



## CREST Newsletter: Issue 4, August & September 2014

### Sonora & Chihuahua Indigenous Community Tourism Workshops



Thanks to support from the Inter-American Foundation, and in partnership with The Christensen Fund, CREST staff visited indigenous communities in the Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua, in August, to assess the status of community based tourism initiatives and explore possibilities for increasing the benefits of tourism for native people. CREST visited with the governor and elders in the Conc'ac (Seri) community at Punta Chueca on the Gulf of California, and learned about the economic

difficulties they've had despite a growing tourism industry at nearby Bahia de Kino. In Chihuahua, CREST visited with indigenous community leaders in the Sierra Tarahumara, and learned about the myriad challenges the Raramuri people have faced as large scale tourism investments have come to the Copper Canyon, and left relatively meager benefits for the original inhabitants. CREST is developing plans to lend its tourism expertise to these communities and hopes to be of service in this region in 2015.

### Sharing Expertise ~ Providing Leadership

As part of CREST's program area, "Sharing Expertise and Providing Leadership", CREST offers public presentations and workshops to help expand understanding of responsible tourism. Recent activities have included:

**State Department Delegation from Africa:** On September 3, CREST Executive Director Martha Honey gave a lecture on the "Origins, Growth and Global Trends in Ecotourism" to a delegation of national parks, wildlife and tourism officials from 12 different African countries. The group of

African professionals was in the U.S. under the auspices of the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program to study parks, biodiversity and ecotourism management.

In the lively discussion following Honey's power point presentation, the visitors demonstrated a solid understanding of the challenges and difficulties of developing nature based ecotourism that brings real economic benefits to poor rural communities. "These are African leaders who understand the potential of ecotourism but also know from their personal experiences how difficult it is to, for instance, protect local cultures and traditions when rural communities are exposed to international tourists from Europe and North America," said Honey. "The good news is that these leaders seemed to be thoughtfully grappling with these and other challenges and this will, ultimately, help to make ecotourism a more useful development tool.

**Inter-American Development Bank:** On September 10, CREST was invited to give a Presentation on community-based and indigenous ecotourism to the Inter-American Development Bank's division on gender and indigenous people. CREST staff David Krantz and Martha Honey, together with CREST consultant Juan Luna Kelsner, gave a PowerPoint talk at IDB's Washington headquarters on successful community and indigenous tourism businesses in the Americas and the key ingredients to success. They also showed a clip from CREST's documentary on tourism along Costa Rica's Pacific coast, which demonstrated the range of benefits one rural community in the Osa Peninsula is receiving from one small hotel, Danta Ecolodge.

**TBEX Cancun:** On September 12, CREST's Martha Honey gave the keynote address alongside eco-travel blogger Bret Love, of Green Global Travel, on responsible travel and the "role of the media in promotion of responsible travel" at TBEX North America, held September 11 – 13, 2014, in Cancun, Mexico. TBEX is the "world's largest gathering of travel bloggers, writers, new media content creators, and social media savvy travel industry professionals."

Asked to speak after captive dolphin pre-conference tours offered as an option for attendees prompted outrage from many bloggers, Martha and Bret discussed the issue of dolphin captivity and various other responsible travel topics. CREST looks forward to further discussing animal welfare and other



issues with both bloggers and media professionals, who have at their fingertips a powerful tool for public education. (Image courtesy of Green Global Travel.)

**University of Vermont Lecture:** On September 15, University of Vermont professor David Kestenbaum invited Martha Honey to speak to his ecotourism class about her work and what she sees as the importance of ecotourism. Honey spoke to the class for nearly three hours via Skype, using some PowerPoint slides and responding to comments and questions from the class of some

40, mainly senior, students. The class is reading Honey's book, *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?*, and will also be viewing CREST's newest film, "The Goose with the Golden Eggs."

## **Travelers' Philanthropy Spotlight: Bodhi Surf School Launches a Travelers' Philanthropy Program**

CREST is always looking for new partners who are making a difference their communities. Check out the latest work by [Bodhi Surf School](#), located in Uvita, Osa, Costa Rica:

Bodhi Surf is pleased to announce that we launched our Travelers' Philanthropy Program in July with the help of the Costa Rica - USA Foundation and their non-profit sister organization, Amigos of Costa Rica. The program is different than the traditional travelers' philanthropy model in that instead of asking our guests to donate, we actually contribute a portion of our own revenue that then goes back to our community.

What that means on the ground is that we give our guests a donation "gift card" upon their departure, and they are able to donate it to one of three organizations that operate in our community. Our aim is that this symbolic gesture will further their connection to the place that they enjoyed so during their stay. Gift cards can be "redeemed" through the Amigos of Costa Rica website, and guests will also be given an opportunity to donate additionally should they so choose.



