

Ecotourism Spotlight on..

Coastal Connections - ethics are good-for-business

Walking the talk isn't just good for the environment, it's also good for the bottom line. That has been the experience for Jan Negrijn of Newfoundland's Coastal Connections. After graduating from a workshop led by Kalahari Management's Carol Patterson and John Hull of Intervale Associates at the Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism, Jan set to work in creating a Code of Ethics and mission statement for his website.

Response to the Code of Ethics and mission statement has been exceedingly positive. "Clients get an immediate 'feel' for our company and what we stand for," Jan says. "Many of them

tell us that they chose us because they feel that our values reflect their own."

Coastal Connections offers interpretive marine nature tours, many with an opportunity to observe or participate in scientific study. The company has found a great group market with bookings coming from University school classes as well as with educational tour groups for older learners. Coastal Connections has also found support with the scientific community, many of whom charter their vessels or benefit from the data collected during vessel trips.

So if you don't already have a Code of Ethics on your website,

you might want to think about how it can help you make a deeper connection with your customers. Stating what you stand for will keep the environment and your bottom-line green. For more information, visit:

www.coastalconnections.ca or www.gmist.ca.

Iceland's West Fjords invests in its tourism



Iceland's West Fjords region is investing in its nature-based tourism industry. Government agencies and tourism operators are working together to make the region more attractive to nature lovers. One of the tourism entrepreneurs in the region is Jon Arnar, who runs a hotel, campground and restaurant at Reykjanes. Jon has been using the Internet to increase his appeal to international tourists. In addition to offering an English version of his website, he has purchased advertising on Google to promote the northern lights and white light phenomena found in Iceland. So far, this has proven to be very successful in driving visitors to his site and will hopefully translate into new reservations. For more information, visit <http://www.rnes.is/english>. Look for more information in upcoming issues on how Iceland is developing their nature-based tourism industry.

Planeta Forum a success

Hundreds of people tuned in for Planeta's Ecotourism Emerging Industry Forum in November. Discussion was focused on topics including Developing Infrastructure for Sustainable Tourism, Marketing and Market Development, Triple Bottom Line Structures, and Interpretative Program Development.

Several posts questioned the viability and actual effectiveness of Internet marketing for small tourism businesses. In response,

people suggested that Internet marketing is more of a challenge than necessary for smaller businesses, and it would more effectively distribute their time among several marketing channels. Conversely, some people felt that focusing on the Internet almost exclusively can be a successful marketing strategy.

To read the Forum summaries, go to:

<http://www.planeta.com>.

From Page 1..

Teacher's guide available

Also included in **Best Practices for Saving Paradise** are opportunities for students to take their learning experience beyond the classroom and into the tourism industry, participating in online forums, receiving industry newsletters and finding opportunities to enrol in field studies classes.

The book is available at a cost of \$15US or \$20CDN, with a 100% credit offered if people order five or more copies of **Saving Paradise: The Story of Sukau Rainforest Lodge** from Kalahari Management. To order your copy of the book, visit <http://www.kalahari-online.com> and go to the book section.

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Help us celebrate 15 years

Naysayers said it couldn't be done, but 2006 marks 15 years in business for Kalahari Management and we'd like to celebrate by doing something different.

In keeping with our ongoing commitment to conservation and community development, Kalahari Management wants to help one special ecotourism project by contributing the services of Carol Patterson to assist in that project's development by leading a workshop, facilitating

a planning session or speaking to a group. The topic is up to you, but it could be a great opportunity to have one of the world's leading ecotourism experts kick-start your nature tourism project or facilitate the building of a broader network of support.

If your project could benefit from such a sponsorship, and you'd like to help us celebrate an important milestone and nature's role in the tourism industry, drop us a line at carol@kalahari-online.com.



Carol Patterson with some of the 15 years of Ecotourism Management newsletters.

To Page 2..

WELCOME



Ecotourism Management is published quarterly by Kalahari Management to provide you with helpful information on the ecotourism industry.

Each issue includes practical advice on running a business, all of it designed to help your business succeed. As well, an ecotourism organization will be featured in each issue to inform you about other businesses in the industry.

Kalahari Management offers research services, business planning, training and accounting. If you have information you would like to share in *Ecotourism Management* or would like more information about our services, please call Carol Patterson at 403/290-0805, fax us at 403/398-1503 or email: carol@kalahari-online.com

Best Practices for Saving Paradise: A Teacher's Guide now available

If you are looking for a sustainable tourism case study, or wanting to focus more on tourism best practices, Carol Patterson has just completed a publication that you will want to add to your library. **Best Practices for Saving Paradise: A Teacher's Guide** is a companion to the book, **Saving Paradise: The Story of Sukau Rainforest Lodge** that Carol co-wrote with Albert Teo.

