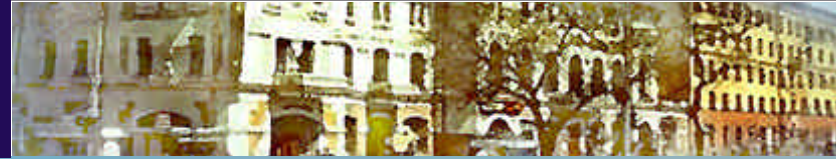


ECOTOURISM GROWS IN RUSSIAN FAR EAST



Funding: U.S. Agency for International Development

Kamchatka, in the Russian Far East, is a remote peninsula known for volcanoes, mineral springs, and picturesque settings. Word of this enchanting destination is spreading and ecotourism in the region is exploding.

In January 2000 a local company, Yelizovo Tour Service, asked Winrock's Entrepreneurial Business Service Program for assistance in expanding its business. The volunteer program responded by sending Gary Cook, an ecotourism

specialist from Earth Island Institute. His experience in ecotour planning and management was important for making recommendations to improve service and programs.

Cook arranged for Yelizovo Tour Service Director Elena Yarovaya to participate in a two-week training tour in California sponsored by the Pacific Environmental Research

Center. She was part of a six-person Russian delegation that participated in an exchange program on ecotourism and sustainable tourism.

The team took part in several overnight eco-tours where professional guides demonstrated the ecotourism philosophy, "Leave No Traces." Elena Yarovaya returned with plenty of new ideas and a better understanding of what travelers want and need.

Yelizovo Tour Service now is attracting and serving a growing number of groups from around the world. It has developed a network of home-stay hosts for tourists, and is promoting its tour packages through international magazines. Elena Yarovaya used the California trip to forge contacts with other members of the Russian delegation. They are staying in touch and planning to develop joint tours.

Winrock's Volunteer Technical Assistance program assists farms, businesses and organizations around the world by introducing manufacturing and processing technologies, improving marketing, and building business management skills.