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ECOCLUB SYNERGY

This month we would like to thank two of our Ecologe Members, [The Cottages at Spring House Farm](#), USA and [The Boat Landing Guesthouse](#), Laos. Mr. Campbell of The Cottages at Spring House Farm created free publicity for all Members by including ECOCLUB.com in their numerous interviews with local newspapers, and television stations as you can see in the [Member News](#) Section. Mr. Bill Tuffin of The Boat Landing Guesthouse had the excellent idea to invite over to the ECOCLUB.com Community 100 conference participants of the SE Asia Community-based Ecotourism Conference and to establish [an on-line forum](#) there so that this important discussion could continue. I hope more members will show such dedication in the future, so that ECOCLUB's on-line and off-line presence becomes ever stronger.

NEW EXPERT MEMBER

We warmly welcome Ms. Ann-Britt Sternfeldt, our new Expert Member from Sweden. Ms Sternfeldt is a published Travel-writer and a co-founder of [The Good Tourist](#). Her travel guides are targeted towards tourists with a conscience, who apart from basic information on a country need practical advice on how to be responsible towards local nature and culture and how to support the local economy. ECOCLUB members who like to be promoted in Sweden can [contact Ms Ann-Britt Sternfeldt](#) with information about their company and she would include them in her articles in Swedish magazines and newspapers. Ms Sternfeldt has recently written "The Good Tourist - In The Gambia", and a brand new English edition is ready. [More information](#)

ECOLOGE MEMBERS APANI -DHANI & TOHUM RENEW

Two quality ecolodges, [Apani-Dhani](#) Ecologe of India, and [Tohum](#) Living Earth Centre of Turkey, have renewed their membership and confidence in ECOCLUB. You will find a special report on Apani-Dhani in this issue and there will be a special report on Tohum in our May issue.

NEW TRIAL ECOLOGE MEMBER: EARTHSHIP OF ST. VINCENT

Earthship is an exciting pioneering marine ecotourism research and training project in the Caribbean, in search of students and volunteers [Click here to board the Earthship](#)

Cum Grano Salis

"I believe there is a growing international understanding of the need to treat security and peace as two sides of the same coin" -

*Kofi Annan,
UN Secretary
General,
1st of April 2002*

What's up @ ECOCLUB

ECOCLUB hosts on-line Conference for [Community-based Ecotourism](#) in SE Asia.

At the request of Ecologe Member [The Boat Landing](#), ECOCLUB has allocated a forum at the ECOCLUB Community for this important topic. A few postings include points of view very hostile to ecotourism, but we display them as ECOCLUB dislikes censorship. However we also have the right to make a comment: It appears from the postings that there is ill-sentiment against a allegedly rapid and unplanned, government-induced development of "lite" versions of ecotourism throughout SE Asia. Some of this criticism is genuine criticism from indigenous people, ignored by this development drive, who are either in favour of more community-managed/owned forms of tourism or, in fewer cases, who are against all tourism development in their areas - we respect both points of view. Some criticism however appears to be from individuals who are anti-tourism by vocation, who have never worked in the tourism sector or had any sort of responsibility, but make a lucrative living by writing articles in and travelling to give lectures against tourism exploitation. They thus wish to drown all ecotourism efforts, everywhere, in the more common boogie so up of "mass tourism", "the west", "western experts" and "globalisation". It is their prerogative, and we respect their right to a different view than ours, but we find the tone of some of their criticism offensive, racist, and nationalistic. We dispute their claim to have an exclusive right to represent indigenous communities, they often represent just their self, they are often members of the local elite and a product of the international aid system they pretend to hate. They perhaps find in the ecotourism movement a soft convenient target, when their real target is (or should have been if they dared) corrupt and despotic local and central authorities and leaders who do not listen to the indigenous communities in the first place. These self-appointed "representatives" wish to discredit, revise and block every genuine ecotourism effort so that they will have an interesting subject, a little niche for their articles in, as it happens the journals they despise, "western" journals. One wonders who is benefiting from and possibly funding all this selective obsession against ecotourism?

ECOCLUB co-sponsored the [Communities & Tourism Conference](#) by Planeta.com in March 2002.

This was one of our postings: Ecology defines a "community" as any grouping of different organisms found living together in a particular environment. The organisms interact, either by competition, predation, mutualism, and in so doing give the community its structure. In Human Geography, "community", defines a group of people living in the same village or town, also interacting by the same "positive" or "negative" means. Community Tourism usually denotes (a) community-owned or community-managed tourism, or, in my view erroneously, (b) tourism that focuses on local customs and involves the "locals" as targets or unwilling / passive participants. In Community Tourism, "community" usually denotes an indigenous community, be it in the "developing" or the "developed" world.

As a result, Community Tourism, is a politically charged concept. It is influenced by conflicts such as "the communal vs. the individual", "socialism vs. capitalism", "locals vs. foreigners", "indigenous people vs. descendants of "conquistadores" and gringos", "decentralisation vs. centralisation". In tourism terms the conflict often translates as the village guesthouse program vs. the lodge of the only english-speaking person of the village who started out as a guide. Or the community owned lodge vs. the environmentally sensitive lodge of an expat or of a returning migrant, the small village inn vs. the international hotel chain, the village on-foot tour vs. the adventure 4 x 4 overland expedition and so on.

