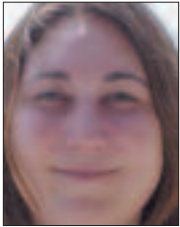


An ecotour de force

Spanning the globe, EJ explores the growing ecotourism industry



Kristen Tuinstra, a master's student in the School of Journalism at Michigan State University, is editor of EJ.

The United Nation's Environment Programme says it won't hurt the natural environment if it's done right. The World Tourism Organization says it will help local people in smaller, developing countries improve financially.

It's ecotourism and this is the year for it—the UN has named 2002 the International Year of Ecotourism. In theory, the endeavor is a nice idea. In 1998, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, along with the World Tourism Organization, declared that 2002 would be ecotourism's year. The group claimed that encouraging ecotourism would in turn encourage a “better appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures, thereby contributing to the strengthening of world peace,” as well as “provide a source of income for many people.”

These statements are understandable and many would agree.

But with the disintegrating Australian Great Barrier Reef and littered national parks to name a couple, the negatives of ecotourism are abundant. If international ecotourism is upped, that's a lot of potential natural damage caused by tourists.

According to a manual written by the UN Environment Programme, “(e)cotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people.” Is this possible... really?

Scores of nongovernmental organi-

zations are working on programs requiring ecotourism companies, such as boats touring the Galapagos Islands, to be certified. The word “ecotourism” and certification are the growing hand-in-hand buzz-words.

IN THIS ISSUE

Our theme package of articles focus on ecotourism—its lucrative and damaging effects. Read ahead to find out how four reporters view ecotourism in Australia, China, India and Mexico. Leading the section off is an article written by **Eric Freedman**, who questions the ethical angle of writing about sacred or natural places—the more people who know about the place, the more traffic these areas endure, the more damage is done.

Jim Detjen, Director of MSU's Knight Center for Environmental Journalism, recently returned from a five-month stint in China, where he was a Fulbright fellow at Nankai University in Tianjin.

Two international students offer their viewpoints on their own countries' efforts to encourage ecotourism. **Susana Guzman**, a second-year master's student from Mexico, reports on views exerted by non-profit organizations and ecotourism companies in Mexico. **Arvind Diddi**, an MSU Ph.D. student from India,

describes the wildlife in India's jungles and the country's position on ecotourism—India is ready to pounce on Americans' tourism budgets.

Besides the theme group of articles on ecotourism, we have an article on the controversial issue of pesticide usage at golf courses. **Brian McKenna**, executive director of Local Motion, unearths the facts rarely reported on the game of “golf.”

The grape berry moth, one of Michigan grapes' worst enemies, is the subject of **Natalia Botero-Garces'** article. The author is a Ph.D. student focusing her dissertation on entomology—the grape berry moth, in fact.

Stephen Meador, a second-year master's student, wrote two articles on heated issues: fuel cell technology and carbon sequestration. Meador, a former employee of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, details efforts made for CO₂ storage and carbon emissions standards.

TOUR DE FORCE

The UN's efforts to increase ecotourism have left some wondering if it has bitten off more force than it can chew. Is it possible to grow a country's finances, especially a developing country, while simultaneously reducing damage to natural areas?

to the editor | reader comments

“I am very impressed with your program's new magazine. Wow!”

■ Emilia Askari,
Public Health Writer,
Detroit Free Press

“Congratulations to all on EJ's excellent quality and beautiful new look. Interestingly, we also covered the thylacine project (*EJ*, Winter 2002) in the current issue of *Audubon*.”

■ Sydney Horton,
Research Editor,
Audubon magazine

“Great job on the *EJ* redesign! I just picked up my copy.... Very professional design—kudos to all involved!”

■ Christine Manninen,
GLIN Webmaster,
Great Lakes
Commission

“Absolutely fabulous! I loved it! I was really impressed.”

■ Tracey Glazener,
reader

“I needed to read the Techno Kids article (*EJ*, Winter 2002) because lately I've been feeling tension and tingling in my wrists, but didn't know why. After going to the doctor, I found out I have tendinitis.”

■ Name withheld