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2006 INTERNATIONAL ECOTOURISM CONFERENCE

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES
TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL

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ECOTURISMO ITALIA >>



ALESSIO SATTA >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Alessio Satta is a Mining engineer specialised in environmental and business management at the Imperial College of London and at the Ecole des Mines of Paris. After having worked at the Environmental Office of Group ACCOR in Paris, he is now Head of the Sustainable Tourism for Ambiente Italia – Research Institute with specific focus in sustainable development strategies for public administrations and marketing and management strategies for private companies and industry. He is International Consultant and Sustainable Tourism Project Manager for the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme, contributing to its activity for the implementation of the Tourism Carrying Capacity Assessment methodology and Integrated Coastal Area Management in the Mediterranean countries. From January 2003 is member of the advisory board and Director of Ecoturismo Italia and he has coordinated the first ecotourism market study in Italy for UN-WTO in 2002. He has collaborated with the following organisations: UN-WTO (World Tourism Organisation), UNESCO, WWF International, French Ministry of Tourism, AFIT, Quebec Ministry of Tourism, Bonjour Quebec, Algerian Ministry of Environment, Croatian Ministry of Tourism, etc.

“Ecoturismo Italia has been founded by operators working on the field for many years with the aim to promote the expression “Ecotourism” and defend it from past abuse, so that it can continue to stand for a kind of tourism that is careful, attentive and that both respects and protects nature and that also provides a mean of support to the local populations.”

ABOUT ECOTURISMO ITALIA >>

Ecoturismo Italia is a no profit organisation born in December 2002. The organisation has its head quarter in Rome, and has an open policy towards the whole world. It has developed partnerships with similar organisations in many countries, mainly from Latin America. Ecoturismo Italia is gathering all Italian actors of ecotourism at various level, creating a network of tour operators and travel agency, organising stages and giving them technical support. It also cooperates with High School and Universities to stimulate the debate around the sustainable tourism development.

ABOUT ITALY >>

Italy is one of the most favoured European tourism destinations in the world. Italy is blessed with a vibrant rich cultural heritage and stunning landscapes which gives an ideal terrain for Ecotourism development.

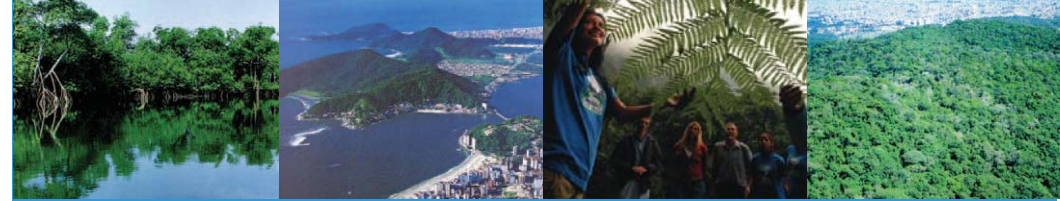


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SAO PAULO FOREST INSTITUTE & GREEN BELT BIOSPHERE RESERVE >>



VANESSA SILVEIRA >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Vanessa Silveira, 35, has a Bcs in Tourism and holds an Ecotourism degree from SENAC College. She works at the São Paulo City Green Belt Biosphere Reserve, as the Youth Program (an eco-job training initiative for needy youth communities at São Paulo Metropolis periurban zones) field manager. Ms. Souza developed an innovative sustainable tourism project, called the “Join-Effort Tourism”, where green belt youth groups conduct mutual visits with the intention of creating low-budget local itineraries, networking similar ecotourism initiatives and stimulating the launch of small tourism businesses.

“Although the city boasts green areas suitable for ecotourism (with over 600.000 hectares of forests, marine and coastal ecosystems and a variety of landscapes) ecotourism at the Biosphere Reserve is still underexplored.”
Rodrigo Victor

ABOUT SAO PAULO FOREST INSTITUTE & GBBR >>

São Paulo Forest Institute is the organisation in charge of most of the São Paulo State protected areas management. This institute also coordinates the São Paulo City Green Belt Biosphere Reserve - GBBR, as declared by UNESCO in 1994. The GBBR’s major mission is to foster policies for reconciling and creating alternatives for the metropolis development in harmony with environment conservation, with the ultimate aim of ensuring nature protection and human well-being. In this context, sustainable tourism (particularly ecotourism) has been pursued through the implementation of a number of initiatives with strong social concerns.

