

Ecotourism Spotlight on.. Unique Mongolian culture supports responsible tourism

Mongolia is one of the world's most fascinating destinations and off the path for mainstream tourists. There are few roads outside the capital, Ulan Bator, the coldest national capital in the world, and sightseeing beyond city limits requires camping and hours on bone-jarring roads.

Efforts are underway to attract more tourists to this isolated destination. The Mongolian Responsible Tourism Development Fund developed a tourism portal (www.mongoliatourism.org/) to highlight responsible tourism companies and trip-planning information.

Javklan Javka, founder of Mongolia Interactive Travel (MIT), thinks Mongolia is a great place for responsible tourists or ecotourists. "Nomadic culture relies on nature, and nature and people cannot exist separately. There are rules followed in the traditional way that not only protect nature, but show people how to live. For example, tearing up flowers and grass, allowing filth into water systems, digging up land, killing animals unnecessarily, and cutting forests are considered sins and are strictly prohibited even today," says Javka. He continues, "Mongolians have a long history of caring for livestock. Horses, cattle, sheep, goats, and two hump camels are praised as the 'five treasures'. Horses are considered the 'emeralds' and highly valued."

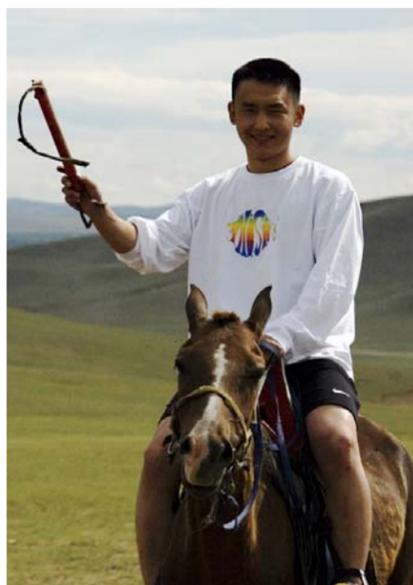
It appears this deep reverence for animals and the landscape is one reason ecotourism is developing slowly in Mongolia. The lack of infrastructure is

consistent with traditional lifestyles, but it makes travel slow and in some cases, uncomfortable.

Tourism entrepreneurs learn through trial-and-error to meet travelers' expectations while working with physical geography and infrastructure weaknesses; Mongolia is no exception.

For example, historically tours to Mongolia were two or three weeks long. Now companies like MIT, offer five to seven day tours. These have been very popular with time-starved travelers, but tourists will find Mongolia does not offer the soft adventure found in other ecotourism destinations. Travel is rugged, requiring a quick adjustment to the harsh climate, bumpy roads and basic accommodation. "I say a medium level of fitness is required," says Javka.

If this describes you, check out www.interactivemongolia.com.



Binoculars for Bhutan

Myrna Pearman, Naturalist at Ellis Bird Farm, just returned from Bhutan. Like many travellers, Myrna was entranced by Bhutan's model of sustainable development. Unlike many travelers, her involvement didn't end when she unpacked her suitcase.

Noticing a lack of guided wildlife-watching opportunities, Myrna asked several people why there were few Bhutanese bird-watchers. She was told that it was impossible to buy binoculars in the country.

Myrna decided to foster interest in wildlife watching and wildlife tourism by spearheading an effort to gather people's gently-used binoculars and get them to Bhutan. "I believe that binoculars will be instrumental in sparking interest in bird watching among the youth of Bhutan and will enable more Bhutanese to learn about the amazing avi-fauna of their country, one of the most spectacular and diverse on the planet," Myrna says.

If you want to donate, please bring your binoculars to the Ellis Bird Farm in Lacombe, Alberta (a great excuse to check out the Facility and do some summer birding). The binoculars will be labeled with the owner's name to provide more connection between Bhutanese recipients and donors.

