

**UNESCO Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for the  
Asia-Pacific Region, Wildlife Institute of India**



**भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान  
Wildlife Institute of India**

**Workshop on  
Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain  
Landscapes of the Himalayas**

**27-28 February 2015  
Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun**



## **Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes of the Himalayas' at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun from 27-28 February, 2015**

The UNESCO Category 2 Centre, Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun and the Ecotourism Wing, Uttarakhand Forest Department organized a 2-Day Workshop on 'Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes of the Himalayas' at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun from 27-28 February, 2015. (Workshop Programme\_Annexure I)

The main objective of the workshop was to bring together the various stakeholders involved in ecotourism activities in the Himalayas and provide a vibrant platform for brainstorming sessions and experience sharing so as to evolve a comprehensive roadmap to foster sustainable nature tourism, especially in the World Heritage Sites of the Garhwal Himalayas.

A total of 30 participants (Annexure II) including Senior (retd.) IAS and IFS officers, Chief Wildlife Wardens, Chief Conservators of Forests, Site Managers from Uttarakhand and Sikkim, including resource persons from University of Montana Dr.Keith Bosak, and Dr.Sejal Worah, WWF-India participated and provided valuable inputs during the workshop.

### **Inaugural and Technical Session I Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2015,**

The inaugural address at the Workshop was made by the Chief Guests, Shri D.V.S. Khatri, IFS, Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttarakhand and Dr. Jagdish Kishwan IFS (retd.) Former ADG, Wildlife, MoEFCC and introductory remarks were given by Dr. V.B. Mathur, Director, Wildlife Institute of India and Shri Rajiv Bharatri, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests, Uttarakhand Forest Department. Shri Manoj Nair, IFS, Scientist UNESCO Category 2 Centre, WII welcomed the participants and Dr. Sonali Ghosh, IFS, Scientist, UNESCO Category 2 Centre, WII delivered the vote of thanks for the two day workshop.

### **Technical Session I**

#### **Ecotourism in Mountain Landscapes: Key Issues**

Session I on the first day of the Workshop was chaired by Dr. R.S. Tolia (IAS retd.), Former Chief Secretary, Government of Uttarakhand and Professor, Centre for Public Policy, Doon University. Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj (IFS), Scientist-F. Wildlife Institute of India and Dr.Dhananjai Mohan (IFS), Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Uttarakhand were the Co-chairs for the session.

The lead speaker, Dr. Keith Bosak, Associate Professor, College of Forestry and Conservation, University of Montana, U.S.A. made a presentation on 'Sustainable Ecotourism in the Field: Lessons from India'. Explaining the three important aspects of ecotourism – nature-based, educational and sustainability aspects – he stressed that it is also a business, a political tool as well as one for conservation and development. Ecotourism also provides a way to preserve culture and heritage. He emphasised the importance of proper planning for business and marketing aspects, infrastructure and visitor management,

and capacity building for ecotourism. Ecotourism must have an environmental plan that accounts for baselines studies and monitoring to evaluate sustainability of ecotourism ventures whilst bearing in mind that ecotourism leads to changes in the culture and environment of the destination. While stressing the importance of local involvement and ownership, he pointed out that ecotourism cannot be a panacea for conservation and development. In the panel discussion following the lead talk, the Chair emphasised the role of community participation for steering ecotourism successfully. He also commented on the need to be aware to a changing framework of tourism management and flagged the need to look at trans boundary issues between states in India. In particular, he highlighted the need to address skill development and poverty alleviation and evaluate incentives and benefits, both monetary and non-monetary, from ecotourism. For ecotourism to be environmentally sustainable, amongst other factors sanitation and solid waste management must be addressed through careful planning and implementation. Dr Sejal Worah commented on the need to explicitly address aims of ecotourism to determine these in terms either of economic development or conservation goals. She asked for more thought on how to link science and management for ecotourism. In addition to catering to the 'niche' nature-tourist or ecotourist, she stressed upon the need to reach out to the mainstream tourists (e.g. religious tourists in Uttarakhand) to change their mindsets towards environmentally responsible tourism and encourage them to connect with nature more meaningfully. Dr Seema Bhatt pointed out that ecotourism is a highly misused term and emphasised the need to set standards and develop a certification system for ecotourism activities. She also stressed on the need for capacity building of local communities involved in ecotourism, regulation of visitor numbers, and regular feedback to inform adaptive management. Mr Rajiv Dhiman emphasised urgent attention to be paid to disaster management and its impacts on ecotourism in light of the Kedarnath floods in June 2013. Mr Rajiv Bhartari shared his extensive experience of developing community based ecotourism in Uttarakhand and discussed the challenges faced and opportunities created therein.