ABOUT BRAZIL & THE GBBR >>

The most important aspect for Brazilian ecotourism potential is the uniqueness (in terms of landscapes, biodiversity and large territorial extensions) of some of its biomes: the Amazon Forest, Pantanal (the largest world wetland), the Atlantic Forest and Cerrado Savanna. Brazil’s natural heritage stirs up international interest in tourists.

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CUBES CAPE TOWN SOUTH AFRICA >>



RUIDA STANVLIET >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Ruida Stanvliet is a trained conservation scientist employed by Cape Nature in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. For the past 10 years she has been intensely involved in all aspects relating to the UNESCO biosphere reserve concept. For a number of years she has acted as the coordinator of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve (KBR). Currently she is advising on biosphere reserve related issues, specifically on the drafting of an ecotourism plan for the KBR. Ruida has authored a number of publications, including the South African Biosphere Reserve Implementation Guidelines referring to ecotourism.

The thematic focus of CUBES Cape Town is on the interface between environmental conservation and poverty alleviation in the urban context.

ABOUT CUBES, CAPE TOWN >>

CUBES Cape Town is a public sector partnership whose purpose is to catalyse local action and debate regarding the role that biodiversity conservation can play in social development and the alleviation of poverty. It is to achieve this by:

- >> serving as a knowledge hub, thematically and institutionally
- >> actively promoting linkages between social and ecological issues
- >> facilitating development of action-based, multi-disciplinary projects working at the interface of poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation; and
- >> providing technical support where possible to existing initiatives, programs and projects.

The thematic focus of CUBES Cape Town is on the interface between environmental conservation and poverty alleviation in the urban context.

ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA >>

South Africa is a country with many diverse ecosystems and biomes, incredibly rich biodiversity and a rainbow nation of peoples. It is almost impossible to tour the country without a sort of nature experience. Ecotourism is being practiced as responsible tourism that gives economic benefits to local communities and helps sustain the natural resources of the country. Ecotourism is thus of utmost importance to the South African tourism industry and supports the many tourists that visit the country for its natural splendour.



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INSTITUTO ECOBRASIL >>



ANA PIMENTEL >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Ana Pimentel is a Brazilian tourism professional with local and international academic recognition and hands-on experience. Her specialty in consulting activities is on communications and sustainable tourism. She also dedicates volunteer time to the secretariat of the Brazilian Sustainable Tourism Board and is the Director of Communications for EcoBrasil.

Currently the domestic market is estimated to be worth over \$50 million and the international market over \$5 million. EcoBrasil estimates about 2-3% of the domestic market and 5-8% of the international market to be ecotourism

ABOUT INSTITUTO ECOBRASIL >>

The EcoBrasil Institute, the Brazilian Ecotourism Association, is a not-for-profit, non-governmental, organisation founded in 1993 to help develop Brazil become a reliable destination for ecotourism. Since then, EcoBrasil has participated in a number of ecotourism projects and its founders are now well-known ecotourism pioneers. Today EcoBrasil continues to be a small dedicated organisation, active through its well visited website, conferences, workshops and seminars on ecotourism concepts.

ABOUT BRAZIL >>

Brazil is one of the largest economies in the world and is a country of continental dimensions. Brazil is blessed with rich and varied ecosystems including the Amazon forest with one of the world's highest rates of biodiversity; the endangered Atlantic Rainforest; the Cerrado and its magical landscapes; and the Caatinga and its surprisingly rich flora and fauna. South of the Amazon lays the Pantanal, the largest wetland in the world and a must for nature lovers. In the very South of Brazil lays the Pampas with its beautiful grassland.

Tourism is growing rapidly in Brazil, which can be a benefit to poor communities as well as a threat to livelihoods and ecosystems. However, Brazil hosts interesting experiences in ecotourism, community tourism and adventure tourism development. Brazil also has a Sustainable Tourism Certification Program.

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SWEDISH ECOTOURISM SOCIETY >>



ANNA MARTINEZ >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Anna Martinez' career in tourism started as a guide in Lanzarote, Spain. After several years working in the tourism industry she decided to do a degree in Ecotourism and did so in Australia. After 5 years in Australia she moved back to her home country Sweden. Anna is a board member of the Swedish Ecotourism Society and is working with a EU-project in a little village (800 habitants) north of Sweden as the Tourism Developer Officer.