The organizations to receive the donations are Forjando Alas, Geoporter, and Fundacion Keto, their focuses on youth development, technological education, and marine conservation, respectively. The Travelers' Philanthropy Program will be a part of a larger project — the Ocean Guardian Journey — our own, documented movement towards reducing our impact, helping protect and preserve our environment and oceans, and helping encourage others to start their own personal journeys to do the same. It is our hope that other businesses and individuals in our area will be inspired to start their own Ocean Guardian Journey.

We are fortunate to live in such an amazing location and all reap the benefits of the land, the ocean, the air. It is our hope that our Travelers' Philanthropy Program and our Ocean Guardian Journey contribute positively back to our home and our livelihood.

Note from CREST: Don't miss this [incredible report](#), showcasing their 2013 community and environmental initiatives!

## Meet the CREST Fall Interns

At CREST, we believe education is vital to the future of sustainability. This fall, we have welcomed five new students to spend their semesters with us, both learning about responsible travel and immensely adding to the organization with their knowledge and skills:

- **Fei Wang** grew up in central China, in the city of Wuhan. She completed her undergraduate degree at Purdue University's prestigious program for Hospitality & Tourism Management. Having completed internships at Walt Disney World Resort's Animal Kingdom Lodge and at Runaway Bride Destination Weddings, Fei is currently pursuing her MTA from George Washington University, with an emphasis in Events & Meetings Management.
- **Irving Marmolejo** hails from Sinaloa, Mexico, where CREST is currently undertaking a sustainable tourism project. He spent 3 years in the Mexican army and is now completing a degree in Industrial Engineering, in Mexico City. Irving's interests are in creating a balance between ecology and technology, and he currently has projects underway focusing on recycling urban solid waste, rain water collection systems for houses, and organic food growth in urban settings.
- **Lu Cheng** ("Leo") joins CREST from Shanghai, China. With a name literally meaning "the journey" in Mandarin, a desire to explore the world led Lu to study his undergraduate degree in hospitality management in Switzerland. He then worked for an events management company in Geneva. Now continuing his study of sustainable hospitality in GW's MTA program, Cheng realizes the importance of travel and hopes to use his education to give back.
- **Nancy Rosano Vera** is a graphic designer from Hidalgo, Mexico. Upon graduation from La Salle University, Nancy spent 4 years working in the Mexican public sector. Nancy is currently studying a Masters in Strategic Design & Innovation, and her interests lie in social innovation and helping others. Now extremely interested in the power of tourism for social good, Nancy hopes to help her home state of Hidalgo come up with an effective and strategic tourism plan.
- **Ximena Alvis Gonzáles** is a tourism consultant, from Bolivia, with more than 10 years of experience in the industry. Ximena has provided consulting and trainings mainly in the areas of community development, capacity building, and customer service. With an undergraduate degree in eco-tourism, Ximena is now living in Washington, DC, and completing a distance masters program in sustainable tourism from Universidad para la Cooperación Internacional, in Costa Rica.

CREST is thrilled to welcome these changemakers! If you're interested in a spring internship with CREST, contact Samantha Hogenson at [staff@responsibletravel.org](mailto:staff@responsibletravel.org).

## CREST Fall Eco-Auction

CREST's Fall Eco-Auction is live **September 17 – October 8**, via [Charitybuzz!](#) Start now on holiday shopping – get a great deal, enjoy a responsible vacation, and support CREST's work for responsible travel. Proceeds from the eco-auction will help to fund CREST's day-to-day operations, research, and travelers' philanthropy program. Twenty-one trip packages are available from our amazing donors:

[Casa San Francisco](#) & [Hotel Con Corazon](#) in Nicaragua; [Ecoventura](#) in the Galapagos; [Fond Doux Resort & Plantation](#) in St. Lucia; [Intrepid Travel](#) in Spain; [Island Outpost's GoldenEye](#) in Jamaica; [Madidi Jungle Ecologde](#) in Bolivia; [Nayara Hotel, Spa & Gardens](#), [Hotel Las Colinas](#), [Bodhi Surf School](#), [Finca Luna Nueva Lodge](#), [Danta Corcovado Lodge](#) & [Rainforest Adventures](#) in Costa Rica; [Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge](#) & [Dwarika's Hotel](#) in Nepal; [Yacutinga Lodge](#) & [Amerian Portal del Iguazu](#) in Argentina; [Rainforest Expeditions](#) in Peru; [True Blue Bay Resort](#), [Belmont Estate](#), & [Maca Bana Luxury Boutique Resort](#) in Grenada; [Xanadu Island Resort](#) & [Radisson Fort George Hotel & Marina](#) in Belize; [Bougainvillea Beach Resort](#) in Barbados; [Rosalie Bay Resort](#) in Dominica; [Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit](#) in Mexico; and [Hotel Vermont](#) in the USA.

If your business is interested in donating a package to our holiday auction (~November 27 – December 17), please contact CREST program associate, [Samantha Hogenson](#). This is a great opportunity for travel businesses to get the word out about what their company has to offer and create or main a connection with CREST.