Once in our (pro-ecotourism) website we once posed the following poll: Given a choice, I would chose to stay at (a) a community-owned hotel (b) An expatriate owned ecolodge (c) Undecided. . The implied question behind the poll, was that sometimes a community operation does not have the means / luxury to apply environmental standards, would you still patronise it over an environmentally friendlier "intruder"? Although it was not a scientific poll, the results were tight: 38%, 37% and 25% respectively.

There is no way that anyone can theorise on a general level about community tourism without his or her general worldview entering the picture and distorting it. Unless one is endlessly talking on a case by case basis, with the danger of missing the forest for the tree.

Beyond politics, a community is only as good, strong, united, educated, progressive, conservative, enlightened, rich, corrupt as its members and its elected, hereditary, or imposed leaders. Equally community tourism is only as good etc, as the (f)actors and sections (employees, lodges, tours, funding, promotion, environmental effects, social effects) that comprise it, both in the short run

and the long run.

Community Tourism, is not by definition "good" or "bad" for all, because we can not all agree on a unique model of social development for all countries, all regions and all communities. Tourism covers many industries, not just a single one. If we could claim that community ownership and management in all these industries, even at the micro-level, and even in countries where indigenous communities were wronged for centuries, was the way for the future, ours would be a very simple and peaceful world, and it is currently not.

A practical goal / question for this conference to tackle, could be to focus on a few successful examples of Community (-owned / managed) Tourism, to understand why each of us considers them successful - if at all, and see whether it is possible / necessary to agree on some non-political yardsticks of this success.

All postings can be seen at: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/community_tourism (Yahoo registration required)

ECOCLUB attends European Eco-label Working Group Meeting.

The second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the "Development of a draft Commission Decision establishing the ecological criteria for the award of the European Community Eco-label for tourist accommodation" was held on the 14th of March in Athens, Greece. The meeting was organised by ANPA the Italian Environment Protection Agency in cooperation with ASAOS (the Greek Competent body for the European ECO-LABEL programme). The co-director of ECOCLUB was invited to participate in this meeting. Over 40 participants from European Competent bodies, environmental agencies and representatives of the tourist industry attended and had the chance to participate in the round table discussion, including ECOCLUB Expert Member Mr. [Mr.Artemios Chatziathanassiou](#) from the Greek Center for Renewable Energy Sources (KAPE / CRES). The meeting was chaired by Ms. Nicola Breier, Expert to the European Commission and Mr. Herbert Hamele from ECOTRANS, an NGO. The meeting aimed to discuss the first draft of criteria for the award of the European community Eco-label to Hotels. Three types of criteria for the Eco-label were proposed: Management, Measure and Limit criteria. The key criteria involve reducing energy and water consumption, avoiding chemical substances, reducing waste, air and noise pollution and protecting biodiversity. ECOCLUB proposed that a criterion relating to the contribution of a hotel to the local community and economy should be added. ECOCLUB also raised the issues of high certification costs for small hotels and lodges, and the frequent conflicts of interest for certifiers. It became clear to us that the majority of members in the working group want to apply this Eco-label to the

whole range of the hospitality industry and to include large hotels and hotel chains. ECOCLUB believes that eco-labels should have teeth, be meaningful for tourists, be not too expensive for small, genuine, sustainable providers to implement and renew, and less easy and lucrative for consultants to apply.

Members in the News

Various local papers reported on Ecodge Member [Cottages @ Spring House Farm](#), in North Carolina, USA:

"Only weeks ago, The Cottages at Spring House Farm, an isolated mountain eco-retreat just north of Lake Lure, became the first U.S. member of ECOCLUB, an international ecotourism club, based in Athens, Greece, that provides travelers information on environmentally friendly lodgings around the world." Citizen-Times.com, March 22, 2002

"The Cottages at Spring House Farm recently became the first ecological retreat in the United States to obtain registration with ECOCLUB, an international ecotourism organization. ECOCLUB provides travelers information on retreats around the world that are not harmful to the environment." The McDowell News, 28 March 2002

Terra.com.gt reported on Ecodge Member [UXLABIL](#) in Guatemala:

"Uxlabil another option in Atitlán. The song of the birds, the tranquility of the lake and the coexistence with natives of San Juan of the Lagoon, Sololá, are part of the enchantment of Uxlabil. Uxlabil, in Tzutuhil language means "your breath" and it is the name of the new eco-hotel that last Saturday opened its doors in Sololá. For Javier Sandoval, head of the project, the objective is to attract visitors interested in ecotourism who wish to discover Guatemala." We want to attract tourists actively interested in rediscovering earth and the customs of the Tzutuhil town that lives at the borders of the lake", Sandoval commented. The idea of Sandoval is born of the necessity to preserve the culture of Guatemala to share it with the foreign tourists as much as national. The opening of Uxlabil has generated expectations within the community of San Juan of the Lagoon since this will favour the diversification of its sources of income. Until now, the Sanjuaneros worked as day laborers in the plantations of coffee and other cultures, or selling some paintings done by they themselves. To this the income of women in the textile industry during their free hours was added."

PATA reported on Expert Member in India, [Mr. Mandip Singh Soin](#):

"Organisers of the 51st Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Annual Conference in New Delhi, India, April 14-18, are aiming to make a minimal impact on the environment and a maximum impact toward sustainable tourism. "Everything that uses energy emits carbon dioxide," said [Mr. Mandip Singh Soin](#), Founder and Managing Director of Ibex Expeditions and head of the environmental subcommittee for the India Organising Committee. Mr. Soin is calculating the Conference's carbon dioxide emissions based upon factors such as the number of delegates, the number of rooms the Conference will utilise and the projected usage of lights, air conditioning and buses. " We are planning a tree-planting project to offset the carbon dioxide emissions and to leave a greener city for future generations," Mr. Soin said."

