

25th July 2010

Announcement of 'Familiarization Trips' to Humla and Dolpa



SNV and the Great Himalaya Trail Development Project are pleased to announce that under the GHT Pilot Project, familiarization trips (fam trips) for journalists and tour operators are being organized to both Humla and Dolpa in West Nepal.

About the Great Himalaya Trail

The Great Himalaya Trail (GHT) is a new and challenging, long distance footpath through some of the most breathtaking mountain landscapes on earth. It is made up of a network of existing trails and trade routes connecting neglected valleys and ridges between the already popular trekking areas. A major objective of the Great Himalaya Trail concept is to bring tourism benefits and improve livelihoods for poor communities in remote mountain regions.

About Humla and Dolpa

Humla and Dolpa are two fascinating areas in West Nepal. Visitors come into contact with intact Tibetan Buddhist and Bonpo culture, pass through incredible landscapes, from verdant valleys to desert like landscapes and have the chance to see rare wildlife including the snow leopard. Humla is famous as a gateway to Mount Kailash, but has much to offer in itself, like the beautiful, untouched Limi Valley.

Life is difficult in these areas with climate changing, the ancient salt trade in terminal decline and more and more people are leaving to find the economic opportunities that don't exist locally. One obvious way to bring economic opportunities into the areas is through tourism. But it should be *responsible* tourism, where tour operators and tourists alike understand the role they are able to play in making this happen: by sourcing products and services locally where possible, by actively engaging and encouraging improvement, and by being environmentally and culturally sensitive.

Trip objectives

The GHT development programme has been running an extensive training programme for local people to increase their capacity to provide tourism services so that local people can reap economic benefits. Additionally the GHT development programme is carrying out marketing activities to increase awareness of the destinations and ultimately the number of visitors to them.

The objectives of the fam-trip are thus:

- To bring journalists to write about their experience of the areas for an (inter)national audience and raise awareness of the destinations;
- To bring local tour operators to familiarise them with the increased and improved local services available so that future trips they run will bring more benefit to local people;
- To bring international tour operators to familiarise them with potential products for their portfolio;
- Last but not least, to bring groups to give the newly trained local service providers some hands on experience and valuable feedback from experienced tourism professionals.



The trips

Below you can see the proposed programs. We will make use of locally provided services as much as possible, which in Dolpa and Humla are basic but authentic. All treks involve quite strenuous trekking, with some steep climbs. During the long programs high passes of around 5000 m will be crossed so participants will need to be fit. The scenery on the way, the views from the passes and the encounters you will have with the Dolpa and Humli people will make it a very worthwhile experience indeed.

	Region	Trek name	Nr of days	Anticipated start date
1	Dolpa	Phoksundo Lake	8	2 nd Sept.
2	Dolpa	Dolpa Circuit, to Dho Tarap, and via Numa La and Baga La to Phoksundo Lake	13	2 nd Sept.
3	Humla	Yalbang	7	13 th Sept.
4	Humla	Limi Valley	15	13 th Sept.

Who is eligible

We are looking for:

- Outbound tour operators who are serious about adding Humla and Dolpa to their portfolio
- Inbound tour operators planning to run trips to Humla and Dolpa or looking to learn more about the local products and services available
- International journalists / photojournalists associated with high circulation publications among the target audience of 'responsible travellers'.
- Local journalists / photojournalists from national media houses

During the trip, we expect participants to share their feedback and ideas to the local product and service providers on how to improve their businesses.

We will support tour operators and journalists post-trip with marketing materials and photographs where possible.

Because of budget restrictions, offers of cost-sharing (for example willingness to pay for the flights) will be welcomed and those applicants prioritised. International flights will be at own cost.

Interested tour operators and journalists are invited to send an email to nepal@snvworld.org. Please mention in detail your reasons for your interest, your role within your organisation (or that of the representative you are proposing), and state in which program you are interested. Please mention in the subject line: *Fam visit Dolpa/Humla- FAO Linda Bezemer*.

If you are a Nepalese tour operator, we would like to suggest to inform the overseas tour operators you are working with about the Fam-trip as well.

If you are a journalist, please mention which publication or media organisation you work for. We will contact you as soon as possible upon receipt of your email.

Please contact us **before 4th of August**.