View from Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, Nepal

## CREST in the News

**September 15, 2014:** Eco-blogger Bret Love of Green Global Travel sat down with Martha Honey to talk about CREST's beginnings, responsible tourism, and the role of the travel media in responsible tourism. See the comprehensive and fun interview [here](#).

**September 16, 2014:** Interested in the business behind ecotourism? CREST Program Director, David Krantz, provides insight on U.S. Eco-Resorts in the Wall Street Journal, in an article entitled [In the U.S., It's Back to Nature for Some Resorts](#) by Robyn A. Friedman.

## Upcoming Events

**Costa Rican Launch of the Goose with the Golden Eggs:** On October 1, CREST is premiering its documentary film on coastal tourism at Costa Rica's Legislative Assembly in San Jose, Costa Rica. This marks the official launch of the film, "The Goose with the Golden Eggs: Tourism on Costa Rica's Pacific Coast" to Costa Rican members of Congress and other government officials, tourism leaders, environmental organizations, and the media. The film showing is co-hosted by the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly, Fundacion Corcovado, and CREST. Costa Rica's Minister of Tourism and head of Costa Rica's Tourism Institute (ICT), Wilhelm Von Breymann, and Diego Gonzalez, President of CANAECO, the country's ecotourism association, will take part in a panel discussion of the film, together with Alejandra Monge, Executive Director of FUNDACION Corcovado and Martha Honey, executive Director of CREST.

"We are extremely pleased that members of Costa Rica's recently elected Partido Acción Ciudadana (PAC) government see our documentary as an important educational tool for discussions about different models of tourism. This marks a dramatic turn-around for our film, of which the first version was vigorously opposed by ICT officials when it was first released," explains Martha Honey.



In the wake of this criticism, CREST agreed to stop distributing the first version and made a new educational edition, which features commentary by Costa Rica's former First Lady and member of Congress Margarita Penon.

The new version was shown in the DC Environmental Film Festival and at the World Bank in Washington, DC and it has been entered in several prominent film festivals. It has been shown at

various international conferences as well as to community groups in Costa Rica and elsewhere. When asked how the film has helped drive change in the Osa Peninsula, Travis Bays, founder of Bodhi Surf School, says “The educational video served as a launching pad for rich discussion between and amongst student visitors and local residents about the challenges coastal communities are facing with respect to quantity and quality of water, beach access, land ownership, protection of mangrove, and other issues. More importantly, the video ignited emotions that helped inspire tangible solutions to overcome some of the challenges Bahia-Uvita faces.”

The film was made by award-winning documentary film makers Charlene Music (a Costa Rican-American) and Peter Jordan. Both hold MFAs in documentary filmmaking from Stanford University.

**“Exploring the World as a Responsible Traveler” Presentation:** On October 16th, CREST will visit our own back yard of Richmond, Virginia, to share responsible travel options and travelers’ philanthropy do’s and don’ts with an audience of travelers interested in responsible choices. CREST was invited by Virtuoso travel advisor, Stacy Luks, whose agency, SoulShift Journeys, goes by the motto “TRAVEL Differently, TRAVEL Sustainably, TRAVEL Open-heartedly, TRAVEL Endlessly”. Together, Luks and CREST staff will discuss key trends shaping the future of travel, opportunities within the eco, culinary, community-based, volunteer, and agri-tourism sectors, and spotlight some exemplary tour operators, destinations, and non-profit organizations that are leading the way. Organized by Luks, the discussion is open for all and will take place at Ellwood Thompson’s Local Market, for which the client base values responsible consumption.

**Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training:** With support from The Ocean Foundation, CREST program associate Samantha Hogenson will travel to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to take part in the Climate Reality Leadership Corps training program, November 4-6. Samantha has been invited to attend the training event, co-hosted by The Alliance for Climate Protection, otherwise known as “The Climate Reality Project”, a U.S. non-profit, founded by former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, and Amigos da Terra -- Amazonia Brasileira, a non-profit, public-interest civil society organization recognized as such by the Brazilian Ministry of Justice and based in Sao Paulo, Brazil.



The purpose of this November training event is to train 500+ Climate Reality Leaders to join the Climate Reality Leadership Corps program. Through this program, community leaders are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to spread the message about the urgency and solvability of the climate crisis. Trainees will be addressed by Chairman Gore, who will share his multimedia presentation and teach trainees how to effectively convey the science and facts about climate change to their future audiences. Hogenson has been carefully selected out of hundreds of applicants to be trained as a Climate Reality Leader.

**Missouri State University Geography Awareness Week:** On November 20, Samantha Hogenson will return to her alma mater, Missouri State University, as an invited speaker during Geography Awareness Week. One of the first students of Geotourism at Missouri State (and in the country!), Samantha will present about the relationship between her education in Missouri State's school of Geography, Geology, and Planning and her career in the tourism industry. She will also discuss geotourism and the great opportunity it provides to sustain and enhance not only the economy, but the environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and well-being of residents in locations all over the world.



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