**Nepal Hill Country Field Trip**

**October 18-26, 2019**

Experience the verdant scenery and village life of Nepal's hill country – traditional houses, mountain trails, terraced cultivation of rice, corn and millet, footbridges across rivers, water buffalo milk, temple ceremonies, traditional dancing, and more. Four nights homestay (at a rural school) with daily touring. Also birds, butterflies, etc. en route. Sightseeing in unforgettable Kathmandu to start. Return via upper Sunkosi River, visiting a Buddhist monastery plus October's clear views of the high Himalaya.

We will be traveling in Kathmandu Valley and the upper Sunkosi River area, north and east of Kathmandu, at elevations of 500-2500m (2500-8000 ft). Our week-long visit will include a mix of touring by vehicle, cultural interaction, optional nature hikes and natural history observation, plus a full-day introduction to the color and chaos of Kathmandu. In the hill country of Ramechhap District, our host will be Narayan Karki, a former Dubai Natural History Group member known for his energy and enthusiasm, and the founder of GN English Boarding School. Narayan is a wealth of knowledge about village life and customs.

Limit 8-12 participants. Land cost est'd AED 5000, airfare est'd AED 1650-2100 (from Dubai or Sharjah) and Nepal visa AED 150. Sign-up and AED 2500 deposit required by August 15. For more information, contact Gary Feulner: grfeulner@gmail.com or 04-306-5570.

Detailed itinerary is as follows:

**Day 1 (Fri, Oct 18): Fly to Kathmandu (KTM)**

Fly to KTM from UAE (Dubai, Sharjah or Abu Dhabi) (4.5 hours). Arrive KTM late afternoon. Welcome and briefing at dinner. Overnight at 3-star hotel in KTM.

**Day 2 (Sat, Oct 19): Sightseeing in Kathmandu**

Visit Pashupati Temple complex, Bodha stupa and Patan Durbar Square, three of the most exotic & well-known sites in Kathmandu. Overnight at 3-star hotel in KTM.

**Day 3 (Sun, Oct 20): Overland to Makadum village**

Drive east to Ramechhap District by reserved 4WD (Tata Sumo). Proceed via the transit hub of Banepa and university city of Dhulikhel (2500m). Then descend via scenic Roshi Creek and along the Sunkosi and Tamakosi Rivers. Lunch at Manthali (500m), the district capital (4 hours by paved road), then cross the Tamakosi and drive up the mountain road to Makadum (1450m) (1.5 hours). Overnight at private school in Makadum. Evening cultural program.

**Day 4 (Mon, Oct 21): Touring to Khandadevi temple and Sunkosi River**

Uphill by Tata Sumo to Khandadevi Temple (2000m) via local settlements and farmsteads. Offerings and sacrifices are conducted at the temple on a regular basis. Descend to Sitkha and Rakathum along the Sunkosi (500m). Lunch at Lubu. Return downstream to Sitkha by river boat, then drive uphill from Sitkha to Makadum. Overnight at private school in Makadum. Evening cultural program.

**Day 5 (Tues, Oct 22): Makadum village life**

Introduction to village life in Makadum and surrounding villages, including houses, agriculture, care of domestic animals etc. Travel by Tata Sumo. Overnight at private school in Makadum. Evening cultural program.

**Day 6 (Wed, Oct 23): Touring to Baudhure and Pinkhuri villages**

Drive by Tata Sumo, down and up to the villages of Baudhure and Pinkhuri, across the valley of Bathauli Creek from Makadum. Ascend to Thanatati Mahadeb peak for views. Lunch at Baudhure. Return for last overnight at private school in Makadum.

**Day 7 (Thu, Oct 24): Makadum to Charikot via Agleswor and Tamakosi River**

Depart early by Tata Sumo on the mountain road to Agleswor peak, via the village of Galpa. Break for a short mid-morning hike to Tiger Rock and/or uphill to Agleswor Peak (2400m) for views of the snow-capped Himalaya (October weather is usually favorable). Continue downhill on mountain roads to the Tamakosi River, then north along the river by paved roads and up to Charikot (2500m), again with (usually) good views of the snow-capped peaks. Lunch at a restaurant along the Tamakosi. Overnight at 2-star hotel in Charikot. [*NB: The hike to Agleswor is a gentle 200m ascent from the road, but the trail is unimproved. The summit is a grassy knoll.*]

**Day 8 (Fri, Oct 25): Charikot to Dolalghat to Kathmandu**

Descend to the upper Sunkosi River at Khadichaur. This area suffered heavy damage from the 2015 earthquakes. Return down the Sunkosi on the Araniko Highway, crossing at Dolalghat (for lunch and bazaar) and continuing on to Kathmandu via Dhulikhel, with an afternoon stop at the hilltop Namabuddha Monastery. Overnight at 3-star hotel in Kathmandu.

**Day 9 (Sat, Oct 26): Return flight to Dubai**

Morning relaxing, touring or shopping in KTM. Return to Dubai by air. Late afternoon or early evening departure from KTM. Arrive Dubai mid to late evening.

*Important Note: This itinerary represents a customized trip intended for DNHG/ENHG members. The greater Makadum area is part of what has been designated as the Indigenous Peoples Trail, but regular commercial tourism has yet to commence there and standard tourist facilities do not currently exist. Electricity is now generally available in this area but internet access cannot be guaranteed.*

*Accommodation in Makadum will be bedframe, mattress and blankets in private school buildings. Washrooms and toilets have cold running water only. Meals in cities and on the road will be in restaurants. Meals in Makadum and villages will be prepared by a dedicated cook. Local dishes will be featured – dal bhat (rice and lentils) is the staple – but we will try to have international alternatives available, and snacks for those in need of "comfort food". Drinking water will be bottled or boiled.*

*Road transportation will be by minibus within Kathmandu and reserved Tata Sumo vehicles (large Jeep-like vehicles) elsewhere. Travel to and from the Makadum area will be mostly on paved roads. Roads within the Makadum area are unpaved and can be rough, making travel slower and less comfortable.*