximum community benefits.

History and Background

In 1993 a community technical advisor from Pro Peten visited the community of Centro Campesino to explore the viability of a tourism route/s that would take tourists to the El Peru Archeological site which is also the nesting site for the scarlet macaw. His findings were that a route was feasible and that in fact another site called Buena Vista, also a good spot for observing the endangered scarlet macaw, could be incorporated into the route as well and involve a neighboring community, El Cruce dos Aguados. The technical advisor then met with representatives of the community of Centro Campesino and discussed the idea informally.

After the initial research and meeting Carlos Soza, Director of ProPeten, the technical advisor and a representative from USAID visited the communities and suggested a workplan, that included goals and objectives, for a community tourism project and explained to them what would be involved. The communities were receptive.

Once the development plan was complete, the communities had a meeting with the idea of initiating a tourism committee. ProPeten had suggested they use the same committee they already had in place for community process. They decided to follow the suggestion but had some doubts regarding ProPeten who they perceived (at that time) as wanting to own their land.

In 1994 the tourism committee was formed but there was still some debate as to how the project would be organized. It was originally suggested that individual people take certain aspects of the project as a private business but the community felt that it would be better to coordinate it as a community project. It was decided that the already existing community council would become the tourism council and be responsible for coordinating the community involvement of the tourism project. A meeting was called with all of the stakeholders involved to formally introduce the project and deliver a detailed workplan for the "Ruta Guacamaya".

The President of the tourism committee working with ProPeten, who gave technical support and guidance, determined the tasks at hand which were then passed down to the appropriate community members to follow up on. The roles for community members were:

- landowners
- guides



- lead forman for Champas construction
- construction workers
- 6 families who share responsibilities for food preparation and presentation
- launcheros (boatmen)
- horsemen/families who own horses

Once the roles and responsibilities were determined ProPetén supported the project by making sure the communities received the guidance and training they would need to develop and deliver a quality product that would meet the standards of an international clientele without further impacting the environment. Training received to date is:

- basic first aid
- human relations
- food preparation for all women in the community
- some guide training
- hygiene and sanitation
- reading and writing
- environmental education
- basic accounting
- English (in the near future)

In February or March of 1994 a third meeting was called with ProPetén and the communities to talk about an itinerary and product design. As the product was being developed an assessment was done in terms of infrastructure and equipment that would be necessary for the project. The assessment also took into consideration the location of the sites relative to impacts on the environment and the surrounding communities. [The following was decided:]

- the communities donated the land for the camp sites
- ProPetén loaned the communities money and helped them purchase a boat, motor and gas. (The loan was paid back with money earned from tourists such as backpackers, scientists, special CI groups, students from the EcoEscuela)
- money was obtained through grants and funding to build infrastructure at Centro Campesino, El Perú and Buena Vista
- ProPetén lent money to the families who owned the horses to buy appropriate saddles for their clients. (The families and the tourism committee paid back ProPetén and later the families paid back what they owed to the tourism committee)

The camp sites were located at Centro Campesino, El Peru and Buena Vista. The infrastructure was built from local materials by the communities and each site had one or two Chapas structures that could be used for cooking, eating, or hanging hammocks. Each site had a wooden table for meal presentation and appropriately built outhouses and solar shower stalls. Trails were built into the forest to access the latrines and showers. As well each site had a designated area for tented camping and horses.

Once the basic product was in place, ProPeten began to look for a tour operator that would be a good partner to the communities and sensitive to low impact and environmentally responsible tourism. ProPeten interviewed local operators and decided the best partner to operate the trip was Epiphyte Adventures. An agreement was signed in 1995 and a partnership between Epiphyte Adventures, the communities of Centro Campesino and El Cruce dos Aguados and ProPeten began. Again roles and responsibilities were defined, although in the first year of operations roles and responsibilities became somewhat unclear causing miscommunication and a lack of trust between partners. Consequently, all of the stakeholders came together again and this time, in writing, defined roles and responsibilities as follows:

Propeten

- * Liaison between communities and tour operator
- * Set criteria for environmentally and socially responsible tours
- * Manage and maintain communication with tour operator
- * Monitor and evaluate quality of operations and services
- * Orient and inform clients about projects and CI/ProPeten's involvement
- * Develop products and support tour operators in marketing these products to the targeted segments of the tourism market
- * Ongoing training with communities and other stakeholders/partners

Community's

- * Equal partners with tour operator
- * Community hosts
- * Caretakers and stewards of the tourism sites
- * Responsible for food in community setting
- * Lead interpreters of local cultural, archeological and environmental information
- * In charge of route logistics
- * Suppliers of horses and boats for El Peru and Buena Vista transport
- * Assist in camp set-up, food preparation and clean-up



Tour Operators

- * Joint partners with ProPeten and Conservation International in the marketing and promotion of The Scarlet Macaw Trail (SMT)
- * Responsible for bookings, cancellations, communication and services provided to outbound operators
- * Responsible for liability of clients while in Guatemala
- * Providers of equipment as needed for the SMT
- * Responsible for overall operations and delivery of services for SMT tour
- * Responsible for all transportation other than that supplied by community's
- * Responsible for all logistics other than SMT route
- * Partners working with the community's to set up and deliver tours
- * Suppliers of all food and food preparation at camp sites
- * Responsible for care, satisfaction and safety of group
- * Translators of the local interpretation
- * Supplier of all accommodations, tours and meals outside of SMT route

Conservation International in Washington ,D.C. initiated market research among tour operators in the United States determining which operators would be most appropriate for the SMT product. After targeting a list of viable operators an invitation was extended to these operators to join a familiarization (FAM) trip of the SMT. In May of 1995 the first FAM for the SMT was run in collaboration with Centro Campesino, El Cruce dos Aguados and Epiphyte Adventures with ProPeten supporting the operations of the trip and Conservation International in DC coordinating all communication and arrangements with the operators. 8 tour operators participated on the FAM and the resulting feedback was very positive.

"Prospective" group bookings resulted in the 1995 FAM, however because Epiphyte's office was in Coban rather than Flores and because of inadequate communication with the operators no actual bookings resulted from the FAM in 1996. In 1996 Epiphyte moved their center of operation to Flores and improved their mechanisms for communication, which is difficult in Guatemala.

Based on feedback from the 1995 FAM all of the stakeholders worked to improve the product, provide further training to the communities and improve communication with the operators and each other. In the Fall of 1995 ProPeten, CI and an outside ecotourism consultant designed and implemented a marketing plan that would reach 100 specifically targeted tour operators in the United States, Canada and Europe. The direct mail marketing effort to these operators was extremely successful.

As a result of this marketing effort a second FAM trip was operated in May of 1996 that included:

- Kurt Kutay, President, Wildland Adventures
- Will Weber , President, Journeys
- Tammy Ridenour, President, Maya Expeditions
- Merilee Metz, Sales Consultant, Great Trips
- Michael Sweeney, Director, Institute for Ecological Tourism,
Humbolt College
- Ted Cheesman, Cheesman's Ecology Safaris
- Michelle Sister, Ecotourism Assistant, Conservation International
- Karin Allgoewer, Ecotourism Intern, ProPeten

Kurt Kutay, President of Wildland Journey's (voted most responsible tour operator, worldwide, by Conde Naste magazine) returning from the FAM trip of the SMT said; "CI's contribution in the development of the "Scarlet Macaw Trail", is as extensive and well prepared as everyone in Guatemala was, it is the best example of conservation supporting ecotourism development I have ever experienced". In a subsequent press release Kurt wrote: "This is one of the best examples of real ecotourism at work. Never before have I seen such a creative collaboration from the ground up between indigenous peoples, the conservation community, the tourism industry and the traveler."