## **Technical Session II**

### **Ecotourism in Mountain Landscapes: Case Studies (Uttarakhand)**

The Chair of this session was Shri D.V.S. Khati, IFS Chief Wildlife Warden, and Govt of Uttarakhand while the co-chair of the session was Dr S.Satyakumar, Scientist G, WII and Shri C.S.Rao, IFS CCF, Govt of Sikkim. In his opening remarks, Shri DVS Khati gave his unique definition of sustainability and shared his own experience of living and working in the mountain tourism site of Nainital. He stressed on the need to come up with a concrete ecotourism plan for the area.

This was followed by the first presentation of the session on Gangotri National Park by Dr. Dhananjai Mohan, IFS CCF wildlife, Govt of Uttarakhand. He gave an overview of the Protected Area and its cultural and natural heritage values that qualify the park as a potential World Heritage Site. He emphasised that Gangotri shrine is well known but is not inside the national park and that as such the integrity of the National Park area is intact. The shortage

of forest frontline staff, lack of nature interpretation facilities and final notification of the National Park were some of the challenges that need to be addressed while taking up eco-tourism activities at the site. The 2013 natural disaster had also significantly brought down the number of visitors, but it was expected that the number of mountaineers was likely to pick up as in earlier years.

The second presentation was on Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers by Shri S.S.Rasaily, IFS Field Director, Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve. He gave an overview of the Biosphere Reserve and stated that the area has both natural and cultural heritage values. Some of the challenges faced by the site managers were post-2013 accessibility and reconstruction of road and communication network in the remote areas. He also emphasised that while planning any eco-tourism initiative in the area the aspect of extremely difficult terrain, limited access to market and employment opportunities must be taken into consideration.

The third presentation was on Greater Himalayan National Park by Shri Ajay Srivastava, IFS, Scientist-F, WII. GHNP is the latest entrant on the list of World Heritage Site and was declared under Criteria X as recently as 2014. The main challenges for developing sustainable tourism in the site was towards improved communication network inside the Park and better involvement and coordination between the multiple stakeholders such as the tourism department, local community and the Park authorities. He also proposed two interpretation and recreational facilities at Sai Ropa and Ropa for enhancing the tourism values of the area.

The fourth presentation was on Sikkim and its Eco-tourism initiatives by Shri C.S.Rao, IFS and Chief Wildlife Warden Govt of Sikkim. In this presentation, he highlighted the unique biodiversity and the ecotourism policy that was launched in 2012. The salient features of this policy has been to promote nature based activities as an alternative income source to local communities through a three tiered management structure, and specific strategies for planning Eco-tourism, training & capacity building, benefit sharing, stakeholders partnership & departmental convergence, product development, infrastructural development, publicity, safety, certification, awareness & education, etc. Guidelines for Ecotourism operators and Guides, visitors and research scholars in PA and non PA have also been clearly laid out. Special emphasis on regulating the number of tourists and solid waste management are also some of the highlights of the overall strategy and were also replicable to other mountain sites in the country.

The session ended with concluding remarks from the Chair.

### **Technical Session III, 1600-1800hrs**

#### **Project formulation on Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes**

The third session of the day was to work in a group to develop project framework. This session was facilitated by Dr. Sejal Worah (with support from Shri V.K. Uniyal, IFS, Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj, IFS, Dr. Dhananjai Mohan, IFS, and Dr. S. Sathyakumar. Outcomes of the group work was presented on the next day.

### **Day Two: Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2015**

#### **Session IV: Project formulation, feedback and next steps**

This session was facilitated by Shri Rajiv Bharatri, to discuss the output of group work. This session was followed by the presentations in the concluding session.

#### **Concluding Session**

Chief Guest of the concluding session was Shri N. Ravishankar, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Uttarakhand. In the concluding session Dr. V.B. Mathur, Director, Wildlife Institute of India in his address provided the information about the recently established UNESCO Category 2 Center at Wildlife Institute of India. He briefed about the objectives of the workshop and provided an overview of the previous day's activities of the workshop

The Session was followed by the presentations on project formulation.

First presentation was made by Shri S.S. Rasaily, IFS Field Director, Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve which is part of the Nanda Devi-Valley of Flowers World Heritage Site. He discussed about the issues in the WHS i.e. huge pilgrim volume, opportunity of spreading the message of nature conservation, need for better interpretation and signage en route, with huge volume of pilgrims using the same route, negative impacts on safety and wilderness experience of the Valley of Flowers eco-tourist. He discussed the need to develop a complete eco-business plan for the EDCs - engage consultant, inter-departmental action plan for support to the EDCs and developing visitor amenities etc.

