

Ecotourism in Uttarakhand: Responding to Environmental and Social Change (3rd- 5th March, 2016)

The University of Montana UMT) in collaboration with the C2C organised a "Workshop on Ecotourism in Uttarakhand: Responding to Environmental and Social Changes" at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India from 3rd to 5th March, 2016. The aim of the workshop was to assess the needs for ecotourism development in Uttarakhand in the context of rapid environmental and social changes occurring in the State and initiate a process for the development of a long term road map for ecotourism development in Uttarakhand. The workshop was led by Dr Keith Bosak and Dr Jennifer Thomsen, Associate Professors, College of Forestry and Conservation, University of Montana, USA. Dr. Bosak, who has been working in Uttarakhand in ecotourism development and protected areas research since 2001, 52 participants who attended the programme included representatives from the Uttarakhand Forest/Tourism/, International Fund for Agricultural Development (EXPAND) Project Departments, NGOs, community-based organizations, ecotourism entrepreneurs, university research scholars, UNDP, FRI and WII. The Honourable Minister, Forest and Wildlife, Government of Uttarakhand Mr. Dinesh Agarwal was the Chief Guest at the Inaugural Session of the Workshop. Key sessions of the workshop included experience sharing on ecotourism in Uttarakhand by government, civil society and researcher participants. Other technical sessions were designed to: 1) understand why ecotourism is being pursued, 2) identify benefits and challenges to ecotourism in the region, and 3) what is needed to successfully manage ecotourism in the future. Various methods such as lecture-demonstrations and participatory group activity were used for conducting the workshop. Major outcome of the workshop was development of awareness and understanding among ecotourism stakeholders in Uttarakhand. To build on the efforts of the workshop, an International Ecotourism Conference is being planned for October-November , 2016 in Dehradun, Uttarakhand to highlight various approaches being