A focus group was conducted following the FAM trip where valuable feedback and input was received in terms of the next steps to take in the development of the SMT and training for the communities. The feedback from the operators was taken positively and is being actively responded to. As a result of the 1996 marketing efforts and FAM trip, the SMT product has been incorporated in the marketing mechanisms of approximately 10 international operators and trips are being planned for 1996/1997.

Key Benefits to the Communities

Centro Campesino

Based on the defined roles and responsibilities of the community, in Centro Campesino alone, 23 families are involved in the tourism project and benefit directly and 40 families benefit indirectly (e.g. construction workers, the local stores, etc.)

When asked if the benefits in the community reached those not involved in the tourism project they said no, but that they give everyone the opportunity to participate if they want to.

Community members also indicated that having the opportunity to communicate with the tourists was a benefit as they enjoyed and learned allot from meeting and talking to people from other countries.



Distribution of Benefits

All of the money made from tourism profits go into the general tourism fund and are reinvested back into the tourism project. This includes things such as:

- * salaries for services rendered
- * trail maintenance and development
- * repairs
- * infrastructure maintenance and development
- * equipment
- * horse maintenance, etc.

El Cruce dos Aguados:

* The benefits provided by tourism are:

- jobs
- money
- an alternative to agriculture

* The tourism committee receives Q1,000-1,800 for 8-10 people for 4 days.

* When asked if any of the benefits from the tourism project reach community member not involved, they said that only the tourism committee benefits from the money received with the exception of the Dona who owns the comedor and the families who own the horses.

Distribution of Benefits

All of the profits are put into a fund maintained by the treasurer of the tourism committee and reinvested into the project.

Conclusions

- 1) The research done in regard to the SMT indicates that "the experience for the client is key". Community based tourism is a new concept to many people, and although the operators invited to experience the SMT were among those who are most aware, they still have a limited concept of "tourism as a tool for conservation". For them, community is not the main point of the route but rather the quality of experience in general, of which the communities are a component.



- 2) Feedback indicated that more highlights are needed on the SMT. The route includes some parts that are not highly impactful in terms of creating “the experience”. Therefore the stakeholders involved are looking at options to include additional highlights as well as making the SMT a component to an itinerary that would visit other sites in Guatemala.
- 3) It was determined that the community guides must speak at least basic English. The relationship between the communities and tourists (of which the majority will not speak Spanish) is reduced by the guides inability to speak English, as the route requires personal contact with the community guides to have the “whole” experience of the SMT.
- 4) Data shows that the product itself is salable but must be targeted to potential markets carefully. The route is currently attractive to clients who are looking for more adventurous tourism programs and do not require a high level of comfort. Feedback indicated that the price of the trip and services rendered were adequate to the markets being targeted. It was determined that we should target operators and clientele that are looking for adventure/nature travel programs.

In closing I think it is important to say that in order for community based tourism to be a viable mechanism for sustainable development, the tourism industry as well as the general public must be educated about the concept and viability of “tourism being used as tool for conservation” in threatened areas throughout the world.

It is important to bear in mind that the local communities possess the natural and cultural heritage that, combined with the surrounding environment, create the magic formula that draws the traveler to their destination. It is here that environmentally and culturally sustainable tourism begins, and it is here that those tender roots wither and die when exploited. Local communities must feel proud of their natural and cultural heritage, understanding that by becoming stewards of this valuable heritage they will realize economic gain resulting from the protection of their resources. From this place of local stewardship for the local environment we will all gain a healthier or more whole-istic perspective, however local inhabitants being at the very end of the chain of monetary compensation, are the first to suffer when and if the economic pool begins to dry up.

I would like to remind you that tourism is now the largest and most profitable industry in the world. This puts each and every one of us in a powerful and strategic position to implement changes that will make this industry more environmentally committed to using our resources in a way that is responsible and sustainable. The future of the earth’s environment is an issue that should concern all of us. Therefore, our traditional ways of doing business, making a profit and traveling in general will no longer carry us through to the next century. Each one of us has



to change our way of looking at things, of doing things. Environmental and social responsibility can become a common goal that reflects all participants involved in the travel industry, resulting in a sustainable resource base that will remain intact for future generations as well as an improved bottom line for individual business.