The E-book will help instructors bring the concepts of sustainability to life in a classroom setting. This teacher's guide outlines the major themes and issues inherent in sustainable tourism development and it provides ways to use the lessons and best practices shared by the people of Sukau Rainforest Lodge. Teachers will find

these lessons helpful for students examining tourism development in their own community.

Best Practices for Saving Paradise provides teaching aids, background information, discussion topics, and other suggestions on using **Saving Paradise: The Story of Sukau Rainforest Lodge** as a case study for students in tourism, environmental management, and business classes. With the valuable insights shared by Albert Teo, founder of Sukau Rainforest Lodge, and his staff, students will learn what happens when concept meet reality, and how Albert's team of dedicated and innovative staff overcame the odds.

To Page 4..

In My Opinion..

When is a trail not just a hike?

By Carol Patterson
President,
Kalahari Management Inc.
When is a trail not just a hike?
More often than you might imagine.

With the right interpretation, a pleasant walk in the outdoors can be so much more than physical exercise.

I recently had the opportunity to hike the Coffin Trail while attending a Nature Based Tourism workshop in Glencoe, Scotland. The trail was extremely scenic, but quite steep and very damp.

My appreciation for the region rose immeasurably when I discovered that before roads were built, residents had carried the coffins of their loved ones over this pass to receive a Christian burial.

I found my small pack a burden at times, so hearing of the effort made by these dedicated mourners, gave me pause on how hearty these people had been and an insight into their lives and values.

I was fortunate to have the benefit of great interpretation this time, but how many opportunities do we miss to share our stories with customers?



The walk follows an old coffin route through The Pass of the Hinds from Dalness back to Glencoe through Lairig Eilde, discussing the history, geology and natural history of the Glen.

This issue we talk about opportunities. In our spotlight article, Jan Negrijn tells how sharing his vision and values has brought him new customers.

We also have some information on the recently-concluded Planeta Forum which included some great discussion on interpretation as well as other aspects of business development.

I hope 2006 finds you delving into new opportunities!

Carol

From Page 1 Help us celebrate ..

Let us know:
o Who you are
o What your project/mandate is
o How we could help
o What you have to work with for the project (e.g. volunteers, meeting space, etc.)

"I encourage people to think about how this unusual oppor-

tunity might give help them leverage resources in their community for real progress," Carol Patterson, Kalahari Management founder says.

Watch for information in future issues on how the Anniversary project is unfolding.

Upcoming Ecotourism Events

The **Educational Travel Conference** will be held February 21 to 24, 2006 in **Baltimore, MD**. For more information visit www.travelearning.com.

The one day **Responsible Travel Forum** (February 22, 2006) will focus on educational travel. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/7en23>.

Greening Your Business

Interested in learning about making your business more profitable and improve the environment? Carol Patterson of Kalahari Management and Dr. John Hull of Intervale Associates will be offering another of their highly successful workshops, **Greening Your Business**, February 22 – 24, 2006. For more information or to register, visit <http://www.gmist.ca>.

Businesses find respite..

Insurance premium relief in sight

Canadian tourism businesses have found some respite from the escalating insurance premiums and ever-increasing challenges in finding proper coverage.

The Council of Tourism Associations (COTA) and Adventure Insurance Agency are now providing coverage across Canada for businesses offering nature-based tourism activities. The national launch of this initiative builds on the success this program has already enjoyed in British Columbia.

"We are very pleased to be able to offer the same extensive coverage found in B.C. to tourism businesses across Canada," said Michael Campbell, President and Chair of the COTA Board. "Through our broker Adventure Insurance Agency and their markets, we will be able to insure the most tourism activities using a process that delivers significant insurance savings."

More information can be found at www.adventureinsurance.ca.

It sounds like the program will receive a great reception from tourism operators. The program encourages high safety standards and risk management practices and many of the subscribers are already saving as much as 25 per cent of their premiums.



The Council of Tourism Associations (COTA) and Adventure Insurance Agency is grabbing the insurance bull by the horns and offering reduced premiums to qualifying members of the nature-based tourism industry.

Brochures still play a vital role

One researcher has found that brochures are still a vital part of a tourism businesses marketing plan. Patrick Tierney, Ph.D. found that brochures are driving business to company websites and influencing travelers to change their travel plans.

He says brochures out-competed all other media for distribution of **during-trip** information. Even travelers using the Internet via WiFi relied on brochures while traveling. Brochures, he found, are more effective than other tourism information channels for changing travel plans or making new

reservations or purchases.

Interestingly, brochures on racks seem to have significant influence on travelers. They found that 59 per cent of travelers getting brochures from a rack actually visited an attraction or purchased something, 37 per cent used a discount coupon from a brochure and 33 per cent learned about a company website or email address.

While the study did not comment on the effectiveness of brochures in pre-trip planning, it would seem that brochures still have a role in a world dominated by Internet marketing.



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