



NEWS FROM THE MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE (NEPAL PROGRAM)

Advancing Mountain Cultures-Preserving Mountain Environment



Brian J. Peniston (Director Himal)

MESSAGE FROM TMI'S DIRECTOR

Autumn of 2009 has been a busy and productive time for The Mountain Institute's Asia Regional Office. Our work in mid West Nepal continues to keep us busy, distributing rice and building mountain enterprises. Programs in Eastern Nepal continue to move forward quickly, with the registration of newly formed trans-boundary conservation working groups. Our many other new developments are described below.

Namaste and Tashidelek,

Brian J. Peniston
Director (Himal Program)

TMI'S HOT NEWS

1. Welcome to Nepali Volunteers
2. Welcome to TMI Intern Molly Clark-Barol
3. Thank you to Peter Gill
4. WFP program extended to Upper Limi and Upper Dolpa
5. TMI Congratulate new Director General and Deputy Director General
6. Climate Change and Ecosystems in the Himalaya presentation at World Bank
7. NGO review workshop at TMI ARO
8. TMI is short listed for Development Market Place by World Bank
9. TMI India team visit Asia Regional Office
10. TMI possible partners with DZI foundation
11. Trans-boundary Conservation Working Group Formation in Ilam and Panchthar
12. Update on MAPs working in Dhading and Rasuwa Districts
13. Great Himalayan Trail Presentation at ICIMOD
14. News from Beyul Projects

NEWS FROM THE FIELD (TMI NEPAL PROGRAM)

1. WELCOME TO YOUNG NEPALI VOLUNTEERS

The Mountain Institute welcomes two young Nepalese Volunteers, Mr. Phurba Sherpa and Mr. Nabin Budhathoki. Both Mr. Sherpa and Mr. Budhathoki generously offered to volunteer at TMI after completing their Bachelors in Environmental Science from College of Applied Science, Kathmandu. They have been assigned in the field, based on their interest. Mr. Sherpa was assigned to the Mera Alpine Conservation and Restoration project and Mr. Budhathoki to Ilam and Panchthar to assist TMI's NTFP Officer Mr. Karma Bhutia and TMI's Gender Development Officer Ms. Sushila Thing in implementing the programs in Ilam and Panchthar. They are now consultants for their respective projects.



Nabin and Phurba (left-right)



Molly Clark-Barol at TMI Nepal Office

2. WELCOME TO TMI INTERN MS. MOLLY CLARK BAROL

TMI welcomes Ms. Molly Clark-Barol as an Intern. Ms Molly is TMI's new Princeton in Asia fellow. Princeton in Asia places recent college graduates in countries across Asia in the fields of teaching, development, journalism, and business. Molly has a BA in Anthropology and Political Science, and she will be working on TMI's project, "Biodiversity, Markets and Enterprises in the Kanchenjunga Region of Nepal." TMI has the great pleasure to have Ms. Molly as an Intern, and we hope her time with TMI will be beneficial to both her and TMI.

3. THANK YOU TO PETER GILL

TMI would like to thank Mr. Peter Gill who has served as intern for several years in TMI's Nepal Office. Mr. Gill was responsible for assisting with TMI's MAPs project in the east.

Mr. Gill has helped the MAPs team to develop our MAPs Cultivation Manual, and researched and prepared the report "Market of Medicinal Plants of Eastern Nepal", a summary of Karma's 10 years of progress with the MAPs program in the east. We wish him all the best for his study at University of Washington in the US. He did help the MAPs team to develop MAPs Cultivation Manual, explored and prepared Market of Medicinal Plants of eastern Nepal, write up of Karma's 10 years achievement of MAPs programs in the east. We wish him all the best for his study at University of Washington in the US.



Peter Gill during his field work in Ilam 2007

NEWS FROM THE FIELD (TMI NEPAL PROGRAM)

4. WFP PROGRAMS EXTENDED TO UPPER LIMIT OF HUMLA AND UPPER DOLPA



Upper Limi valley in Humla

TMI and WFP have finalized plans to extend our programming to the upper limit of Humla District. 3 VDCs with a population of 3253 people from 581 households will benefit this program. For this, WFP has agreed to support the distribution of 92.96 MT of rice and 11.62 MT of lentils to those in need in the area. TMI will construct 4 KM of road to fulfill this task. In order



People of Upper Dolpa

to complete the task on time, TMI will be working with Himalayan Conservation and Development Association (HCDA) for a period of three months. Likewise, TMI and WFP are planning to work with the Dolpa Institute (DI) in Upper Dolpa. For this, WFP will provide 128.48 MT of rice and 16.06 MT of lentils to 6 VDCs with a population of 5576 from 1606 households will directly benefited from this programs. The people of Dolpa continue a lifestyle unchanged for centuries, subsisting by trading their barley for rock salt from Tibet and for rice from the south. These traders cross some of the highest passes on the earth during their trading trips.