Polynesian Airlines in-flight magazine reported on Ecodge Member in Samoa [Ecotour Samoa](#) :

"Ecotour Samoa, in conjunction with Polynesian Airlines, are offering all Polynesian Airlines passengers a 10% discount on the Green Turtle Bus. The Green Turtle Bus can transfer you from village to village, even getting you safely from island to island (with the help of a few ferries). So, why not ride the GREEN TURTLE bus on a magical journey as it tours Upolu Island daily - providing you with access to numerous overnight traditional beach resorts and a wide variety of holiday activities. The Green Turtle Bus will get you wherever you want to go, introduce you to your hosts and hostesses, and then pick you up a few days later when you are ready. All the best tourist accommodations in rural Samoa are beautifully located on white, sandy, swimmable, safe, coconut-lined beaches, some very private and secluded. So, why not spend a few nights experiencing how local Samoans live, share their lives and make community tourism mutually beneficial. Your traditionally prepared meals are fresh and nutritious, very affordable and can be served right on the beach. Not sure what to do in a village? Well, there are local village guides who can take you to nearby highlights, introducing you to fellow villagers, showcasing their traditional arts and crafts or just keeping you company. And for the more active holidaymakers, you can go sea kayaking, traditional fishing, deep sea fishing, birdwatching to nearby nesting colonies, swimming, snorkelling, beachcombing, diving, surfing, trekking, bush-walking and even white-water trekking to remote waterfalls deep in the nearby rainforested mountains. Thanks to

visitors like you, rural communities in Samoa are gearing themselves up for a real bonanza. For 10 years now, the Samoan Visitors Bureau has encouraged rural villages to offer simple affordable traditional accommodation to visitors. For the villagers, well, it is a whole different story. They are only just beginning to realize what the real direct benefits of community tourism are. Sure, it's extra income for the villagers: for some, it is their only income. And Polynesian Airline commends the efforts being made by all members of the Samoa's tourism industry to help make the Samoan Islands one of the best South Pacific holiday destinations on offer today, especially Ecotour Samoa which recently won the Environmentally-Friendly Exporter of the Year Award (2001), Tourism Award (2001) and was also the Overall Winner as the Exporter of the Year. Our sincerest congratulations to Funealii and Steve."

MEMBERS REPORTS

By Rod Burns of our Ec lodge Members in Canada [Bold Point Farm](#)

"We continue our 15 year history of Business and the Environment Social Payment Policy: 5% of each booking will be donated to an environmental protection / research / advocacy association, in hard dollars or in time. This year, we're letting you know where the donations will be going to. We encourage you to donate 1 - 5% of your holiday budget to a similar favourite: January, February and March: Orca Whale Research, Hanson Island, Alexandra Morton April: Watershed Sentinel Magazine May, June: Marmots of Vancouver Island June: Sierra Club of B.C. July: Coastal Ecotourism Operators Association, August: Wilderness Tourism Association of B.C. September: Marmots of Vancouver Island October, November, December: Salmon Enhancement Society"

-->To contact Bold Point Farm please use the [Enquiry Form](#).

By Jane Bayley & Steve Gilbert of Ec lodge Members in Morocco [Naturally Morocco](#)
"Naturally Morocco offer a 15% discount on all flights from UK to Morocco booked at least 8 weeks in advance, between May and October and 10% off accommodation during certain weeks - see "Special Offers" on the new web site for details. We also thought that you'd be interested to know that we have both given up our part time jobs in education to concentrate full time on our ecotourism business, which we are now expanding into Andalucia in summer 2002. We are in the process of restoring a village house in the mountains between Malaga & Granada which will be the base for Naturally Spain. Again our emphasis will be on using our expertise in the natural environment, but in this case there will be more emphasis on catering for vegetarians, who have such a hard time in Spain. Having taken this step, we are now available to you full time (evenings & weekends included) and you can be assured of even greater level of personal service - we are available by e-mail or phone for most of our waking hours!"

-->To contact Naturally Morocco please use the [Enquiry Form](#).

Any views/announcements that appear in this section are not necessarily endorsed by ECOCLUB S.A. We reserve the right to edit reports appearing in this section for reasons of brevity and clarity.

Expert & Ec lodge Members: Send your ecotourism news report or article for the next issue to news@ecoclub.com

Non-Members: [Click here to learn about our Membership Options](#)

World Ecotourism News

International:

Two new natural wetland areas on the borders of Poland and Ukraine were added by UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme to its World Network of Biosphere Reserves, at the close of its biannual Council meeting in Paris. The two reserves are: the West Polesie B.R., Poland and the Shatskiyi B.R., Ukraine. The UNESCO Council, in relation to the International Year of Ecotourism, noted that "ecotourism, as practiced, at times, did not meet sustainability criteria or provide net benefits to local communities". ([Unesco](#))

In an article "[industry puts spin on ecotourism](#)" CNN decided to explore ecotourism: In the article we learn of the following exciting findings: *"But (ecotourism) it's not just about diving with dolphins. In hotels around the world, thousands of towels and sheets are washed every day. And it's at this level that the giants of the hotel industry claim they can make a difference. At the Berlin Hilton, showers are outfitted with water-saving devices, and guests can decide whether to have their towels changed every day or every other day."*
- Missing the forest for the towels?