Leslie Jarvie
Executive Director
Ecoplan:net
PO Box 527
Graton, CA 95444 USA
Ecoplan:net - Ecological Planning for the Environment and Tourism

Tel&Fax:(707) 824-4874
e-mail:ljjarvie@ecoplannet.org



APPENDIX 6

CBET RESOURCES

Training and Information Resources

The Mountain Institute
Asian Regional Office
attn: Wendy Lama or Nandita Jain
P.O. Box 2785, Bishalnagar
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 977-1-419356, Fax: 977-1-414902
e-mail: wendy@lama.wlink.nepal.com -or- njain@mountain.org
web: <http://www.mountain.org>

Ecoplan:net
Ecological Planning for the Environment and Tourism
attn: Leslie Jarvie
PO Box 257
Graton, California 95444 USA
Tel/Fax: 707-824-4874
Email: ljjarvie@ecoplannet.org

Regional Community Forestry Training Center
(See separate description for upcoming course, included below.)

The Ecotourism Society
P.O. Box 755
North Bennington, Vermont 05257-0755 USA
Ph. (802) 447-2121 Fx. (802) 447-2122
Email ecomail@ecotourism.org

Government Tourism Agencies

Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) - Delhi
Chandralok Building
36 Janpath
Ph. 332-4764



HPTDC-Shimla
attn: Trekking Officer in Charge
Tourist Office

HPTDC Information Office-Kullu
attn: Mrs. Solanki
Dhalpur

HPTDC Information Office-Manali
Hotel Kunzam
Ph. 2175

HPTDC-Marketing Office
Next to Hotel Kunzam
Ph. 2116

Himalayan Tourism Advisory Board (HIMTAB)
attn: Mr. Sudhir Sahi
Centur Hotel, New Delhi

Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN)
(A division of UP tourism)
*organizes mountain bike tours

NGOs

International Development Enterprises
attn: Chris Behr
C5/43 Salderjung Development Area
New Delhi 110016
Ph. 696-9812,13,4632

Himalayan Environment Trust
attn: Captain Kauley
Leged Inn
E-4 East of Kailash
New Delhi
Ph. 621-5635



Central Himalayan Rural Action Group (CHIRAG)
attn: Mr. Kanhi Lal, Director
Sitla, Mukteswar
Nainital District
UP INDIA

Rural Center for Human Interests (RUCHI)
attn: Mr. Dharamvir Singh, Director
Shalana, Rajgarh 173101
Dist. Sirmour
HP INDIA
Tel: (91) 1799-3203 Fx: 1792-77649

Community Aid
attn: Mr. Dharat Mukerjee
Darkot
Manchiara
Uttar Pradesh

Publications

“Ecotourism for Forest Conservation and Community Development” Please send all requests to Ms. Channuan Ratarasarn <corveer@mozart.inet.co.th> or Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC), Kasetsart University, PO Box 1111, Bangkok 10903, Thailand Tel: (662) 940-5700 ext. 1222 fax: (662) 561-4880

World Trade Organization. 1995. What Tourism Managers Need to Know: A Practical Guide to the Development and Use of Indicators of Sustainable Tourism. Ottawa, Consulting and Audit Canada.

Ecotour Operators in India

New Delhi

Amber Tours
Flat 2 , Dwarka Sadan
C-42 Connaught Place
Ph. 331-2773



Asian Adventures

attn: Mohit Aggarwal
B-9 Sector 27 Noida 201301
Ph. 91524878, 74
Email info@indiawildlife.com

Exotic Journeys

attn: Raj and Hashmad Singh
26, Sector 2 Market
RK Puram 110022
Ph. 616-2737, 617-0221, 617-8658, 610-4448
email: exotic@del2.vsnl.net.in