Nature's Best was developed by travel associations, land owners, nature conservation associations, non-profit organisations, public authorities, tourist companies and institutions, More than 30 companies and 20 National associations took part of the process of creating criteria for Nature's Best

Photos: www.naturensbest.se

ABOUT THE SWEDISH ECOTOURISM SOCIETY >>

The Swedish Ecotourism Society was created 1996. The initiative came from the Swedish WWF. Today the organisation has grown to about 350 members. The Swedish Ecotourism Society is together with The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and The Swedish Travel and Tourism Council responsible for the creation of Europe's first national quality label for nature tours in Europe – 'Nature's Best'. Nature's Best was launched 2002 during the year of tourism.

ABOUT SWEDEN >>

Sweden has exceptional natural scenery and enormous tracts of untouched wilderness. The North of Sweden offers magnificent natural scenery and exotic phenomena as the midnight sun, the aurora borealis (northern lights), Arctic chill and total silence. Sweden has the longest coastline in Europe, stretching 7,300 km. Part of the coastline host the world famous archipelago that was formed during the Ice Age. Stockholm's archipelago contains more than 25,000 islands.

The indigenous people of Sweden – the Sami People can be dated back 7000 years. The Sami people of today are numbered about 40 000 in all, divided between Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden.

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TURTLE ISLAND FIJI >>



PONI NAKIA >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Poni Nakia works as the Community Liaison Officer for seven community villages in Turtle Island, Fiji. Poni is from the village of Matakawalevu, which is one of the seven villages in the Nacula Tikina. He is in charge of visiting each of the seven villages at least once a week, and has established outstanding relationships with all of the key players in those villages including the Chiefs. Every month, Poni writes the Nacula Tikina news, which is then distributed to all of the villages in hardcopy as well as being sent to 100 or more politicians and public servants in Fiji who are interested in what is happening in the Yasawas. Poni has been specially recommended by Andrew Fairley, Managing Director of Turtle Island.

"Progress on Turtle Island means preserving the natural environment for the pleasure of our guests, not building 500 new rooms."
Richard Evanson-Turtle Island Owner

ABOUT THE YASAWAS, FIJI >>

The Yasawas is an area which is part of the Nacula Tikina. It includes Turtle Island and 3 larger islands, upon which are situated 7 different villages. Approximately 3,500 people live in this area. There are more and more resorts looking to open up on the Yasawas – most of them indigenous-owned but some are in partnership with Europeans. Thus there is a continuing and ongoing need for awareness at a macro level of the sorts of standards and criteria that these properties ought to be aspiring to.

ABOUT TURTLE ISLAND >>

Turtle Island is a 5 star resort operated on a freehold island in the middle of the Yasawas. It has developed a sustainable tourism policy since the 1990's and has during that time been host to many thousands of guests from throughout the world, who have been exposed to a unique approach to Sustainable Tourism. Their experience on Turtle Island has enabled them to have a greater appreciation of the Fijian people and their culture, and a more complete understanding of what can be achieved through responsible tourism practices, such that it is a win/win situation

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FRENCH ECOTOURISM ASSOCIATION >>



PASCAL LANGUILLON >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Pascal Languillon completed his MSc. in Environmental Sciences in Auckland University in 2001. He then worked on ecotourism development within an indigenous community in the Amazon, the Shiwiar, before supervising a European Development Funds program on community tourism in Moheli Island, in the Comoros. Back in France, his home country, he founded the French Ecotourism Association to develop the concept of Ecotourism and promote French and foreign operators involved in ecotourism. Pascal Languillon travelled around the world in more than 40 countries where he visited dozens of ecotourism projects. He tells his travel stories in Ecotourism Magazine, first public French magazine on the subject. Pascal is now an international consultant and works on diverse ecotourism projects in France and abroad.

Our Mission is to create a network of French ecotourism operators and to promote them nationally and internationally. Our Association is also involved in promoting environmental education and awareness amongst travellers, tourism operators and institutions.

ABOUT THE FRENCH ECOTOURISM ASSOCIATION >>

The French Ecotourism Association (AFE) was created in 2005 to promote the concept of ecotourism in France, both within tourism operators and the public. The AFE supports ecotourism projects and the development of territorial strategies linked to sustainable tourism. The AFE is presently developing an 'ecotourist booklet' to encourage best Ecotourism practices worldwide. Australian operators will have a primary position in this booklet.

FRANCE & ECOTOURISM >>

France is the first tourism destination in the world. Its international image is usually associated with culture and gastronomy but France also has a great potential for nature-based tourism. France has a large variety of landscapes as well as a vast network of protected areas, where tourism is already developed. Besides, France is one of the world leaders for rural tourism and an ecotourism supply is progressively being implemented. The French Ecotourism Association's role is to gather these various initiatives and promote them so as to disseminate good practices and strengthen the emergence of environmentally-friendly tourism.