The World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme are organising an [online Conference](#) between 1-26 April, 2002, moderated by Ron Mader. The discussions during this web-conference will be organised around the four main themes defined for the World Ecotourism Summit, and its results will be presented at the Summit (Quebec City, Canada, 19-22 May 2002). The prime objective of this web-conference is "to provide an easy access forum for a wide range of stakeholders involved in ecotourism to exchange experiences and voice comments, especially for those who have not been able to attend regional preparatory conferences that have taken place between March 2001 and March 2002".

Details at <http://www.world-tourism.org/2002ecotourism>

"The typical Mediterranean holiday can have an environmental impact equivalent to spending up to 50 per cent of a holidaymaker's entire annual income in two weeks", a new report commissioned by WWF has found. Using a new method, "Holiday Footprinting", consultants claimed to be able to take details of two summer holiday packages to Majorca and Cyprus and evaluate their environmental impact, or "ecological footprint", in terms of the resources they used, based on data provided by Thomson Holidays, a large Tour Operator. "Footprinting" quantifies the Earth's resources into "area units". Each person on the planet can use up to two area units a year for all their activities without damaging the environment.

Details at <http://www.wwf.org.uk>

Africa & M.East

Zambia: To allegedly protect their premises from constant break-ins - (according to others to prevent locals from mixing with foreign guests), some lodge owners near the Zambezi River and the Victoria Falls have built fences around their premises. This action has annoyed the Zambia Wildlife Authority and the National Heritage Conservation Commission who contend that the fencing of properties situated in Mosi-O-Tunya Zoological Park prevents the free movement of animals. ([ENS](#))

S. Arabia: A six-day international symposium on ecotourism at the King Fahd Cultural Center took place. The symposium, held to mark the International Year of Ecotourism, was co-organised by the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development and the Supreme Commission for Tourism.

Kenya: Costas Christ, seasoned conservationist, and senior director for Ecotourism at Conservation International gave an interesting personal account of ecotourism in Kenya in [Grist magazine](#).

Asia & Pacific

Pakistan: Ecotourism Society Pakistan (ESP) has posted [a new page](#) for promotion of the "integrated tourism concept". The page includes the following papers: "Sustainable Tourism or Ecotourism: Does Reality Substantiate the Myth?", "Role of communities in Ecotourism Role of information Technology in sustainable tourism Pakistan", "Tourism Master Plan-A critical review", "Mega Tourism", "Mountaineering, mountain tourism and sustainable development in mountain regions".

Sri Lanka: The Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation has launched [Eco Net](#) a free email information service, with a view to provide updates on the activities, news, events, features published in media on ecotourism in Sri Lanka and other countries in the South Asian Region.

India: Conservationists in India allege that dolphin watching is killing off a rare inland population. Thousands of tourists travel to the Chilka lagoon to see the Irrawaddy dolphins which are only one of two lagoon dolphin populations anywhere in the world. Conservationists say propellers injure the animals and create noise which disrupts their breeding. Over 20 dolphins were killed this way last year according to the newspaper Navyug ([Ananova](#))

Nepal: Studies by GEM Nepal, show that the harvest of pine resin without cutting down the pines, in the area around Kathmandu valley can produce enough "bio-fuel" oil to power 20 factories. ([Clean Energy Nepal](#))

Japan: The Japanese branch of WWF announced for the first time it would support the partial lifting of an international ban on commercial whaling on condition that all catches are closely monitored. WWF International did not endorse or condemn this announcement. Whale meat from so-called "scientific" whaling, an allowed practice, regularly finds its way to exclusive Tokyo restaurants. Norway is the only country that defies the international ban on commercial whaling. (Various)

Hawaii: The largest area ever set aside for conservation purposes in the U.S., a proposed new marine sanctuary in the northwestern Hawaiian islands, will be the subject of nine public meetings in Hawaii. ([ENS](#))

Philippines: The Philippines' Hundred Islands National Park has been placed under 24 hour surveillance to prevent dynamite fishing activities. (Greenbase)

[Caribbean](#)

Jamaica: Environmentalists in Jamaica and abroad are upbeat about the resurgence of coral reefs on the island's North Coast. A recent report in the Dallas Morning News quoted noted marine biologist, Nancy Knowlton, as saying that "this is the best development to come out of Caribbean reefs in nearly a decade". ([Sidsnet](#))

Barbados: The Barbados Government is spending over \$300 000 to boost community-tourism projects in rural parishes, according to Minister of Tourism Noel Lynch. (Barbados Nation / [Sidsnet](#)).

Bahamas: Director-General of Tourism in the Bahamas believes Caribbean nations ought to focus on developing "eco-nations" before

promoting the concept of eco-tourism. Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace said he is often criticised for saying there is no such thing as eco-tourism, but "you have to be an eco-nation first before you can talk about eco-tourism." ([Sidsnet](#))

[Europe](#)

Greece: A new interesting study by WWF Greece was received by ECOCLUB. It is titled "Planning and pilot projects for ecological tourism development." and it is edited by Ms. E. Svoronou who is WWF Greece's top Expert on Ecotourism. It examines literature and methodology for ecotourism in protected areas as well as international case studies. It then focuses on pilot projects for ecotourism development in the Western Zagori mountain area in Epirus and in Lake Kerkini, Macedonia. The report, unfortunately only in Greek at the moment, is available from [WWF Greece](#). An English abstract is also available.