The second presentation was made by Dr. Dhananjai Mohan, CCF, Uttarakhand Forest Department. He discussed the need of the project as outstanding natural and cultural values are largely getting overlooked, and sustainable practices required for environmental conservation in fragile landscape. He also pointed out the key issues, short and long term actions for the conservation of natural heritage sites.

The third presentation on solid waste management in Khangchendzonga National Park was made by Mr. C.S. Rao, IFS, CCF Govt of Sikkim. He first provided the details about green initiatives by state forests department like compulsory environmental education for schools, ban on plastic carry bags, restrictions on green felling (only dead, dying & diseased trees allowed to be removed for the bonafide use) and grazing, regulation of fodder collection from reserve forests on a sustainable basis only through JFMCs, organic farming, total compensation for the crops damaged by wildlife, ban on fire crackers and ban on commercial exploitation of medicinal plants.

Then he presented ecotourism policy of the state government and provided information about revenue generated by the tourism activities. He also provided information about garbage monitoring activity to minimize the wastes generation by recycling and discussed the green policy initiatives of the state government.

Dr. Keith Bosak, University of Montana presented a road map for Ecotourism in Uttarakhand. He shared his experience in ecotourism in Uttarakhand. He also stressed that the roadmap for ecotourism for Uttarakhand must be developed. This plan must be long-term and take into account the needs of local people and environments (Tour Report\_ Annexure III). At the end of the workshop Mr. N. Ravishankar, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Uttarakhand addressed the participants and emphasised the need to develop an adaptive strategy for sustainable tourism in mountain landscapes

The Workshop concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Sonali Ghosh, IFS, Scientist, UNESCO Category 2 Centre, Wildlife Institute of India.

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(Annexure I)

**UNESCO Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and  
Training for the Asia-Pacific Region, Wildlife Institute of India,  
Dehradun**



भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान  
Wildlife Institute of India

**Workshop on  
Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes of the Himalayas**

**27-28 February 2015**  
**Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun**

**PROGRAMME**

<b>Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2015</b>		<b>0930-1000 hrs:Registration</b>
<b>Inaugural Session</b>		
1000-1005 h	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	: ShriManoj Nair, IFS, Scientist-E, WII-UNESCO C2C
1005-1015 h	<b>Introductory Remarks</b>	: Dr. V.B. Mathur, Director, WII
1015-1025 h	<b>Address</b>	: Shri D.V.S. Khati, IFS, Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttarakhand
1025-1040 h	<b>Address</b>	: Dr. JagdishKishwan, IFS (retd.), Former ADG (Wildlife), MoEFCC
1040-1045 h	<b>Vote of Thanks</b>	: Dr. SonaliGhosh, IFS, Scientist-E, WII- UNESCO C2C
1045-1100 h	<b>Tea/ Coffee Break</b>	
1100-1230 h	<b>Session I:Ecotourism in Mountain Landscapes: Key Issues</b>	
	<b>Chair:</b> Dr.R.S. Tolia, IAS (retd.), Former Chief Secretary, Govt. of Uttarakhand	
	<b>Co-chair :</b> Dr. G.S.Rawat, Scientist G, WII/ Dr. A.K.Bhardwaj, IFS, Scientist F, WII	
	Dr. Dhananjai Mohan, IFS CCF (WL), Govt of Uttarakhand	
	<b>Rapporteur:</b> Dr. MalvikaOnial, Scientist-E, WII-UNESCO C2C	
	<b>Lead Speaker:</b> Dr. Keith Bosak, Associate Professor, College of Forestry & Conservation, University of Montana	
	<b>Panel Discussion :</b> Shri Rajiv Bhartari, IFS, Dr. G S Rawat, Dr.SejalWorah,	

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Shri Rajiv Dhiman, IFS, ShriShrawan Kumar