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BALI'S VILLAGE ECOTOURISM NETWORK >>



ATIEK >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Atiek is a trained Anthropologist and long term program staff member of Yayasan Wisnu, a Balinese environment NGO working with the four JED villages to implement natural resources management systems. She has been involved with the Village Ecotourism Network since its inception, regularly travelling to the villages to guide village discussion on the development and direction of the project. She has also been involved in encouraging local guides in each of the villages to 're-learn' their history and about their environmental assets in preparation for interpretation to tourists. She has been nominated to represent JED at the 2006 Ecotourism Australia Conference because of her perspective on the JED project within the context of Bali's tourism history and cultural and environmental circumstances. This is her first time to Australia.

The local guides interpret their homes and lives with pride but honesty, providing guests with a refreshing insight into the 'behind the scenes' realities of the destination so heavily marketed as 'paradise'.

ABOUT BALI'S VILLAGE ECOTOURISM NETWORK >>

Designed, owned and run jointly by four Balinese villages and a local environment NGO, the establishment of Bali's Village Ecotourism Network (Jaringan Ekowisata Desa, or JED) was a brave new step. In an attempt to reclaim the international image of the island they love, the villages invite travellers to come and learn about local agriculture, lifestyles, beliefs, worries and aspirations. The hope is that from the ashes of mass-tourism, JED will encourage the growth of a different kind of tourism in Bali, benefiting local economies, supporting the culture, preserving the environment and developing a new international appreciation of Bali.

ABOUT BALI >>

Bali's colourful Hindu traditions, welcoming people and stunning landscapes have been attracting tourists since the 1940s. The island's status as Indonesia's tourism capital, has however taken a toll on the environment, produced vast economic inequalities and commercialised aspects of cultural life. The Village Ecotourism Network is an initiative that hopes to help revitalise tourism, in a way that redresses some of the injustices Bali has experienced at the hands of mass tourism in the past.

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ESTONIAN ECOTOURISM ASSOCIATION >>



AIVAR RUUKEL >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Aivar Ruukel is the Chairman of the Estonian Ecotourism Association. (ESTECAS). He has sound experience in ecotourism development and organised an International Conference on Central and Eastern Europe and Baltic Sea region: "Ecotourism - Balancing Sustainability and Profitability" in Parnu, Estonia 22-23 September 1997. Aivar organises eco-tours in the Somaa National Park to teach local and visitors on traditional canoeing and conservation strategies. He also develops workshops, monitoring and networking programs, and has a number of publications on ecotourism.

"Ecotourism means responsible traveling, preserving nature and culture."

Estonian Ecotourism Association

ABOUT THE ESTONIAN ECOTOURISM ASSOCIATION >>

ESTECAS is a nongovernmental, non-profit membership organisation that promotes the development of tourism that contributes to the local communities and conserves the natural and cultural heritage of Estonia. The group develops and articulates the main principles of ecotourism appropriate for Estonia: from strategies and action plans, to industry guidelines and standards. The organisation collects, publishes and disseminates information about ecotourism, sustainable tourism, and responsible travel and tour operation. Group members also organise projects and activities promoting conservation of natural and cultural heritage, including training programs for ecotourism and initiatives aimed at monitoring social, ecological and economic impacts of tourism.

ESTECAS cooperates with: The Ecotourism Society; Swedish Ecotourism Society; Estonian Fund for Nature; Estonian Nature Conservation Society, and others.

ABOUT ESTONIA >>

Estonia lies along the Baltic Sea, just below Finland. Tallinn, Estonia's capital city is only about 40 miles south of Helsinki, across the Gulf of Finland. Estonians have been living in this tiny portion of the Baltic lands since approximately 2,500 B.C., making them the longest settled of the European peoples. Estonia's pristine natural attractions include sandy beaches on beautiful islands, fishing, horse riding, cycling and hiking, canoeing, sailing and boating. (www.visitestonia.com)

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NOMADIC EXPEDITIONS >>



GERELTUV DASHDOOROV >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Gereltuv Dashdoorov is a graduate in international relations and is programs director at Nomadic Expeditions. He ran Nomadic Expeditions' office in New Jersey, USA between 2002-2005 and represented the company and Three Camel Lodge in North America. He works in planning and coordination of its natural, cultural and educational expeditions and marketing of the Three Camel Lodge. His responsibilities include coordinating resources and information for new programs and projects at and the involvement of non-government agencies and herding families in Three Camel Lodge eco-programs.