[WWF Greece](#) is also organising an international two day conference titled "Measuring Carrying Capacity and Managing Visitors in Protected Areas", in Athens, on the 31st of May and 1st of June 2002. ECOCLUB plans to participate in this conference - full report on this Conference will be presented in the June or July ECOCLUB News issue.

Greece: Modern scholarship long ago dismissed as false the explanation that the ancient Greeks gave for the Delphi Oracle's inspiration, the holiest ancient Greek religious centre going back to 1200 B.C., the explanation being vapors rising from the temple's floor. Archaeologists of the early 20th century found no underlying fissure or possible source of intoxicants and thus concluded that the vapors were a myth. Now, however, a geologist, an archaeologist, a chemist and a toxicologist produced evidence suggesting that a crack in the rocks allowed the emission of psychoactive ethylene. ([NY Times](#))

Poland / Ukraine:

[Latin America](#)

Ecuador: Reported by Shawna Luey, Canada: "Ecuador Edges Closer to Tourism Law. The February symposium for Ecotourism held in Guayaquil Ecuador brought about some inspiring discussion on a much needed Tourism Law. Speakers from Brazil and Chile offered insight on their practices and efforts to professionals from all sectors of the industry. Proposed regulations include an ecotourism code of ethics, cross-sector organization, conservation, and an ecotourism certification based on the successful Costa Rican model. Realizing the importance of sustainable tourism development to the economic and environmental viability of the country, Ecuador's Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Environment maintain a serious pitch for the support of Congress to continue with projects under a Tourism Law. The implementation of this law would help combat escalating problems such as the interruption of the migrating humpback whale's mating ritual by

non-authorized fishing vessels transporting tourists for a closer look."

Costa Rica: The inhabitants of the northern zone of Costa Rica, gathered together in the Northern Front for Opposition to Mining (Frente Norte de Oposicion a la Minería) are opposed to the Crucitas Mining project for open-cast gold mining and have organised a march in San Carlos, under the slogan of "Yes to life, No to Mining." They demand the suspension of mining projects and promotion of a sustainable, eco-touristic and agro-industrial development for the frontier communities that so far have been neglected. ([World Rainforest Movement](#))

Colombia: Parque Natural Nacional Alto Fragua-Indiwasi is a new 168,000 acres National Park just created following negotiations involving the Colombian government, the Association of Ingaño Councils and the Amazon Conservation Team, a Virginia-based group. ([MSNBC](#))

Peru: A team of explorers led by writer and adventure guide Peter Frost, and funded by National Geographic has discovered an ancient Inca settlement in the south-eastern mountains of Peru that may hold an unparalleled record of the Indian civilisation from beginning to end. As in the case of Machu Pichu, the local Indians have always known about it. They call it Corihuayrachina, but it is only now that a team of explorers has reached the site that its significance has become apparent. There is also evidence of some very early Inca civilisation that may force scholars to rethink their ideas about when the Incas first expanded their empire. ([National Geographic](#))

North America

USA: Ford Motor Co. unveiled a new zero-emissions version of its Ford Focus at the New York International Auto Show. [Associated Press]

USA: 55 Million Americans Now Classified As "Geotourists". The Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) and National Geographic Traveler released results of the first, large-scale study of the "consumer market for geotourism". 55 million Americans are now classified as sustainable or "Geotourists," and nearly 100 million traveling Americans are moving in that direction. The term geotourism is apparently defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the "geographical character" of the place being visited. (TIA / NGT)
What's next, enviro-tourism or physio-tourism?

Canada: The city of Toronto has cut its green house discharges by 67 per cent since 1990, according to a new report. A large part of this huge reduction was achieved by improving the energy efficiency of city buildings and streetlights. ([David Suzuki Foundation](#))



ECOCLUBing in Shekhawati, Rajasthan, India

Shekhawati (the land of ruler Rao Shekaji 1433-1488) in Rajasthan, North Western India, is famous as the home to an extraordinary number of colourful, unique in the world wall paintings that adorn hundreds of buildings, called havelis, constructed by the Marwari community of merchants who have been a backbone of entrepreneurship in India since the 19th century. The frescoes also decorate temples, cenotaphs,

opportunities limited, and thus the entrepreneurial inhabitants eventually moved out of Shekhawati and into other towns, leaving behind the picturesque walls. The murals slowly decayed, and became covered with graffiti and even whitewashed. Lack of proper water drainage resulted in water seeping down to the streets and to the precarious foundations of the buildings. The walls of many havelis, were punctured to set up stalls and workshops while finely carved woodwork found its way to antiques dealers shops. Some havelis were even purposely demolished to make way for modern buildings.

Enter Ramesh Jangid, owner of one of ECOCLUB's oldest Ecolodge Members, [Apani Dhani](#), in Nawalgarh. Ramesh uses proceeds from Apani Dhani Ecolodge, and Alternative Travels India to restore tradition through helping and educating the local community. A native of Rajasthan, he lived in Europe for many years, before returning to create Alternative Travels in 1986 and Apani Dhani four years later. Upon his return to India he became acutely aware of the need to develop responsible tourism, one which would combine a deep respect for the culture and people with an authentic experience for the foreign traveler.

For the past 14 years, Ramesh has tried to make his guests participate in Indian daily life, particularly rural life. He emphasises the importance of real personal contact with local people, believing that this is the only way for non-Indians to gain genuine insight into a culture as diverse and complex.