For more information, email info@ellisbirdfarm.ca

ECO TOURISM Management

Autumn 2011

A newsletter of information and advice for the Visitor Industry

Published by Kalahari Management Inc., Box 46056, Inglewood P.O.,
Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2G 5H7. Telephone 403/290-0805 Fax 403/398-1503, www.kalahari-online.com

In My Opinion..

Seeing Maho Bay it before it's gone

by Carol Patterson
President,
Kalahari Management Inc.

Imagine you found a great vacation place with strong environmental practices. Then imagine that place being bulldozed. If you're like me, that kind of thought is depressing. But that's how I felt after visiting Maho Bay Eco-Camps in the US Virgin Islands.



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

Years ago, I wrote about this eco-resort in my book *The Business of Ecotourism*, and was so intrigued I added it to my bucket list.

Getting to Maho Bay from Western Canada takes three flights, an overnight stop and a ferry ride. The length of this expedition had kept me away, but when I heard rumors Maho

Bay was closing, it was time to book my trip.

I felt underwhelmed when I first saw Maho Bay Eco-Camps. The arrival area was a cross between a back alley and a recycling facility. Not totally unexpected as the facility endeavours to balance visitor comfort with responsible tourism practices, but the resort seemed long in the tooth.

To Page 2..

Be Bear Aware

Bear experts from around the world will gather in Banff October 6 to 9 for the **Bear Care Group** conference to discuss issues facing bruins. Carol Patterson of Kalahari Management will speak on innovation and unconventional problem solving. For more information go to www.bearcaregroup.org/



From Page 1.. Maho Bay

I soon discovered the land lease was not being renewed. With limited time before Maho Bay closes, upkeep investments aren't viable, hence the run-down look.

Maho Bay is perhaps a victim of it's own success. When founder Stanley Selengut built his tent-camp thirty years ago, land in USVI was cheap. No more. The landowners want \$25 million for the property, and given its location within a national park, the land seems destined for higher-density development. A grassroots



movement to save Maho Bay has sprung up. If you want to help, join the Save Maho Bay group on Facebook. To learn why Maho Bay is special check out our video at <http://bit.ly/n4xfbP>



RTD5

It may sound like the name of a Star Wars creature, but RTD5 was the **Responsible Tourism Destination Conference** held June 26-29 in Edmonton.

People from over twenty countries discussed difficulties in making tourism destinations sustainable. A Declaration on Responsible Tourism was drafted recommending steps to sustainability. To view the declaration, go to <http://bit.ly/mVjXNg>.

Next years conference will be held in Brazil.

Follow us
on Twitter



If you enjoy EcoTourism Management and want more frequent updates on tourism news and research follow *Reinventure* on Twitter.

NAI Offers Canadian Workshops

Tim Merriman, Executive Director of National Interpretive Association (NAI), is bringing his skills to Canada for intensive training for interpreters. A Train the Trainer workshop for Certified Interpretive Trainers will be held September 12 to 16 at the Toronto Zoo. There will be a Certified Interpretive Planner Workshop in Prince Albert National Park October 3 to 7. For details visit www.interpnet.com/certification/cert_calendar.shtml

Upcoming Ecotourism Events

The **International Ecotourism Society's North American conference** will be held **September 19 to 21** in Hilton Head, South Carolina. For more details visit www.ecotourism.org

The **Adventure Travel and Tourism Association** is holding their summit in **Chiapas, Mexico, October 17 to 20**. To register go to www.adventuretravel.biz/connect/summit/

The **Educational Learning Conference** will be held **January 18 to 21** in SeaWorld. Deadline for Responsible Tourism Showcase is October 4. To learn more go to www.travelearning.com

Travel Alberta will hold its 11th conference **October 23 to 25** in Banff. Carol Patterson will speak on marketing to female travelers. To learn more go to <http://bit.ly/oNo7ZF>

The **Road Less Travelled: Finding Unconventional Work/Life Solutions** workshop will be held at the University of Calgary, December 12. To learn more from Carol Patterson on unconventional career paths visit Continuing Education at <http://tinyurl.com/lh85wo>

Need a Reinventure? (or know someone who does?)

