

FROM THE PRESIDENT



It feels inspiring to be doing great things from the ESOI platform. But there is still so much to do across the country. Our recent meeting with the Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has set the pace and now the Joint Secretary, Dr. Suman Bhalla from the ministry is on our board. We intend to be part of the new projects in the Andamans, Daman and Diu as well. It may seem that ecotourism has not come of age in India and that ESOI is talking a new language. However, we are going to continue to work, guide and collaborate with all well-meaning project owners to do some solid work on the ground. I wish everybody concerned the very best.

Steve Borgia

NEWS & UPDATES

Think tank meeting on the new tourism policy

A multi-stakeholder meeting was called by the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) and the Surya Foundation on July 17 to gather ideas and inputs for the new tourism policy in the making. ESOI was represented by Rakesh Mathur and Mandip Singh Soin.

ESOI meets the Environment Minister with big ideas

Steve Borgia, Mandip Singh Soin and Seem Bhatt met the MoEF&CC Minister on July 28 to discuss the role of ESOI as the unifying force between MoEF and MoT in order to harmonise the policies on ecotourism and responsible tourism. The meeting ended on a positive note.



EVENTS & DEVELOPMENTS

ESOI VP speaks in Myanmar

Seema Bhatt was invited to speak at the international conference on 'Ecotourism in Protected Areas: Strengthening Conservation, Development and Adaptation' in Myanmar's capital city of Nay Pi Taw. She spoke on 'Engaging host communities and ensuring benefits'. It was hosted by Myanmar's Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MOHT) and Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF) and organised by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) from May 19-21. More than 200 experts, government officials and journalists participated and topics like climate change, spiritual tourism, etc. were discussed in detail.



Tourism made organic

Harvest Fresh Farm is an organic fruit farm and Farmstay in Kerala, close to Periyar Tiger Reserve. It chiefly grows pomegranates along with papaya, grape, coconut, mango and has an apiary. There is also a vegetable and herbal garden. Accommodation is simple and comfortable. Delicious local cuisine is served to the guests who

are invited to join in harvesting the fruit garden and tending to the farm animals.

Indian Tourism 2.0 Conclave

The Indian Tourism 2.0 conclave organised by MoT in Delhi on July 27 was attended by the ESOI President, Former President, Honorary Secretary and patron member, Shilabhadra Banerjee. They presented on environment, heritage, responsible and adventure tourism and tourism carrying capacity, respectively.



ESOI welcomes its newest member -
**Harvest Fresh Farms,
 Thekkady**
www.harvestfresh.in

Making friends for better conservation in Tadoba

Anirudh Chaoji

Communities living around the forest have rarely been cooperative with forest departments. As a result of this existing antagonism, they don't receive much help from villagers in fighting forest fires or nabbing poachers. On the contrary, villagers have often been known to help offenders enter forests.

In the light of the new community-based participatory programmes like ecotourism, initiated by the Maharashtra Forest Department, forests like the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve now have many 'good neighbours'. The Eco Development Committee members in the villages neighbouring the forest have found occupations as guides, gypsy drivers and adventure operators, and also help manage tourists and waste. They have now turned into stakeholders of conservation, thus making it a win-win situation for all.



Publicising good tourism practices through innovative methods

Niranjan Khatri from ESOI recently met the Karnataka State Minister of Ecotourism, the Minister of Forests, Vinay Luthra and the Managing Director of the Bangalore Metro to discuss the issues of waste management and tourist indiscipline. He suggested that firstly, the responsibility of forest management should be shared between forest officers and stakeholders in tourism. Travel agents must be encouraged to attach the Dos and Don'ts of the forest while sending confirmation vouchers. He also recommended that since most tourists travel via Bangalore to forested areas, attractive messaging on good tourism and forest practices could be displayed at metro stations for further sensitisation. Moreover, all hotels in Mysore should have similar messaging in their hotel lobbies. All these points were noted by the government and metro officials present for further action.

