In association with

LAO PDR

2009 Internship Program Outline

Nam Kading National Protected Area (NKNPA)
Bolikhamxay Province
Lao Peoples Democratic Republic (PDR)

Map source: http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/AC776E/ac776e06.htm
Background

The Lao P.D.R. is located in the heart of the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. It lies between latitude 14 to 23 degrees North and longitude 100 to 108 degrees East. It is the only Southeast Asian country without direct access to the sea, stretching North to South 1,700 kilometers. Laos encompasses a total of 236,800 square kilometers with the terrain characterized by three distinct regions - mountains, plateaus, and plains. The mountains and plateaus make up three-quarters of the total area. (www.tourismlaos.gov.la/laos-in-brief.htm)

The greatest conservation challenges in Lao PDR are the domestic and international wildlife trade and unsustainable hunting for subsistence consumption. Some of the country’s most charismatic species, such as tigers, are heavily targeted by poachers. Because their own prey has been depleted, the tigers sometimes resort to killing livestock, which leads to conflicts with rural communities. Loss of habitat poses an additional strain on remaining wildlife populations, and researchers are still working to understand the ecology and distribution of the animals facing the greatest threat. Therefore, the role of threatened species in the forest ecosystem and the impacts their loss could have on forest ecology are difficult to predict. Rice field expansion and poaching pose significant threats to many species and their habitats, especially because most wildlife populations are very small. (www.wcs.org/where-we-work/asia/lao-pdr.aspx)

Fast facts:

- Lao PDR harbors one of the largest remaining populations of Asian elephants in Indochina, primarily in the Nakai Plateau.
- Of the three subspecies of Eld’s deer occurring in Southeast Asia, one is found in Lao PDR and is listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List.
- The western black crested gibbon is one of the world’s rarest and most endangered gibbon species and is over-hunted for food.
- The Indochinese tiger is present throughout the forested areas of Lao PDR, although the populations are small.
- The Bolikhamsay Ecosystem and Wildlife Project works in ever-wet forests and limestone karst (a type of stone surface that can be part of forests, caves, and a wide range of other environments) that are home to many recent wildlife discoveries.

(www.wcs.org/where-we-work/asia/lao-pdr.aspx)
The 169,000ha Nam Kading National Protected Area (NKNPA), in Bolikhamxay Province, central Lao Peoples Democratic Republic (PDR) was declared in 1993. The NKNPA is now open to eco-tourists looking to see some of Lao PDRs most rugged and wild areas. Until June 2009 the area was off limits to tourists.

**Travel & Philanthropy:**

'All over the world, travelers and travel companies are giving financial resources, time, and talent to further the wellbeing of local communities. This emerging movement is helping to support and empower local and indigenous communities by providing jobs, skills, and lasting improvements in health care, education, and environmental stewardship'.

http://www.travelersphilanthropy.org/what-is-travelers/definition.shtml

**The concept:**

The NKNPA is managed by the Government of Lao with technical input from the Wildlife Conservation Society. As part of sustainable financing for the NKNPA, WCS and the GoL have built the Nam Kading Research and Training Centre (NKRTC) on the edge of the protected area. With the aims of:

- Educating Lao and Foreign visitors about the NKNPA
- Provide locations for Foreign and Local scientists to research the biodiversity of the NKNPA
- Providing conservation tourism based products to visitors

The centre is in the stages of being set up and will be run by local villages and the protected area to benefit both local populations and support funding for management of the biodiversity in the NKNPA.

**The Intern:**

The NKNPA is looking for motivated, self reliant, recent graduates with a background and interest in conservation and tourism, to assist in setting up this exciting new centre. The intern will work with local guides to set up educational treks into the NKNPA, set up trainings for villagers in management the NKRTC. Three hikes are being developed into the heart of the NKNPA.
The person we are looking for needs:

- Strong interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills, with an ability to listen and respond appropriately
- Ability to work in a team and contribute effectively
- Friendly, approachable and helpful nature
- Desire to help others learn new skills
- Ability to be flexible and adaptable
- Interest and/or experience in wildlife conservation
- Sufficient budget and interest to participate in a philanthropic travel project

The position is based at the centre on the banks of the Nam Kading River where comfortable but basic accommodation and meals are supplied. The centre has solar power and a generator for backup. There are shared bathing facilities but no hot water. Meals are generally simple and local: Rice, eggs, leafy vegetables and fresh fish from the Nam Kading River.

The centre is located around 3.5 hours from Vientiane (the capital of Lao PDR). The internship is for one person for 12 weeks or for 2 people for 6 weeks each concurrently, or for 3 people each doing 4 weeks concurrently. It is hoped to start in early September 2009. Start date and length of stay are negotiable. There is a minimum commitment of 1 month.

**Costs:**

The cost of 12 weeks is US$2700USD. For 6 weeks US$1800 or for 4 weeks US$900 per person. Longer stays are possible too.

This money is used to cover costs:
- Food at the NKRTC
- Orientation
- Pick up and drop off at Vientiane international Airport
- Fuel for travel on project activities
- Field support (contribution to field activity budget (porters and equipment in field)
- Lao National NKNPA staff time in working and supervising internship
The intern is expected to cover:

1. Travel to Vientiane international Airport
2. VISA in Lao
3. Travel/Health insurance
4. Personal expenses in country

The Program

An outline of a possible internship program is below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>In Paksane office/NKRTC reading documents and meeting staff get an overview of Project activities.</td>
<td>Successful early establishment of relationships, understanding of scarce resources and challenging operating environment and confirmation of commitment to project objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Centre (Eco-tourism)</td>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Work with tourism office to develop tourist information on NTFP’s wildlife and nature on the trails in the NKNPA</td>
<td>Tour brochure and point information and map with information on local uses of NTFP’s/Wildlife etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improvement of Trails facilities and appearance, cut trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Centre</td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Pilot Test treks with tourists and guides</td>
<td>Report on tourist satisfaction and recommendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A young Asian Elephant is captured on camera as it follows behind its mother in the Nam Kading National Protected Area. This evidence that elephants are still reproducing in the protected area is good news.

http://programs.wcs.org/laoswildlifephotoexhibition/en/06Ungulates.html
Training Centre  | Oct  | 7-11  | Investigate potential of New tourism product (Wild Shot Camera Trap Tours) Or Spend time learning about wildlife monitoring  | Report Market interest in Wild Shot Camera Trap Tours |

Paksane  | Nov  | 12  | Wrap up and debrief/evaluation  | Final report on internship program |

Interested individuals should send CV and cover letter to Chris Hallam, challam@wcs.org

Useful web sites:

Wildlife Conservation Society, Lao PDR
http://www.wcs.org/where-we-work/asia/lao-pdr.aspx

SAVE Travel Alliance
www.SAVE-travel.org

Lao National Tourism Administration

Laos - Integrated Ecosystem and Wildlife Management in Bolikhamxay Province
www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSServlet?pcont

Rare Planet, Lao PDR

Traveler’s Philanthropy http://www.travelersphilanthropy.org/
Lao PDR national laws allow rural communities to hunt a small number of Red Muntjac within their village-allocated area each year for subsistence but it is illegal to sell the meat to urban markets and restaurants. If you buy muntjac meat you are breaking the law and contributing to poverty by consuming meat that is important for food security in rural villages. [Nam Et-Phou Louey](http://programs.wcs.org/laoswildlifephotoexhibition/en/06Unqulates.html)

SAVE Travel Alliance is supported by:

[The Global Poverty Project](www.globalpovertyproject.com)
[www.pacificasiatourism.org](www.pacificasiatourism.org)
International development via sustainable tourism