5. TMI CONGRATULATES NEWLY APPOINTED DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

TMI's Director (Himal Program) and Senior Program Manager congratulate the newly appointed Director and Deputy General of Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. The team was briefed on TMI's programming in protected areas of Nepal, such as the Mera Alpine Conservation and Restoration project and the promotion of conservation and livelihoods improvement in and around Rara National Park and Buffer Zone. Both the Director General and Deputy Director General express their gratitude to TMI's members for the congratulations, and they have shown keen interest in working together in the near future.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ECOSYSTEMS IN THE HIMALAYA AT THE WORLD BANK

TMI's Director has been asked to give a presentation at the World Bank's conference, "Climate Change and Ecosystems in the Himalaya." The presentation will address climate change in all of TMI's project regions, including Western Nepal, with emphasis on glacier lake outburst, utilizing using a series of photographs collected by Dr. Alton Byers over several years in the Everest region.



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7. NGO REVIEW AND PLANNING WORKSHOP AT TMI ARO

TMI invited two NGO partners, SHAGG and Deep Joyti, of Ilam and Panchthar to Kathmandu to review and plan for the coming year. Both NGO partners gave an over all program assessment to TMI Regional Office staff. During their time here in Kathmandu, both NGO partners worked hard in order to prepare a work plan for the coming year. As a result, plans have been made for work with both partners and they have returned to their respective VDCs to implement the programs.



NGO partners here at TMI Office in Kathmandu

8. TMI IS SHORT LISTED FOR DEVELOPMENT MARKETPLACE BY WORLD BANK

TMI's proposal was selected as a finalist for the 2009 Global Development Marketplace (DM2009). Only 100 of the 1,755 proposals submitted for this year's competition were selected as finalists following a highly competitive and rigorous assessment process involving nearly 200 assessors.

A full list of the finalists can be found on our website at www.developmentmarketplace.org. To continue participation in the competition, finalists are required to submit a more detailed full proposal package by September 17. A distinguished jury comprised of our partners and other leaders in the international development community will select the competition winners based on these full proposals.

As a member of a finalist organization, you are invited to attend the Marketplace event in Washington, D.C. scheduled for November 10-13, 2009 where the World Bank expects to award funding to 20-25 winning proposals.

9. TMI INDIA TEAM VISITS ASIAN REGIONAL OFFICE

TMI's India team visited the Asia Regional Office from 10th August to 12th August 2009. We met the new Director of TMI India Programs, Dr Ghanashyam Sharma, who worked with Nandita Jain many years ago on the Sikkim Biodiversity and Enterprise Project. They presented their impressive program progress to the TMI Nepal Office and we developed joint work plans for the coming 12 months. We are looking forward to a very good year together as we foster closer coordination on projects.



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10. TMI POSSIBLE PARTNER WITH DZI FOUNDATION

The Mountain Institute has been providing technical support to the DZI Foundation, which is conducting feasibility studies of a MAPs cultivation program in Khotang district, east of Solukhumbu. DZI Foundation members have just completed their first feasibility study in Ilam and Panchthar where they observed and interviewed as many user groups and individual farmers as possible. They are interested in implementing MAPs cultivation program in Khotang district, given interest from the local people.

11. KANCHENJUNGA-SINGALILA TRANS-BOUNDARY CONSERVATION GROUP FORMATION AND REGISTRATION

TMI staffers Ms. Sushila Thing and Mr. Nabin Raja Budhathoki visited Ilam & Panchthar from 24th August to 26th August 2009 to conduct VDC- level trans-boundary workshops (2 in Panchthar-Chyangthapu & Prangbung and 1 in Ilam-Jaubari) and one trans-boundary working group formation workshop (in Ilam headquarters). In the VDC-level workshops, trans-border conservation issues were prioritized and their solutions were investigated and collected at the local level. During the working group formation workshop held on 24th August in Ilam, locals selected from Ilam, Panchthar & Taplejung gathered to formulate a common agenda on trans-border conservation issues to be raised at the national level through district and regional level workshops to be conducted in the near future. During the workshop, a working committee was also selected for the legal registration of the Trans-boundary Working Group.



