



Conference on Ecotourism in Armenia

Saturday, April 2, 2016

American University of Armenia

Purpose: To accelerate development of ecotourism in Armenia by creating a platform for exchange of ideas and experiences as well as creating a network of stakeholders.

Agenda

10:00 – 10:55 Registration and Exhibition Hall

11:00-11:55 General Session 1: What is the big idea? (Arm/Eng sim. translation), Manoogian Hall, 1st floor

- 11:00 – 11:05 Welcoming Remarks -- Randall Rhodes, AUA Provost
- 11:05 – 11:15 Purpose of Conference -- Alen Amirkhanyan, AUA Acopian Center for the Environment
- 11:15 – 11:25 Sergey Avetisyan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy
- 11:25 – 11:35 Khachik Hakobyan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Nature Protection
- 11:35 – 11:50 Nora Mirzoyan, World Bank
- 11:50 – 11:55 Instructions -- Tatevik Vardanyan and Oscar Alvarado, AUA Acopian Center for the Environment

12:00-13:30 Morning Concurrent Sessions

Session 1 – Food and Agro Tourism (Arm/Eng sim. translation), Manoogian Hall, 1st floor

Food is an integral part of a tourist's experience. Ecotourists, in particular, have high expectations on their nutritional and personal care products. They also want to experience food and herbal harvesting and preparation.

Speakers

- Nune Manukyan, Areni Wine Festival
- Artur Gazaryan, Kapan
- Nune Darbinyan, EcoGlobe
- Ara Markosian, Nairian
- Moderator: Vardan Urutyan, International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education

Session 2 – Wildlife-based Tourism (Armenian only), Room 113W, 1st floor

Preserving and protecting wildlife and nature while promoting environmental assets as tourism attractions.

Speakers

- Sargis Aghayan, Young Biologists Association, Zaritap-Gomk-Martiros Ecotourism Trail
- Tsovinar Hovhanisyan, Armenian Society for Protection of Birds
- Tamar Galstyan, Plants of Armenia
- Levon Galstyan, Citizen Forest Monitoring and Pan-Armenian Environmental Front
- Hayk Melik-Adamyanyan, Non-living Natural Monuments Expert
- Moderator: Victoria Burnazyan, Ecolur NGO

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Session 3 – Adventure Tourism (Armenian only), Room 114W, 1st floor

Best practices for adventure activities in Armenia (i.e. respecting nature, safety guidelines, engagement with local communities)

Speakers

Arman Antonyan, Federation of Amateur Cycling and Cycle Tourism
Mkhitar Mkhitaryan, Armenian Alpine Club
Armen Sargsyan, Paragliding in Armenia
Arpine Hakobyan, NGO Center – EU Project for Cycling Tourism
Moderator: Vardan Gareyan, GavarTour

Session 4 – Paleo/Cultural-Tourism (Armenian only), Room 308E, 3rd floor

Promoting and respecting cultural and historical assets as drivers of tourism (i.e. archaeological sites, naturally sourced textiles or carpets, and handmade arts & crafts)

Speakers

Boris Gasparyan, RA NAS Institute of Archeology and Ethnography
Robert Ghuksyan, Timeland Foundation
Davit Simonyan, Areni Wine Art B&B in Areni, ARDI project/USAID/Fuller House & Heifer Armenia
Tatev Muradyan, Silk Road Hotel
Moderator: Hamazasp Danielyan, Smithsonian Institute

13:30-14:30 Lunch & Networking

14:30 – 15:30 General Session 2: Making it work (Arm/Eng simultaneous translation), Manoogian Hall, 1st floor

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| 14:00 – 14:20 | Karen Manvelyan, WWF, Protected areas and nature-based tourism in Armenia
Karen Karapetyan, TJS, Transboundary Joint Secretariat for the Southern Caucasus |
| 14:20 – 14:35 | Ramaz Gokhelasvili, KFW/MNP Support Programme for Protected Areas Armenia |
| 14:35 – 14:45 | Varazdat Karapetyan, Regional Development Fund |
| 14:45 – 14:55 | Zhanna Galyan, Ecotourism Association of Armenia |

15:30-17:00 Afternoon Concurrent Sessions

Session 5 – Hiking Trails, Maps, and Guidebooks (Arm/Eng simultaneous translation), Manoogian Hall, 1st floor. *Discuss current initiatives to mark and map a comprehensive network of hiking trails in Armenia and to share international best practices, standards and norms*

Speakers

Gevorg Gasparyan, Arevi Tours
Raffi Kojian, Janapar Trail
Tom Allen & Alessandro Mambelli, Trans Armenia Trail
Anahit Galstyan, One Armenia
Moderator: Aram Keryan, American University of Armenia

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Session 6 – Tourist Expectations (Armenian only), Room 113W, 1st floor

What are the basic amenities, facilities and standards that international tourists expect when traveling. How can Armenian business meet these standards while remaining authentic to their surroundings?

Speakers

Vahagn Vardumyan, Sun Child Eco Tours

Hasmik Aslanyan-Azoyan, Basen Hotel in Sissian, Heifer Armenia/Development Principles NGO

Armen Kazaryan/Siranush Vardanyan, ARK Armenia

Anahit Ghazanchyan, Heifer Armenia/Development Principles NGO

Moderator: Antoine Terjanian, Yeghenadzor B&B Network

Session 7 – Setting up an ecotourism business (Armenian only), Room 114W, 1st floor

What should be taken into account when starting an ecotourism business? What are the steps to ensure financial stability and how can businesses include the greater community in the value chain.

Speakers

Anahit Badalian, Berd Women's Resource Center

Tigran Chibukhchyan, Apaga Resort

Argishti Mikayelyan, Agrotourism, Camping, B&B, Greens' Union of Armenia – Vayk, Vayots Dzor

Yura Sargsyan, Chef and B&B owner in Tsaghkunk Village, Heifer Armenia/Development Principles NGO

Moderator: Sevak Hovhannisyanyan, EV Consulting

Session 8 – Collaboration (Armenian only), Room 308E, 3rd floor

How can the country as a whole, market all the different ecotourism activities being offered in Armenia? How do we connect each other and create a network that will benefit everyone?

Speakers

Karine Davoyan, Union of Incoming Tour Operators

Vladimir Grigoryan, Armenia Adventure Travel Association

Razmik Sargsyan, Young Biologists Association

Aram Tarakhchyan, ApricotPlus – Bjni UNDP Pilot Project

Moderator: Armine Israelyan, IDEa Foundation

17:00-17:30 General Session 3: Carrying it forward (Arm/Eng simultaneous translation) Manoogian Hall, 1st floor

17:00 – 17:10 Gayane Ghandilyan, Digital Pomegranate

17:10 – 17:20 Vazgen Galstyan, Jermuk Development Center NGO - Ecotourism Festival

17:20 – 17:30 Alen Amirkhanyan, Closing Remarks/Lessons Learned/Next Steps

17:30 – 18:00 Networking in the Exhibition Hall