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1230-1330 h	<b>Session II: Ecotourism in Mountain Landscapes: Case Studies (Uttarakhand)</b> <b>Chair:</b> Shri D.V.S. Khati, IFS, Chief Wildlife Warden, Govt of Uttarakhand <b>Co-Chair :</b> Dr. S. Sathyakumar, Scientist G, WII Shri C.S. Rao, IFS, CCF (WL, T, Hq.), Government of Sikkim <b>Rapporteur:</b> Dr.SonaliGhosh, IFS, Scientist E, WII-UNESCO C2C <b>Presentations:</b> (1) Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers : Shri S.S. Rasaily, IFS (2) Gangotri National Park : Dr Dhananjai Mohan, IFS
1330-1430 h	<b>Lunch Break</b>
1430-1600h	<b>Session II (contd) : Case Studies (Himalayas)</b>  (3) Great Himalayan National Park : Shri Ajay Srivastava, IFS, Scientist-F, WII (4) Khangchendzonga National Park : Shri C.S.Rao, IFS
1600-1800 h	<b>Session III: Project formulation on Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes</b> Group work to develop project framework facilitated by Dr SejalWorah (with support from Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj, IFS, Dr. D Mohan, IFS, Dr S Sathyakumar
1800 h	<b>Dinner</b>

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**Day Two : Saturday:28<sup>th</sup>February, 2015**

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0930-1100h	<b>Session IV:Project formulation, feedback and next steps</b>  Facilitation by Shri Rajiv Bhartari, IFS (discussion of group outputs and refinement for presenting to wider audience)
1100-1200 h	Tea break and preparation of presentation by facilitators
1200-1300 h	Presentation of project framework and discussion on next steps. Chair: Dr V B Mathur, Director WII Co Chair: Shri Rajiv Bhartari, IFS Concluding remarks: Dr Keith Bosak
1300 h	<b>Lunch</b>

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Participants of Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes of the Himalayas 27-28 February 2015 Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun

(Annexure II)



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Wildlife Institute of India

**Workshop on  
Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes of the Himalayas**

**27-28 February 2015  
Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun  
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## **India Travel Report**

**February 19 to March 02, 2015**

**Submitted by: Keith Bosak**

### Overview:

During the period of February 19<sup>th</sup> to March 2<sup>nd</sup>, I (Keith Bosak) traveled to India to coordinate and participate in a workshop titled: “Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes of the Himalayas” in Dehradun. The workshop took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 2015 and was hosted by the UNESCO Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for the Asia-Pacific Region and by the Wildlife Institute of India.

The purpose of this visit was to generate linkages and build networks among academics, policy-makers, resource managers, and the tourism industry with a long-term goal of building capacity for protected area management and sustainable tourism development in India. India has a rapidly growing population and an economy that is keeping pace. As such, the pressures put on the environment in India are immense and this is also true with India's protected areas. Indian protected areas are characterized as having people living within or adjacent to their boundaries who practice subsistence livelihoods and therefore place demands on the local natural resources. This is a challenging situation for resource managers in India but also a source of opportunities. In this case, ecotourism has been identified as a means by which local populations can engage in economic activities that provide an income and also promote conservation. While this sounds like an ideal configuration (having local people engaged in ecotourism in support of the conservation goals of Indian protected areas) there are enormous challenges that need to be addressed. In addition, protected area managers face their own challenges related to protection of resources while allowing for some local use and a growing number of recreational users.

### Workshop- Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun:

From the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February until the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, I traveled to Dehradun, the capital of Uttarakhand State for a workshop titled: “Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes of the Himalayas” hosted by the UNESCO Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for the Asia-Pacific Region and by the Wildlife Institute of India. The workshop was envisioned by Mr. Rajiv Bhartari, the Chief Conservator of Forests Ecotourism for Uttarakhand. Mr. Bhartari invited me to help with some of the coordination of the workshop and to be a speaker, facilitator and participant. The workshop was hosted at the Wildlife Institute of India and funded and organized by the UNESCO C2C Centre. Thanks to Dr. VB Mathur, Director of WII for providing the resources and the platform for this workshop. The aim of the workshop was “to bring together the various stakeholders involved in ecotourism activities in the Himalayas and provide a vibrant platform for brainstorming sessions and experience sharing so as to evolve a comprehensive roadmap to foster

sustainable nature tourism, especially in the World Heritage Sites of the Garhwal Himalayas.”

The workshop was held over two days and involved a wide array of participants from various arenas. See appendix-1 for a complete list of participants. The first session began with an experience-sharing session where after an introductory presentation on ecotourism, presentations were given on Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks, Gangotri National Park, the Great Himalayan National Park and on ecotourism in Sikkim. The presentations were useful in giving context to the challenges of conservation and potential for ecotourism. The presentation on Sikkim was particularly useful in providing an example of an active and successful ecotourism initiative. In the afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup>, participants broke into small groups to discuss issues and possible solutions for Valley of Flowers and Nanda Devi National Parks, and Gangotri National Park. The aim was to outline the issues surrounding ecotourism and devise novel solutions. The groups were facilitated by Mr. Rajiv Bhartari, Dr. Sejal Worah (Program Director for WWF India) and Dr. Keith Bosak. The second day of the workshop involved making plans for each protected area and then presenting those plans to the other groups for feedback. The workshop culminated with each group presenting their plans to the rest of the participants and to distinguished guests such as the Chief Secretary of the state of Uttarakhand, Mr. N Ravi Shankar.