Far Horizons

attn: Punit Mehta
M/57-A Malviya Naga 110017
Ph. 645-0945, 622-1222, 7626
Mercury Himalayan Explorations
attn: Col. Kumar
Jeevan Tara Building
Parliament Street
Ph. 31-2008

Mountain Travel India

Yetish Bahuguna, Vira Mehta, John Edwards
Ph. 752-5032, 752-5357

Rimo Expeditions

attn: Chewang Motup
B5/6 #4320 Vasant Kunj 110070
Ph. 613-6568, 689-8710
Email rimo@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in

Shikar Travels

209 Competent House
14 Middle Circle
Connaught Circus
Ph. 331-2444



Wanderlust Travel
attn: Maj. Yadav
M-51-52 Palika Bhawan
New Delhi 110066
Ph. 687-5200, 602-1800, 611-1889
Email travel.wonder@axcess.net.in

World Expeditions
Ground Floor, MG-Bhawan-1
7 Local Shopping Center
Madangir
Ph. 698-3358

Manali

Himalayan Adventures
attn: Rupsingh Negi
The Mall (next to UCO Bank)
Ph. 2750

Himalayan Journeys
The Mall (nr. State Bank of India)
Ph. 2365

Snowbird Adventures
Manu Market
Ph. 2586
*organizes mountain bike tours also



ANNOUNCING AN INTERNATIONAL COURSE in COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM FOR CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

To be held in Nepal 15 February - 6 March 1999 organized by THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY FORESTRY TRAINING CENTRE and THE MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE in collaboration with Institute of Forestry (Nepal) and The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation

COURSE DESCRIPTION

It is now widely accepted that local stewardship of resources plays an important role in the long-term sustainability of resource use.

A range of collaborative activities has demonstrated that participation of local communities in the management of forest resources greatly assists in conservation as well as promotes rural development. Community-based tourism is one such emerging activity which is generating much interest.

While community-based tourism has been used to describe a variety of activities that seek to positively link conservation with economic development, many of the issues involved in the development of a community-based tourist area are not clearly understood. There are concerns about managing negative impacts on local environments, while at the same time sufficiently involving

local communities in the planning process to receive just benefits from tourism activities. Though successful examples of community managed tourism exist, they tend to be highly localized or culturally specific in context.

This course is designed to develop participants' skills and awareness to successfully assess and plan for community-based tourism activities within a market context. The course focuses on participatory planning approaches that actively involve local communities in tourism development so they can derive maximum benefits and contribute to conserving the local resources (cultural and/or environmental) on which tourism is dependent.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the course are to:

* Provide skills to assess the potential of community-based tourism activities (within the social, market political, and environmental contexts);

* Enable participants to assist communities and others in developing plans for community-based tourism using participatory approaches and tools; and



* Provide participants opportunities to exchange and share experiences and lessons learned from community-based tourism activities.

COURSE TOPICS

1. The Role of Community-based Tourism

- * Characteristics, enabling policy-frameworks and linkages among tourism, rural development, conservation and other sectors
- * Issues and opportunities in community-based tourism
- * International case studies and examples from the region

2. Community-based Tourism Planning and Tools (Field Study and Practice)

- * Asset-based approaches to planning for community tourism
- * Participatory planning and design tools for:
 - Social and environmental resources assessment for community-based tourism
 - Assessing economic and market linkages
 - Successful institutional support
 - Stakeholder analysis and conflict resolution
 - Action planning and follow up

3. Participatory Community-based Monitoring and Evaluation

- * Concepts and methods in community-based monitoring and evaluation
- * Case studies of community-based monitoring and evaluation

4. Applications in Participants' Own Work Situation

- * Development of planning strategies to be applied in participants' own work situations
- * Production of sample workplans for community-based tourism activities at selected sites

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

The course builds upon experiential learning techniques. Training sessions facilitate the learning and sharing of information from participant to participant, as well as from trainer to participant.



Ongoing reflection, linking the course content with the participants' own experiences, will occur. Participants are encouraged to bring information, reports, etc. on community-based tourism in their own country and work areas.