Apani Dhani's nine bungalows are meticulously constructed in the same spirit, in a traditional way: pampas grass (local plant) is used for thatching the roofs of the huts. Sun dried clay bricks, mudplaster and ochre from the nearby mountains are utilised for wall construction and decoration. All the rooms are beautifully decorated with local handicrafts and feature full bathroom facilities. All bungalows use solar panels for electricity.

Pro-community Apani Dhani is the force behind the Friends of Shekhawati, a local NGO. Among other things, with the coordination of local teachers, this association organises and finances direct actions in the schools, conferences, slide - shows, outings to selected sites, photo-contests and training for young guides including tuition in English and French, basic courses in local history and architecture: many teenagers and even children, instead of going to school, find it more lucrative to "guide" tourists around. Not knowing English and, of course, not having any historical or architectural knowledge they simply show the tourists around, hoping for a good tip, sometimes turning aggressive when they do not get it. The association recently granted a scholarship to 12



students to help them become registered guides.

Pro Environment Apani Dhani makes a point of using renewable energy sources and recycling. There is a solar water heating system, solar panels for electricity, a bio-gas plant producing methane gas, a solar oven occasionally used for cooking rice and lentils. Water conservation measures have been installed for bathing and flushing. Mineral water and fruit juices are bought in glass bottles which are taken back by the dealer and leaf plates are used to serve the meals. Along with leftover food, those are given to the animals or composted. Used paper is turned into papier mache.

Things to do in Shekhawati:

One can choose from day outings to appreciate the most representative elements of Shekhawati architecture: the havelis and their wall paintings, cenotaphs, impressive wells, trekking in the Arawalli range to discover remote hamlets and holy places and strolling in the surrounding countryside in a camel cart. The most important sites are: Nawalgarh (where Apani Dhani is located): founded in 1737 by Nawal Singh. Has some of the best preserved havelis and finest frescoes in Shekhawati. Worth seeing are the Aath havelis (eight havelis) complex, Murarka haveli, Bansidhar Bhagat haveli, Chokhani haveli, Gangamai temple and Podar school, the only haveli in the whole Shekhawati which has been restored by its owner. Fatehpur: established in 1451, once the capital of muslim Nawabs before being taken over by Shekhawat rajputs in the 18th century. Laxmangarh One of the most imposing forts in the region, built in the early 19th century. The city is laid out on a grid pattern which makes your way easy to find. One of the least visited towns, even though it has many interesting buildings. Mahansar founded in 1768. Not many havelis here but one of the most exquisite ones, the Sone-Chandi ki Dukan dating from 1846. Incorporates gold leaf in its intricate paintings. This haveli has three vaulted ceilings; scenes from the *Ramayana* are painted on the left one, incarnations of *Vishnu* on the centre one, and scenes from the life of *Krishna* are to be found on the right one. Ramgarh Founded in 1791, it has been one of the richest towns at the end of the 19th century.

Apani Dhani Latest News:

Ramesh informs us that Apani Dhani has just got a face lift: a complete restoration of thatched roofs of all the huts, the whole complex got a new coat of ochre, one additional single room was added, flowers were planted in the court yard and a "wormicompost" method was started with earth worms. What are you waiting for?

- [Contact Apani Dhani](#)
- [Click here to see all ECOCLUB Member Lodges in India](#)

ECO-EVENTS

If you are organising or are aware of an ecotourism related Trade Show, Conference, Workshop or other Event please send us the details to news@ecoclub.com to announce it and promote it for free.

A worldwide selection of ecotourism and related events during the next 4 months. For more details and events please visit <http://ecoclub.com/events>