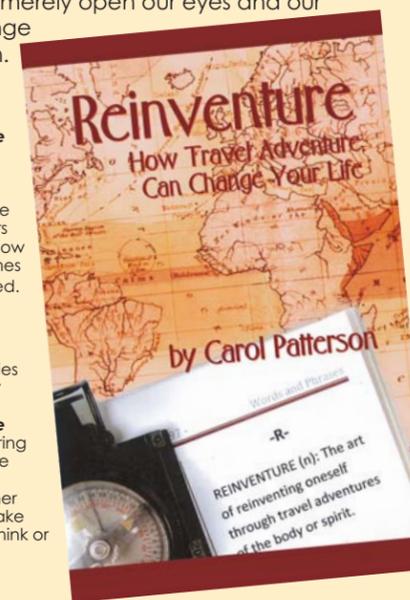
Travel allows us to reinvent ourselves over and over again. If we merely open our eyes and our hearts, change can happen.

In *Reinventure: How Travel Can Change Your Life* author, lecturer, traveller Carol Patterson has gathered favorite travel stories, hers and others, to show that no one comes home unchanged.

Some of the wonderfully entertaining stories in *Reinventure: How Travel Can Change Your Life* are earth-shattering epiphanies, some are just gentle adjustments. Either way, they will make you laugh, cry, think or just shake your head in wonder.

Reading *Reinventure* means becoming part of the experience.

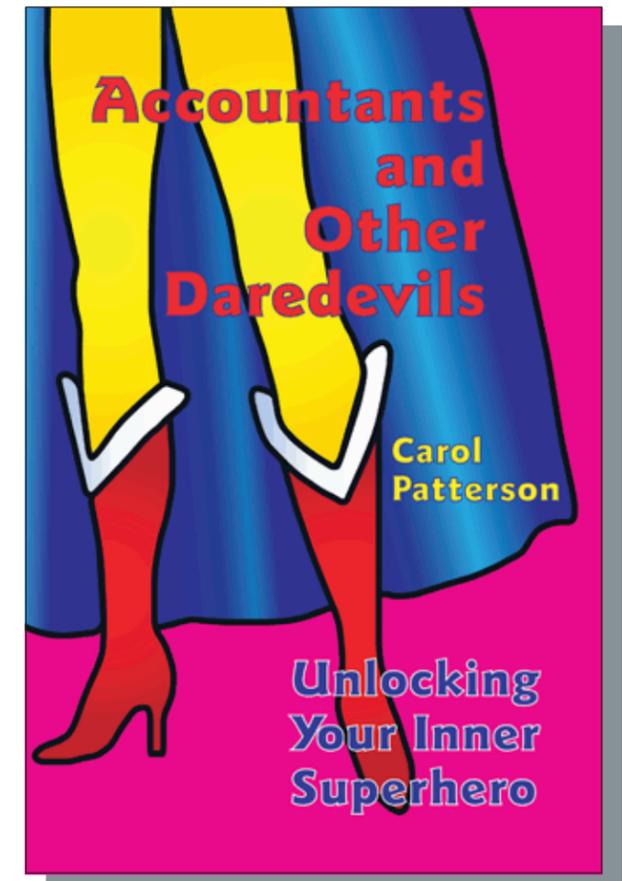
Learn more, follow the stories, get Reinventure tips, or add your own stories at: www.reinventuretravel.com



Order your copy of *Reinventure: How Travel Can Change Your Life* at www.trafford.com/08-0116 or email orders@trafford.com. It's also available at major online book retailers. isbn: 978-1-4251-6979-4

Looking for a great gift for the travel lover in your life?

Order **Reinventure** from Amazon <http://tinyurl.com/reinventure>



Accountants and Other Daredevils: Unlocking Your Inner Superhero

is available from **Amazon.com** or from the publisher at: <http://tinyurl.com/23tm6x9>