Much of the course will involve field study in rural communities where there is existing tourism potential. While in the field participants will have the opportunity to learn and practice participatory tools for community-based planning, monitoring and evaluation of tourism.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This course is designed for field-based level professionals from governmental and non-governmental agencies, researchers, academics, and private sector agencies (tour operators, etc.) who are working in community-based tourism activities, or working in areas where community-based tourism is viable or has the potential to become a tool for achieving conservation and development goals.

In order to provide the most interactive setting in which each participant is actively involved, the course is limited to 25 participants. Moreover, since the course is taught in English, participants should possess a high proficiency in English speaking, writing, and listening. Women are strongly encouraged to apply. In view of the need to walk in hilly terrain (max. elevation 2,200m), the participants should be in good health and physical condition.

FELLOWSHIPS

Candidates should secure their own financial support from either their government, employer, or donor countries (contact their embassies) or International Organizations such as The Asian Development Bank, Asia Foundation, AusAID, DANCED, Department for International Development (DFID), FAO, The Ford Foundation, ITTO, USAID, The World Bank, and WWF country offices.

COSTS

The course fee is US\$ 3,975 which includes course materials, accommodation, daily allowance (which covers expenses for food and other essential items) and health insurance. Part of the course fee is paid back to the participants for their daily allowance.

Transportation to and from Nepal is not included. Registration deadline - 25th January 1999.

COURSE FACILITATORS

RECOFTC has organized international training courses in community forestry since 1987. The main objective of RECOFTC is to organize, provide, facilitate and otherwise support training for community forestry in the Asia- Pacific Region.

The Mountain Institute (TMI) is an international conservation and development organization, with over ten years experience in designing and implementing innovative community-based tourism programs in Nepal, India and the Tibetan Autonomous Region, China. TMI's goal is to conserve mountain environments and cultural heritage while improving the livelihoods of mountain people. TMI brings 25 years of scientific, field-based experiences to address challenges and opportunities facing mountain cultures, communities and conservation.

The Institute of Forestry/Nepal (IOF) is the primary higher education center for natural resource professionals in Nepal. The IOF has more than four years experience in community based tourism training and education at the national and international level.

The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) is a non-governmental organization with more than 13 years experience in designing and implementing biological research, national and international level training on community based conservation, and enterprise development programs of which the Annapurna Conservation Project and Baghmara Community Forestry Program are considered models.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:

Dr. Somsak Sukwong, Director
Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC)
Kasetsart University
PO Box 1111
Bangkok 10903, Thailand
Tel: (662) 940-5700,
Fax: (662) 561-4880
E-mail: ftcsss@nontri.ku.ac.th



APPENDIX 7

COST ANALYSIS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN KINNAUR

***Not on disk - hardcopy in final report only**



**APPENDIX 8
ECOTREKS IN/NEAR GHNP**

***Not on disk-hardcopies in report only**

APPENDIX 9

MONITORING PARAMETERS FOR ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF MOUNTAIN TOURISM

Made available by Dr. Pitamber Sharma, International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), via The Mountain Forum

1. Parameters for Monitoring Environmental Impacts

(a) Forest and vegetation condition. The condition of forest and vegetation in the tourist area may be monitored in terms of percent of forest cover, forest density in terms of crown cover, estimated biomass in terms of mt/ha, and bio-diversity in terms of indicator species of flora and fauna.

(b) Consumption of fuelwood and other forest products. This may be monitored in terms of per capita fuelwood consumption per annum, and the share of fuelwood and forest products in the total resource consumption by households, lodges etc.

(c) Usage of alternate energy. This may be monitored in terms of the share of alternative sources of energy such as kerosene, electricity, solar etc. in the total energy consumption.

(d) Water quality. Parameters may be the measure of biological contaminants such as biological oxygen demand (BOD), coliform bacteria, and physical contaminants such as silt content, and chemical contamination in creeks, streams and rivers or other water bodies such as lakes.