- April 2002, Sustainable Development of Ecotourism Conference/On-line
- April 2-5, Third Meeting of the Committee on Statistics and Macroeconomic Analysis of Tourism/SPAIN
- April 3-4, CHME Hospitality Research Conference 2002/UK
- April 5-7, 6th Working for Global Justice Conference: Careers, Issues, and Activism in International Development?/USA
- April 7-14, Mountain Travel Symposium Whistler/CANADA
- April 8-10, 4th Annual TREX/GUATEMALA
- April 9-12, PATA Travel Mart/SINGAPORE
- April 9-13, AAHPERD National Conference/USA
- April 9-13, Promoting Best Practices in Sustainable Travel & Tourism & the 2nd Annual Ambassador Lane Lecture/HAWAII
- April 11-14, AWTTE 2002/LEBANON
- April 11-13, International Conference: "Leisure Futures"/AUSTRIA
- April 14-15, Conference on Ecotourism for the South Pacific Islands IYE 2002/ FIJI
- April 14-18, 51st PATA Annual Conference/INDIA
- April 14-16, JAPEX 2002/JAMAICA
- April 16-19, Tourism Futures/AUSTRALIA
- April 17-21, Tourism in the Mediterranean: From Past to Future/TURKEY
- April 18-21, 2002 Spring Travel & Leisure Show/CANADA
- April 18-22, SATTE/INDIA
- April 18-21, 2002 Asia Dive Expo (ADEX)/SINGAPORE
- April 18-21, 2002 Spring Travel & Leisure Show/CANADA
- April 21-24, Scenic Summit: Action for America's Communities, Countryside & Public Lands/USA
- April 24-28, ECOTUR 2002 - Feria Internacional de Ecoturismo y Aventura/ECUADOR
- April 25-28, IYE2002, Regional Conference for Arctic countries/SWEDEN
- April 29-30, Sustaining Wild & Wonderful: Best Practices in Tourism Conference/USA
- May 2002, Financing Ecotourism/PLANETA.COM
- May 2-5, Ecotourism & Conservation in the Americas, Putting Good Intentions to Work/USA
- May 2-5, Millennium Hospitality Summit 2002/USA
- May 2-4, BTC - Caribbean Tourism Exchange/DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
- May 2-5, Cayman Islands Marketplace 2002/CAYMAN ISLANDS
- May 2-5, ASTA Southern Regional Conference/JAMAICA
- May 5-10, 27th Annual ATA Congress/GUINEA
- May 7-10, Arabian Travel Market/UAE
- May 11-14, Indaba 2002/SOUTH AFRICA
- May 12-15, "Tourism for All" World Congress/MEXICO
- May 13-17, COTAL 2002/VENEZUELA
- May 13-17, Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association University - 2002 Global Meeting/UK
- May 13-23, The Cornell Hotel School Advanced Management Program: AMP 2002/USA
- May 14-16, 2nd International Scientific Conference: Tourism & Regional Development/RUSSIA
- May 15-19, IFWTO Annual Convention/THAILAND
- May 16-18, Tourism Industry Education Symposium/FINLAND
- May 19-22, IYE2002, World Ecotourism Summit/CANADA
- May 19-22, International Resort Managers Association (IRMA) Managers Conference/USA
- May 20-22, The HOTEL SHOW Dubai/U.A.E.
- May 22-25, 10th Canadian Congress on Leisure Research/CANADA
- May 22-25, Hospitality Management in Europe: Moving into a new dimension EURHODIP/THE NETHERLANDS
- May 22-26, EMITT/TURKEY
- May 22-25, Tourism Industry Development, Marketing and Sustainability: the 5th Biennial Conference on Asian Tourism/HONG KONG
- May 25-29, International Pow Wow 2002/USA
- May 27-June 2, Expotur 2002/COSTA RICA
- May 28-31, Celebrating Mountain Women/NEPAL
- May 31-June 1, Karibu Tanzania Tourism & Trade Fair/TANZANIA
- May 31-June 9, The Nature Isle's Ma Pampo World Ecotourism Conference and Nature Fest/DOMINICA
- May 31-June 1, WWF Greece - Carrying Capacity & Visitor Management in Protected Areas/GREECE
- June 2, 9th International Symposium on Society and Resource Management/USA
- June 2-4, 24th Annual International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference/USA
- June 10-July 26, The Cornell Hotel School Professional Development Program (PDP)2002/USA
- June 13-14, Digital Security for the Airline Industry Conference/USA
- June 16-19, CHIC 2002/PUERTO RICO
- June 17-28, The Cornell Hotel School General Managers Program (GMP) 2002/USA
- June 18-20, International Scientific Conference - "Rethinking of education and Training for

Tourism"/CROATIA
June 19-21, ICTC - International City Tourism Conference/AUSTRIA
June 22-26, Vacation.com 4th Annual International Conference & Trade Show/USA
June 23-26, 33rd Annual TTRA conference - Capitalising on travel research for marketing success/USA
June 25-27, Leisure 2002/UK
June 25-27, HITEC/USA
June 26-28, Food & Hotel South China 2002 /CHINA
July 5-12, Commission for the Anthropology of Tourism at the XVth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences/ITALY
July 8-11, The World 2002 - International Hospitality and Tourism Conference/MALAYSIA
July 8-12, Research Committee on International Tourism of the International Sociological Association World Congress/AUSTRALIA
July 8-12, 7th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas/COOK ISLANDS
July 10-13, 8th Annual Conference of Asia Pacific Tourism Association: Worldwide Views and Multidimensional Perspectives/CHINA
July 10-11, Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality & Foodservice Expo 2002/HAWAII
July 15, 25:25 Vision: Tourism in 25 years time, Tourism Society 25th Anniversary Conference/UK
July 17-21, 6th Annual International Multicultural Tourism/Hotel Ownership Summit & Trade Show/USA
July 22-26, Spring Internet World 2002/USA
July 24-26, Leisure: our common wealth? Annual Conference of the Leisure Studies Association/UK
July 30, Cultural Impact 2002/UK

Details of these and other events at ECOCLUB.com EVENTS: <http://ecoclub.com/events>

To announce an eco-event, please email news@ecoclub.com

W@tch - Monthly advances and the opposite

@ Search engines April Fool's Jokes: Sitting pretty at the top, Google posted news of its new "PigeonRank" technology whereby hundreds of pigeons were pecking away to rank web pages. Meanwhile, the Open Directory got a new look, as Microsoft had acquired for one day the Open Directory (ODP) and changed its name to "GOD"-- the "Gates Open Directory" project!...

@ One more airline, Delta Air Lines, the third-largest U.S. carrier, announced it would eliminate routine commissions paid to travel agents for tickets sold in the U.S. and Canada in a move to reduce costs, but also reflecting the effect of on-line direct ticket sales.

@ Two groups of researchers reported in the journal Science that they had a draft of the full DNA sequence of the rice plant - a staple for more than half the world's population. Peculiarly, they found that the DNA sequence of rice was more complex than the human DNA sequence.

@ W@tch your heads: "1950DA" a one kilometre-wide space rock has a one in 300 chance of striking the Earth in 2880, say astronomers. 320,000 days left then?

THE GEORGE ORWELL COLLECTION:

An entry related to ecotourism this month ! - no comments...