Itineraries

FAM-Trips to Dolpa

Short program to Phoksundo Lake

Day	Date	Program
Day 1	2-sep	Flight Kathmandu-Nepalgunj
Day 2	3-sep	Flight Nepalgunj-Juphal (2475 m), walk to Dunai (2140 m) 3 hrs. Availability to talk to local agents in Juphal and Dunai. In Dunai visit to Dolpa Kendriya Gompa and Dolpo Bon School and Hostel
Day 3	4-sep	Trek to Chhepka (2838 m) 5 hrs
Day 4	5-sep	Trek to Amchi Hospital/Chunuwar (3110 m) 6 hrs
Day 5	6-sep	Trek to Ringmo/Phoksundo Lake (3733 m) 3 hrs, visit village of Ringmo and Bonpo Monastery.
Day 6	7-sep	Trek to Sangta (2520 m) 6 hrs
Day 7	8-sep	Trek to Juphal (2476 m) 5 hrs
Day 8	9-sep	Flight Simikot-Nepalgunj-Kathmandu

Detailed information about this trek you can find at:

<http://www.thegreathimalayatrail.org/1106/phoksundo-lake-trek/>

Long program Dolpa Circuit, to Dho Tarap, and via Numa La and Baga La to Phoksundo Lake

Day 1	2-sep	Flight Kathmandu-Nepalgunj
Day 2	3-sep	Flight Nepalgunj-Juphal (2475 m), walk to Dunai (2140 m) 3 hrs
Day 3	4-sep	Trek to Lingdo (2391 m) 5 hrs
Day 4	5-sep	Trek to Laina Odar (3370 m) 6 hrs
Day 5	6-sep	Trek to Sisaul (3750 m) via Nawarpani (3475 m) 7 hrs
Day 6	7-sep	Trek to Dho Tarap (4080 m) 4 hrs, visit Ribo Bhumpa Gompa and Shipchaur (Bonpo) Gompa
Day 7	8-sep	Trek to Numa La Base Camp (4440 m) 3 ½ hrs
Day 8	9-sep	Trek to Danigar (4631 m) via Numa La (Pass) (5318 m) 6 hrs
Day 9	10-sep	Trek to Yak Kharka (3982 m) via Baga La (5190 m) 6 hrs
Day 10	11-sep	Trek to Ringmo/Phoksundo Lake (3733 m) 2 ½ hrs, visit village of Ringmo and Bonpo Monastery.
Day 11	12-sep	to Chhepka (2838 m) via Rechi (2940 m) 7 hrs
Day 12	13-sep	to Juphal (2475 m) 6 hrs
Day 13	14-sep	Flight Juphal-Nepalgunj-Kathmandu

Detailed information about this trek you can find at:

<http://www.thegreathimalayatrail.org/1102/the-dolpa-circuit/>



FAM-Trips to Humla

Short program up to Yalbang

Day	Date	Program
Day 1	13-sep	Flight Kathmandu-Nepalgunj
Day 2	14-sep	Flight Nepalgunj-Simikot (2950 m), walk to Dharapuri (2300 m) 4 hrs
Day 3	15-sep	Trek to Kermi (2670 m) 3 hrs, in afternoon visit to hotspots
Day 4	16-sep	Trek to Yalbang (3020 m) 5 hrs, in afternoon visit Namkha Khyung Dzong Monastery and school
Day 5	17-sep	Trek to Kermi (2670 m) 5 hrs, in afternoon visit to Laikyo Gompa and Lhundrup Choeling Gompa
Day 6	18-sep	Trek to Simkot (2950 m) 7 hrs, in afternoon opportunity to talk with local agents
Day 7	19-sep	Flight Simikot-Nepalgunj-Kathmandu

Detailed information about this trek you can find at:

<http://www.thegreathimalayatrail.org/1119/humla-nepal-ght-limi-valley-trek-itinerary/>

Long program to Limi Valley

Day 1	13-sep	Fly to Nepalgunj
Day 2	14-sep	Flight Nepalgunj-Simikot (2950 m), walk to Dharapuri (2300 m) 4 hrs
Day 3	15-sep	Trek to Kermi (2670 m) 3 hrs, in afternoon visit to hotspots
Day 4	16-sep	Trek to Yalbang (3020 m) 5 hrs, in afternoon visit Namkha Khyung Dzong Monastery and school
Day 5	17-sep	Trek to Tumkot (3380 m) 5 hrs, in afternoon visit to Dhungkar Choezom Monastery
Day 6	18-sep	To Yari (3700m) 5 hrs
Day 7	19-sep	Trek to Hilsa (3720 m) via Nara La (4620 m) 6 hrs
Day 8	20-sep	To Manepeme (3990 m) 5 hrs
Day 9	21-sep	Trek to Til, one of the villages in the Limi Valley (4000 m) 6 hrs
Day 10	22-sep	Trek to Jang (3930 m), via Halji (3660 m) in Limi Valley 7 hrs, in Halji visit to Rinchenling Gompa
Day 11	23-sep	To Talung (4370 m) 8 hrs
Day 12	24-sep	Trek to Shinjungma (3620 m) via Nyalu La (4949 m) 8 hrs
Day 13	25-sep	To Kermi (2670 m) 7 hrs
Day 14	26-sep	Trek to Simikot (2950 m) 6 hrs
Day 15	27-sep	Fly to Nepalgunj-Kathmandu

Detailed information about this trek you can find at:

<http://www.thegreathimalayatrail.org/1119/humla-nepal-ght-limi-valley-trek-itinerary/>