(e) Air quality. Emissions such as smoke, exhausts from vehicles and aircrafts, indoors and localized air pollution as well as visibility can be the monitoring parameters for air quality.

(f) Noise pollution. Monitoring parameter can be the measurement of noise by source (such as aircrafts) in decibels.

(g) Sanitary conditions. Monitoring parameters can be the quantity of litter in specific locations or along trails. Litter can be categorized into biodegradable and bio-nondegradable, and, in case of the latter, into toxic and non-toxic bio-nondegradable waste. Solid waste disposal in resort areas, campsites or trails may be another parameter for monitoring the impact particularly of trekking and mountaineering tourism. In heavily frequented campsites drainage conditions particularly with respect to sewage may be an important parameter. The relative importance of these parameters is determined largely by the geographical location of the tourist area. At higher altitudes with extremely low temperatures decomposition of even biodegradable waste

is not possible and may be a source of environmental hazard. Use of environment friendly technology such as solar toilets, use of incinerators etc., and periodic or seasonal cleaning of the camps and location based institutional systems for cleaning the environment and the effectiveness of such systems may be other parameters of monitoring the impact of tourism on the environment.

(h) Biophysical environment. There can be a number of parameters, again depending on the geographical location, to monitor the impact of tourism on the physical environment. These can be the number and frequency of landslides, the receding of the treeline, the receding of glaciers, eutrophication and drying up of springs and lakes, changes in micro-climatic conditions etc.

(i) Environmental consciousness on the part of the community. A final category of environmental monitoring parameters can be indicators to perceive the consciousness of the community with respect to the state of the environment. These may reflect in formation of location-specific community groups to raise environmental consciousness and influence the behavior of the host population as well as the tourists, and activities related to environmental care etc.

2. Parameters for Monitoring Socio-Cultural Impacts

The socio-cultural impact monitoring parameters need to capture a number of dimensions that reflect the socio-cultural fabric of a community.

(a) Demographic changes. Trends and patterns of emigration and immigration among households in the local communities can be an important indicator to monitor the impact of tourism. Changes in seasonality of migration can be another important parameter.

(b) Social mobility. Trends and patterns in social mobility among different groups in the community can be a parameter indicating the influence of tourism in a given social order.

(c) Social cohesion, attitudes and values. These parameters can only be qualitative. The state of social cohesion in the community and family can be a parameter indicating the influence of tourism in the community. The attitude of the members of the community to life, nature, social relationships, religion etc. can be other indicators of the changes in society resulting from tourism.

(d) Practice of cultural traditions and rituals. The practice of positively reinforcing cultural traditions and rituals is an effective indicator of the influence of tourism on local communities. These can be assessed in terms of the observance of cultural festivals and a renewed awareness of the cultural identity of the community.



(e) Cultural heritage. The awareness of the cultural heritage is reflected in things such as the preservation and maintenance of cultural assets and artifacts, the state of traditional crafts and the extent to which traditional architectural styles prevail in the community. Similarly the maintenance of ethnic, community specific food and dress habits may be another indicator of the strength of the cultural heritage.

(f) Law, order and security. The extent of crime, violence and corruption can also be used as parameters for assessing external impacts on communities. The prevalence of prostitution has often been noted as a negative effect of tourism in many Asian countries.

3. Parameters for Monitoring Economic Impacts

The parameters for monitoring economic impacts need to reflect income and employment effects, effects on consumption, asset formation and ownership, and reinvestment, as well as impact on levels of living in general and the levels of living of the disadvantaged groups in particular.

(a) Contribution to cash income and livelihood options among households is an effective indicator of the economic impact of tourism. This may be measured in term of the share of tourism related income in total household income, extent of household employment in tourism related activities; contribution of non-traditional income opportunities due to tourism; opportunities opened up for the poor and the disadvantaged etc.

(b) Land ownership mainly in terms of the sale and ownership of land to outsiders, and the displacement of locals.