Source & Author: [Marcus L. Endicott](#) / GREEN-TRAVEL Newsgroup

"Many of you have contacted me for an explanation of the abrupt move from Lsoft.com to Yahoogroups.com at the beginning of November of last year. Approximately 24 hours following the posting of a message from the Ecotourism Society of Pakistan enumerating the effects of war in Afghanistan on the Pakistani tourism industry to the GREEN-TRAVEL list, both lists were unilaterally frozen without warning by Washington, DC, based Lsoft.com. When contacted by phone for an explanation, Lsoft.com Vice President of Sales offered the following: "Does it suck? Yes, it sucks!"

ECO-JOBS

Operations Manager, Riversong Lodge - ALASKA
 Internews Country Director - ARMENIA
 Tour Guide - AUSTRALIA
 Ranger - AUSTRALIA
 Driver/leaders - CANADA
 Nature Camp Director - CANADA
 Press Officer - CANADA
 Senior Manager - CHINA
 Organic Agricultor - ECUADOR
 Organic Gardener - ECUADOR
 Director of the Indian Center for Social Entrepreneurship - INDIA
 Energy and agriculture interns - INDIA
 Programme Support Manager - INDIA
 Deputy Director - LATIN AMERICA
 Hotel Manager, Lindblad Expeditions - Baja Mexico, SE Alaska
 Website Designer - NEPAL
 UNDP International Programme Coordinator - NEPAL
 Lecturer/Senior Lecturer - NEW ZEALAND
 General Manager - THAILAND
 Director, Center for Marine Resources - Turks & Caicos Islands
 Environmental Enterprise Specialist - UGANDA
 Strategic Policy Advisor - UK
 Environmental Consultants - UK
 Conservation and Landscape Officer - UK
 12 Environmental Placement Students - UK
 Research Intern - USA

Working Managers, Trappers Lake Lodge and Resort - USA
 Trek Leader - USA
 Lodge Manager, Evergreen Lodge - USA
 WEB and Technology Intern - USA
 National Conservation Organiser, Sierra Club - USA
 Various, Rocky Mountain Adventures - USA
 Various, Trail Lake Lodge - USA
 Garden Intern - USA
 Environmental Analyst - USA
 Teacher/Naturalist/Environmental Explorers - USA
 Consulting Ecologist Salesperson Position - USA
 Government Relations Intern - USA
 Development Associate - USA
 Special Events Assistant - USA
 Assistant Manager, River Camp - USA
 Lodge Operation Manager - USA
 Hut Caretaker - USA
 Environmental Correspondent, The Associated Press - USA
 Tour Programme Director - USA
 Utah Conservation Corps Members - USA
 Assistant Director - USA
 Biologist/Educator for Bird Programmes - USA

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ECO-QUIZ

THE MARCH ECO-QUIZ WAS:

Name the Tourist peninsula that "does not understand"!

When the Spanish conquistadors first arrived at that peninsula, they started asking the Mayas : "Where are we?" or rather "Dónde estamos?" as they were not starring in a Hollywood flick. The perplexed Mayas of course replied "Yucatan, Yucatan" = "I do not understand you" thus the linguistically challenged conquerors understood that they were in the Yucatan peninsula!

Northern Yucatan nowadays is swarmed by mass tourists whereas in the South, there are good efforts not to repeat the North's over-development mistakes: a 1.3 million acre Biosphere, [Sian Ka'an](#) (Maya for "where the sky is born") was established in 1986.

We had the same winner as last month, Mr. P.P. from Bucarest, Romania! Congratulations ! His Website choice: [Benidorm](#), the infamous mass tourism paradise. According to Mr. P.P., Benidorm is "where real ecotourists should go so that they will not harm the environment elsewhere."...

Thank you also to Mr. Thabit Alomari from Irbid, Jordan, for trying: his reply: "Rosinish", arosin-ish, arrosin (yawn) ixi (be quiet), possibly imitating a finger upright on the mouth; someone wanted to sleep, exactly the opposite of being aroused."

THE APRIL ECO -QUIZ IS:

Despite 5,000 visitors every day, cormorants have made a comeback at this famous island, named in fact after them. Name the island !

Email your replies to: news@ecoclub.com

As an incentive to scratch your scalps, the winner(s) adds the link to their favorite tourist or environment website on this page with a brief, and preferably humorous, explanation why it is their favourite.

THE ECOCLUB.com SHOP SPECIALS

This Month:

[Greek Flora & Fauna Set of 2 First Day Covers](#)

Price: \$11.50 - Free Shipping !

[Olive Oil Soap Set of 4](#)

Price: \$9.90 - Free Shipping !

New Publications

Megan Epler Wood:

Ecotourism: Principles, Practices and Policies for Sustainability
Publisher-United Nations Environment Programme; 80pp
\$15USD TIES members (\$18 nonmembers)

<http://www.ecotourism.org/membooks>

Meb Cutlack:

[Belize : Ecotourism in Action](#)

(Paperback - February 2002)

Dorothy L. Hodgson & Richard A. Schroeder:

"Dilemmas of counter-mapping community resources in Tanzania"

IN: [Development and Change](#) 33 (1, Jan. 2002) : 79-100

This article compares four ecotourism projects from Maasai areas in Tanzania.

Rosaleen Duffy:

[A Trip Too Far : Ecotourism, Politics and Exploitation](#)

(Hardcover - February 2002)



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by EMAIL to: news@ecoclub.com or

by POST to: ECOCLUB S.A., PO BOX 65232, Psihico, Athens, 15410, Greece

N.B. 1. Please do not send us email attachments, only text files. 2. We reserve the right to edit all reports for reasons of brevity and clarity.

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