Our vision: "Throughout all of our travels, we are committed, both as a company and as individuals, to supporting the cultures and heritage of the lands we visit and to protecting the biodiversity of the ecosystems we explore"

ABOUT NOMADIC EXPEDITIONS >>

Nomadic Expeditions is a member of the International Ecotourism Society and is the premier Ecotourism travel company in Mongolia. They provide a range of travel experiences including camel and horse trekking, palaeontological field-trips, kayaking, hiking and cultural and religious festivals and run Mongolia's premier Ger-camp, the Three Camels Lodge. They create and sponsor environmental programs such as zero interest loans to Ger-camps with sound ecological practices to local community anti-litter campaigns. By promoting locally-based tourism, economic stability is provided for rural communities thereby reducing the necessity to relocate to cities — a desirable alternative to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. Nomadic Expeditions has coordinated field-trips for organisations such as the Asia Foundation, American Museum of Natural History, Soros Foundation, and WWF and they consult to the government on ecotourism and business development. For more information, please visit www.nomadicexpeditions.com.

ABOUT MONGOLIA >>

Because of Mongolia's low population density and nomadic lifestyle, the country contains some of the last relatively pristine examples of Asia's deserts, steppe, forests and mountains including the flora and fauna indigenous to each ecosystem. Within these ecosystems are found some of the world's most elusive and endangered species, such as the Gobi Bear (the world's only desert dwelling bear), Wild Camel and Snow Leopard. The Mongolian government has committed to protecting its unique habitat by setting aside one tenth of its territory into a system of protected areas and has pledged to increase this to 30% of the country, resulting in the largest national park system in the world.

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JAPAN ECOLOGE ASSOCIATION >>



MASARU TAKAYAMA >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Masaru Takayama founded and chairs the first ecolodge association in the world since 2003, Japan Ecolodge Association. Masaru has extensive working experience in the energy conservation and eco-products for green accommodations in U.S.A and Japan. Currently working as an independent ecolodge/ecotourism consultant and a certified energy conservation advisor under Japanese national energy conservation program, Masaru tries to apply his knowledge to the existing accommodations to improve sustainability and reduce energy consumption while increasing the level of welfare in neighbouring communities.

Masaru also serves as a board member of The International Ecotourism Society and an advisory member of forthcoming Global Ecotourism Conference 2007 in Oslo. Working knowledge in English and Spanish also helps Masaru to further interweave the ecotourism network and has enabled to speak on behalf of the organisations in countries of Japan, China, ROC(Taiwan), Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Australia, Belarus, Costa Rica etc.

“Our policy is to gather information and promote sustainable accommodations in Japan under international standards”.

ABOUT THE JAPAN ECOLOGE ASSOCIATION >>

Japan Ecolodge Association (ECOLA) endeavors to disseminate the ecolodge concepts by offering Japan Ecolodge Checklist. We firmly believe that locally operated nature-based lodges of low-impact facility with educational and interpretative programs can lead to help conservation and improve sustainability of surrounding nature while revitalising local economy. We have generated 110 item ecolodge checklists to raise the awareness of conservation and sustainability for ecolodge members.

ABOUT JAPAN >>

Japan is often regarded as a country not blessed with nature but with more than 80% of mountainous national land and over 34,000km of coastline offers true nature to be enjoyed. Staying at ecolodges is certainly one of the options that responsible tourists can appreciate the countryside, more traditional Japan.

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SRI LANKA ECOTOURISM FOUNDATION >>



FREDERICK DE SILVA GURUSINGHE >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Mr. F.De.S. Gurusinghe is the founder President of Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF), the pioneer ecotourism organisation in Sri Lanka, since its inception in 1998 to the date. He is an Economic (Hon) graduate and M.Phil Post-Graduate Degree holder of University of Ceylon, Sri Lanka. He started his career as a Teacher in high schools in Sri Lanka and later became a lecturer in University affiliated higher education institutions. Since 1980, he has been actively engaged in Sri Lanka tourism industry. He is the pioneer in promoting ecotourism in Sri Lanka and the driving force behind the Community Based Ecotourism Programmes. He is presently working as a part-time tourism/ecotourism Consultant for public and private sector organisations in Sri Lanka in addition to his routing work of the Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation.