Trans-boundary Group Formation Workshop

12. UPDATE ON MAPs WORKING IN DHADING AND RASUWA DISTRICTS

As part of TMI's MAPs conservation and livelihood programs in the eastern Nepal, TMI also helped local farmers from Dhading and Rasuwa to introduce MAPs cultivation into private and community forest areas. Starting in 2007, TMI trained a few model farmers from Dhading District, bringing them for on the job training to some of our Rasuwa project sites. Following training, the Dhading farmers have established several nurseries that are flourishing, and the original six farmers are beginning to get yields from their fields. More farmers are requesting training as trust is established.

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13. GREAT HIMALAYAN TRAILS PRESENTATION AT ICIMOD

ICIMOD and ECO-HIMAL have organized a two-day Great Himalayan Trails Conference at the ICIMOD complex. The conference aims to bring together the different stakeholders involved in Great Himalayan Trail projects to discuss the status and progress of the different initiatives as well as how these initiatives can be linked and the collaboration between the different institutions strengthened. This conference was scheduled for 1&2 September 2009 but has been postponed until further notice. At the conference, TMI will present case studies of community-based tourism from Makalu-Barun, the Salpa-Arun Conservation Program, the Langtang Ecotourism Project, and the Sacred Sites and Khumbu Alpine Conservation and Restoration Programs from Khumbu and Mera regions.

14. NEWS FROM BEYUL PROJECT

The Mountain Institute (TMI) with financial support from Ford Foundation has been implementing the Building Livelihoods along Beyul Trails Project in Sagarmatha National Park and Buffer Zone in the Khumbu and Pharak in the northern part of Solukhumbu District. The objective of the project is to improve livelihoods, conserve local culture and environment.

The project aims to conserve local culture particularly preservation of the vanishing language; sustainable income generation from tourism industry; and improving people's attitude towards environmental protection through awareness and understanding.

The staff members of the Beyul Project along with a consulting trainer and partner staff spent a month in the Sagarmatha National Park (July 3-August 2). During this period the staff worked intensively with various local partners to implement a number of very important joint initiatives. The activities accomplished were:

1. HOME STAY

Training: Successful completion of 8 days training for 21 members of the Homestay Groups from three villages of Sewongma, Thamo and Thameteng Villages of Sagarmatha National Park. This was only training workshop held in the area entirely in local language and have been extremely productive.

After the training the Yulki Drontshogs or Village Hospitality Groups were formed in Thameteng and Sewongma villages and formalized by developing memberships, rules for operation and management organizations.



Participants during Homestay Training

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2. HOMESTAY OPERATION:

Completion of 6 days hands on experiential learning of Homestay Operations by five Homestay operators belonging to Homestay Group (Thameteng Yulki Drontshog) by hosting Portland State University Study Group (Geography of Sustainability) organized by Professor Barbara Brower. We thank the PSU group for making an important contribution towards development of a sustainable tourism model. TMI project team also supported the PSU group in providing information, organizing field and community activities and interpreting the local environment. The first step toward initiating Homestay program was to hold a village wide consultation meeting to inform and seek support of the entire village. This was held at Thameteng Village on 16 July 2009. During the meeting, issues such as village infrastructure (water, access trails, sanitation) improvement and development were discussed. This meeting was called in collaboration with the Multi-purpose Mountain Center and received widespread support for all of the ideas discussed. These improvements were deemed essential particularly in light of managing village home-stays in future.

3. HANDICRAFT WORKSHOP:

Completion of a 9 days production workshop of Yak Handicraft Group in Thameteng Village during which the group refined their skills and produced additional yak wool based handicrafts.



4. GONPA PROJECT MEETINGS:

During the field visit, meetings were also held with Thame Gonpa Committee, Kyarok Gonpa Committee and Namche Gonpa Committee to advance the collaborative projects with TMI. These included fund raising program for Thame Gonpa, completion of the Kyarok Gonpa facility improvement, and Namche display and information center development.



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