My initial impressions are that the workshop was very well-run and many thanks go to Mr. Bhartari, the UNESCO C2C Centre and WII for supporting this workshop. The scientists at C2C and WII are vibrant and enthusiastic with good training in natural sciences and in conservation. The workshop was well-supported with participation coming from the highest levels of government in Uttarakhand. It is obvious that conservation of natural resources is of importance in the state. The participants were well-chosen and included Directors and DFO's from Gangotri, Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers, Great Himalayan, and Kanchenjunga National Parks. There was also a small contingent of people representing the tourism industry along with WII scientists. The focus of the workshop was on ecotourism however, the driving force behind the workshop was one of conservation as paramount. I commend this drive and admire the willingness of most of the participants to even contemplate ideas of how to effectively develop and manage ecotourism given the conservation challenges they face in their positions.

There were many challenges and opportunities uncovered through the workshop. The Indian Himalaya provides a spectacular setting for people interested in nature and/or adventure. However, the areas are remote and access is sometimes difficult. Signage is limited and interpretation is nonexistent. Waste management and crowding are increasing in certain parks. These are just a few of the challenges faced when attempting to develop ecotourism in this area. These challenges become even more difficult when the people facing them (DFO's and other park staff) are not trained in ecotourism. What this unveils is a structural situation whereby resource managers at all levels are being asked to plan and implement ecotourism while maintaining the conservation values of the areas they manage. This is a difficult situation and beyond the capacity of most resource managers.

In addition, there is no ecotourism plan or vision for the state of Uttarakhand or its protected areas. The first questions to answer before moving forward are: Why ecotourism? and What is to be sustained? Ecotourism is still in its early stages in Uttarakhand however it has the potential to grow rapidly. The group of people assembled by Mr. Bhartari at this workshop

are motivated to pursue ecotourism. This combination produces a unique opportunity to begin a visioning and planning process.

### Recommendations:

This workshop represented a significant step towards the development of ecotourism in Uttarakhand and I have several recommendations for moving forward.

- Carefully examine the roles of natural resource agencies and resource managers in the management of ecotourism. It might be too much to ask for natural resource agencies to take on the management of ecotourism. What I recommend is that agencies take stock of their expertise and examine their mandates carefully and then decide if their goals would be better achieved by managing natural resources for ecotourism rather than trying to take on the management of ecotourism itself. This is an important distinction and one that deserves careful thought. Goals might be better achieved if policies were put in place that acted as parameters for how ecotourism could operate in a way that conservation would still be paramount.
- Visioning and planning are key to ensuring successful ecotourism. As noted above, there needs to be a clear understanding of why ecotourism is being developed. There could be many reasons from ecotourism being a way to finance conservation to ecotourism providing local livelihoods. These need to be understood and will provide clarity for understanding what is to be sustained through ecotourism. Next, there needs to be a visioning and planning process that will ultimately produce an ecotourism plan. Visioning and planning allow for strategic thinking about the future and provide concrete actions for achieving goals. In addition, planning allows for a wide range of stakeholders to give input thereby achieving the greatest amount of buy-in.
- Capacity building needs to occur at all levels. The endeavor to develop ecotourism is complicated and requires a huge diversity of skills and specific knowledge. Capacity needs to be built for
  - Networking capacity needs to be built. A wide variety of stakeholders need to be involved and these include NGO's, ecotourism providers, and conservation groups. Ecotourism cannot only be developed by the government, it will take many different groups and those groups need to be coordinated.
  - Scientists and administrators need to build capacity in the many ways in which protected areas are managed globally. This could be achieved through exchange programs and opportunities for graduate education abroad.
  - Resource managers need to build capacity in how to manage for ecotourism. This could be achieved through workshops and through exchanges within India and abroad.
  - Business owners need to build capacity in best practices for ecotourism
  - Local people need to build capacity in small-scale ecotourism management
- I also recommend the implementation of small scale pilot projects once the visioning and planning phase is complete. Pilot projects will allow for 'experimental conditions' whereby novel solutions can be tested for effectiveness and where models can be tested before being scaled up.