“The Mission of SLEF is to use ecotourism as a tool to conserve the environment, assure maximum economic benefits to the host community, preserve age-old cultural heritage, provide in-depth information about Sri Lanka and to satisfy the needs of both national and international ecotourists visiting the genuine eco sites in the island. “

ABOUT THE SRI LANKA ECOTOURISM FOUNDATION >>

Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF) is the pioneer ecotourism organisation in Sri Lanka. Founded in 1999, it worked hand in hand with governmental institutions to position Sri Lanka as an ecotourism destination in South Asia. SLEF also lobbied to develop national ecotourism policies and guidelines, which were adopted in May 2003. SLEF initiated databases on Ecotourism in Sri Lanka and pioneered in the development of a Community Based Ecotourism Enterprises (CBEs), and has made arrangements to conduct Ecotourism Research Programmes and training programmes on related themes.

ABOUT SRI LANKA >>

Sri Lanka is an Island located off the south-eastern shores of India. Sri Lanka is known as ' Pearl of the Indian Ocean'. Sri Lanka was under colonial rule for more than 450 years and the British called it 'Ceylon' The extant of the country is 65610 SQ.KMS and the population is approximately 19 Million. Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society with a Sri Lanka has a genial climate and weather pattern.

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KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE >>



GIDEON AMBOGA >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Gideon Amboga has been working for Kenya Wildlife Service, a government conservation agency, for over 30 years. There he initiated 10 ecotourism projects in 4 protected area ecosystems, aimed at protecting the environment whilst providing economic benefits to local communities, reducing conflicts and enhancing visitor enjoyment. These projects included tented camps, eco-lodges, community game sanctuaries, campsites, cultural manyattas and local community lifestyles exhibitions. Gideon gained experience in sustainable ecotourism development both locally and abroad. He has been in charge of various protected areas in different parts of Kenya, and has worked with pastoral communities on conservation initiatives.

Ecotourism initiatives within the Kilimanjaro heartland encourage links between private investors in ecotourism and local community-based organisations.

ABOUT THE KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE >>

Kenya Wildlife Service is a government agency mandated by law to manage wildlife in all areas of Kenya, both terrestrial and marine. It has an elaborate conservation 'network' in the whole country. Its mission is to protect and manage wildlife and its habitats in a sustainable manner and in collaboration with communities and other stakeholders for posterity. The organisations core values towards this are to manage these natural resources scientifically, responsively and professionally. The organisation is headed by Chief Executive, with over 3000 staff.

ABOUT THE KILIMANJARO HEARTLAND >>

Kilimanjaro Heartland is a landscape striding between two countries, Kenya and d Tanzania. Africa's highest peak and most famous landmark rises in the centre of this scenic Heartland, surrounded by a variety of ecosystems from wetlands to semi-arid savannas. Kenya's famous Amboseli National Park, Tanzania's Kilimanjaro National Park and Arusha National Parks are found in this heartland. There are also vast community lands tended by the local Maasai people. Target species here are Africa's best known and most studied elephant population, the endangered cheetah and wild dog.



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ECOTOURISM SOCIETY OF KENYA >>



JUDITH A. KEPHER-GONA >>



SHORT BIOGRAPHY >>

Judith Kepher-Gona is the CEO of Ecotourism society of Kenya. Judy joined ESOK in 1999 and has since then engineered its transformation from an insignificant awareness creation organisation to a leader in setting standards for the tourism sector in Kenya and now into performance evaluation. Judy graduated from University of Nairobi in 1992 with a BA degree in Sociology and Geography. She worked for the Kenya Wildlife Service, the organisation charged with management of Kenya's national parks. Judy is in the final stages of completing her MA in Community Development. Her MA thesis is on private/community partnerships in ecotourism as tools for rural development.

"I have a passion for the concept of ecotourism, for me it's a philosophy-for me it's more than a market segment it's a tradition."

Judith Kepher-Gona

ABOUT THE ECOTOURISM SOCIETY OF KENYA >>

The Ecotourism Society of Kenya, Africa's premier ecotourism society, was founded in 1996 with a vision to propel Kenya's tourism to new heights-ecotourism. With membership of over 200 corporate organisations and professionals, the society aims at providing leadership in the knowledge and practice of ecotourism for Kenya and the Africa region at large. Key achievements include the implementation of a voluntary certification scheme for accommodation facilities, the ESOK Eco-rating Scheme, and a community outreach program that encourages communities to engage in ecotourism.

ABOUT KENYA >>

Kenya is a developing country with a population of about 30 million people. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy with more than 50% of the population living from agriculture. Tourism is among the top three foreign exchange earners, others being coffee and tea. Kenya is credited among the first countries to embrace ecotourism.

Photos: Kenya Tourist Board



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