ESOI helps select the Bagh Mitra awardees

On July 29, 2015, WWF-India along with Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and the Global Tiger Forum (GTF), jointly observed the Global Tiger Day by organising the WWF-PATA Bagh Mitra Awards. The former President of ESOI was a member of the jury. The awardees who were felicitated for their exemplary work towards tiger conservation were:

- Mr. L. Krishnamoorthy, IFS, for his work on conservation of tiger habitat in the Bhopal Forest Division during his tenure as Conservator;
- Dr. Sonali Ghosh, IFS, the former Conservator of Forests and Deputy Director of Manas Tiger Reserve, Assam, for her courageous efforts to arrest poaching and illegal trade of animal parts in Manas Tiger Reserve;
- Mr. Nand Kishore, IFS, for his selfless act of bravery to prevent human-tiger conflict during his tenure as the former Divisional Forest Officer-cum-Deputy Director of the Valmiki Tiger Reserve;
- The Periyar Tiger Conservation Foundation, Thekkady, Kerala for its efforts to enhance protection in the Periyar Tiger Reserve, and;
- The Borikheda Village Eco-Development Committee, Amravati, Maharashtra, for its remarkable work towards wildlife conservation and supporting local community.



Portable biogas at Vishnubaaug

Vishnubaaug is an environment theme park located at the foothills of the Matherran range. As part of its environment awareness programme, the park has set up a portable biogas system which is turning out to be highly cost effective and convenient. Visitors to the park get to understand the process of biogas production easily as the whole unit functions in front of them. Even children get educated on the benefits of biogas when they see live demonstrations of biogas cooking. The system was started off on cow dung, but now it runs completely on kitchen waste.



ESOI on the jury for the National Tourism Awards

For the 2014-15 National Tourism Awards for responsible tourism, Rakesh Mathur and Mandip Singh Soin acted as jury members along with MoT on July 13. The final results are awaited.

The future of Incredible India

On July 6, CNN and MoT organised a one-day workshop to discuss the future of the Incredible India campaign. Members from ESOI participated in this event.

Catching up with members

Former CEO of MPEDB, Ajoy Bhattacharya re-connected with ESOI officials and shared the exciting news that he has taken over as CEO of the National Bamboo Mission (<http://nbm.nic.in/structure.html>). He claimed that bamboo will be the next big thing used for construction and various other purposes.

PUBLICATIONS

Ecotourism and Environment Handbook

The handbook is a collation of ideas, guidelines, articles and contacts in ecotourism, with over 290 pages. The printing was funded by the Ministry of Tourism and an additional 1,000 copies by Sita. Postage and handling: Rs.150/-

Write to admin@ecotourismsocietyofindia.org to avail of a copy.



ESOI GOVERNING BODY

ESOI OFFICE BEARERS

1. Steve Borgia (President)
2. Krishna Kumar Singh (Vice President)
3. Seema Bhatt (Vice President)
4. Rakesh Mathur (Secretary)
5. Anirudh Chaoji (Treasurer)
6. Mandip Singh Soin FRGS (Immediate Past President)

HONORARY MEMBERS

1. Maharaja Gaj Singh Ji
2. M.P. Bezbaruah, IAS (Retd.)
3. Shilabhadra Banerjee IAS (Retd.)
4. Sujit Banerjee IAS (Retd.)
5. H.S. Pabla, IFS (Retd.)

We are in pursuit of like-minded people at the state level to spread our network nationwide. If you are interested in associating with us, please write to Steve Borgia at steve@indecotourism.com

ESOI GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS (2014-2016)

1. Suhail Gupta
2. Jose Dominic
3. Venu V. IAS
4. Randhir Brar
5. Rohit Kohli

SPECIAL INVITEES

1. Dipak Deva
2. Toby Sinclair
3. Anil Kumar Sharma

GRAND PATRON MEMBERS



PATRON MEMBERS



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