(c) Asset formation in the area in terms of new construction, ownership of such construction, and other assets as well as savings that might be resulting from tourism. (d) Wage rates relative to price increases and shortages of essential items may be used to indicate the real impact of tourism on the levels of living in the area.

(e) Prevalence of child labor may be a parameter to indicate the exploitation that may result from the pressures arising from tourism particularly in lodge keeping and catering activities.

(f) Reinvestment of tourism earnings in the locality can be used as a parameter to indicate the effects of tourism in opening new opportunities and expanding the multiplier effects of tourism.

(g) Qualitative perception of linkages within the productive sectors resulting from tourism. The breadth and depth of sustainable economic impact of tourism is indicated by these linkages. Perception on dependence of the local economy on outside, particularly with regard to the

growth of a dualistic economic structure with a outside dependent parallel economy and a subsistence economy. These trends may have implications for the long run sustainability of tourism.

4. Parameters for Monitoring Gender Impacts

These parameters relate to the sensitivity of tourism induced activities to the needs of women and the promotion of the interests of women as a disadvantaged group within and outside the domain of the households.

- (a) Income and employment opportunities for women generated by tourism related activities and the extent to which women are facilitated to take advantage of the opportunities. Participation of women in tourism related trade, the state of women entrepreneurship may be important parameters.
- (b) Effect of tourism related activities in the overall work burden of women as reflected in the increase or decrease in the work burden and the extent of work sharing by male members of the household.
- (c) Women's status within households as reflected in decision making with respect to use of income, and other household decisions.
- (d) Perception of women's status in the community as reflected in the representation of women in community organizations, and participation of women in development activities outside the household.
- (e) Level of participation of women in women's organizations, Mothers Groups etc.
- (f) State of women's literacy as reflected in the enrollment of girlchild in school; out-of-school education as well as skill training for women.
- (g) Attitude of facilitating agencies in promoting women's involvement in entrepreneurship and development work, through credit support, training and related programs.
- (h) Long run changes in sex ratios, and life expectancy of women.



5. Parameters for Monitoring Impact on Development

These would reflect the impact of tourism on generally accepted development parameters. These may include:

- (a) State of accessibility to the area in terms of transport and communication.
- (b) Availability and quality of basic services at reasonable distances such as basic health services, elementary schools, drinking water.
- (c) General level of literacy.
- (d) State and vitality of local institutions such as local government, community resource user groups and their activities in the economic and environmental development of the concerned communities, the extent of dialogue between the government and the community in terms of development priorities, and in the realization of the comparative advantage.
- (e) Extent of human resource development in terms of the local pool of trained manpower that can innovatively create and take advantage of opportunities.
- (f) General enthusiasm in development as reflected in the general participation in development of all groups and stratas of the community.
- (g) Relative change in the condition of the poorest household in terms of levels of living, basic income, consumption, access to education and health, and fuel and fodder needs.



APPENDIX 10
VISITOR'S MAP TO THE ANNAPURNA CONSERVATION AREA
***Not on disk-hard copy in report only**

"Ecotourism for Community Development: A Stakeholder's Perspective in Great Himalayan National Park," International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development (IJSESD) 2 (2011): 2, accessed (December 19, 2019), doi:10.4018/jsesd.2011040103. Export Reference. Available In.Â Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) lies in the Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh. GHNP has rich biodiversity, sparse human populations, inaccessibility, little tourism, and a local economy based on traditional livelihoods. The forest environment provides local people with Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) such as honey, fruit nuts, bark of birch and yew, flowers and fuel wood. Himalayan Ecotourism is community-based social enterprise offering treks and other outdoor activities in Himachal Pradesh. We are located in the ecozone of the Great Himalayan National Park where we operate from the Tirthan valley. We function as a joint venture between a local cooperative society and qualified professionals to deliver top-notch ecotourism services. Himalayan Ecotourism stands for sustainable development in the Himalayas by promoting conservation and empowerment of the locals with a focus on women. A cooperative-based model of enterprise. Himalayan Ecotourism is a social enter