



# Great Baikal Trail

*A non-profit organization*

## In this edition:

Guest lesson in Tanhoj, 2010	2
How to get a 'flying' internship at GBT	4
Mind-Opening Translation	4
First impressions	5
Resources of the Irkutsk Botanical Garden for Work with Non-Commercial Organizations	6
GBT Strategic Management	8
From a volunteer to...	8
Ecological English or how it all began...	9
To see Baikal for the first time	10
Wild west	12
On the other side of the world...	14
TBI's Summer Environmental Exchange Program	16
Rotary - GBT 2009	17
G Generalized final report	18

## Newsletter №11



**The Great Baikal Trail—  
building the first system  
of trails in Russia**

## Guest lesson in Tanhoj, 2010

From February 3rd till February 4th, 2010 a traditional annual guest lesson was held at a boarding school on the Tanhoj settlement (Buryatiya republic). The purpose of the lesson was to educate the students about ecology by playing cheerful games. Joy Barney, an expert from the American Federal Wood Agency, held a three-day seminar on the theme "Ecological Formation: Interaction and Training Questions" for GBT volunteers. As a result of Joy's seminar, we held the guest lesson in Tanhoj and a number of other schools in the Irkutsk region.

Our travel began on February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 in the morning. A group of 14 people left the GBT office and traveled in two minibuses to the Tanhoj settlement where Joy was waiting for us. Upon arrival we stayed at the visit-centre, which

was comfortable enough but a little bit chilly. After settling in and preparing for the lesson, we went to the school. There, we were warmly welcomed, and we appreciated the fact that the school was prepared for our arrival. We were invited into the assembly hall with the children from the primary school and we presented ourselves, talked about GBT, and played a few



games. Children from Vydrino settlement also visited the boarding school. They had prepared a sketch for Joy in English about a spider looking for friends. The children were delighted that it was possible to communicate with a foreigner.

After our introduction and presentation we started the most important thing

- the games. Almost all the students (nearly 100 children) from different classes participated. For this special day they were released from their regular lessons. At first we played general games for everyone. Children played the game "Everyone for themselves" in which they pretended they were trees struggling for a place in the sun, collecting resources necessary for existence in conditions of rigid competition. Then we played a very cheerful and noisy game called "Thunder-storm" during which they learned about the different stages of a thunderstorm. After the children had "turned into" the rain droplets, they pretended they were flowing in a river that washed away sediment from the coast and bore them in the lake.

Then, we divided everyone into four stations. At each station





there was a different game, and groups of children rotated from station to station so that everyone could participate in all of the offered games. In "The Sum of Parts" the children pretended to be millionaires and founders. Everyone drew on a sheet of paper what they would like to construct on a slice of the Lake Baikal coast. In the game "Bog," the children learned about the water-purifying function of bogs and about the negative consequences that arise when bogs are drained. In the game "Topography," the children learned how water flows down from mountains and feeds the rivers. And finally, in the fourth game, "A Life Web," the children learned about the close interrelation between vegetative and animal organisms by constructing a trophic chain of Baikal.

As a result, our program was pleasant for not only for the students, but also for the teachers who did not hesitate to take part in

the games. The children learned a lot of new things and had a good time. It was hard to leave such remarkable children. In the end there was a reflexion where GBT volunteers, Joy, and the school teachers discussed the results of the day, talked about differences between American and Russian education, and planned for future cooperation with GBT.

After the exhausting working day we had a whole evening at our disposal. After supper, some of the volunteers relaxed in the banya while the others preferred to remain in the visit-centre to tell and listen to various amusing stories from each others' camp life over a cup of tea. The evening ended with the game "Mafia," and after it everyone went to bed happy.

We were free to spend the next day how we wanted. In the morning we decided to visit the Baikal Biospheric reserve and a museum and to ski and sledge. In the museum we had very interesting tour during which we learned about animals that can be found in the Baikal region. Then we put on high boots, took hunting skis and a sledge, and

went for a walk on the reserve. The day was sunny, and it was quiet and warm in the woods. We went on a narrow trail, and it was difficult to go without skis because the snow was very deep. But it was fun to dive into the snow and make "snow angels." It was cheerful.

After a dinner, unfortunately, we had to go back home to dusty Irkutsk and leave this winter fairy-land. Joy thanked everyone for participating and presented comics about the well-known American Smokey Bear and badges with its image. She also left GBT a book describing ecological games and lessons for children. All of this was very pleasant. I



hope that this trip pleased Joy in the same way and that she will remember it for a long time.

*Anastasija  
Holjavitskaja  
The volunteer*

## How to get a 'flying' internship at GBT

First of all, let me introduce myself - my name is Anya and I've been a GBT volunteer for 5 years. Long ago - a whole year and a half ago (I truly believe that a lot of time has passed) - I had to complete a internship as a translator as a part of my studies at the university. It didn't take a long time to think of where to find it: of course at GBT! Soon, all the documents were filled out, final reports written up, and I was given an "excellent mark" on my work! By a lucky chance, this internship resulted not only in my "excellent mark," but also in the signing of a 5-year agreement between GBT and Irkutsk State Linguistic University (IGLU) to coordinate student internships.

Soon we were invited to the job fair at IGLU, and we looked incredibly appealing next to the stands advertising positions as supermarket loaders and kindergarten nurses. We were busy all day handing out business cards to all the people we knew or didn't and offering our courses to prospective team leader as-

sistants, interpreters and guides. Everyone was so surprised that all of our courses are free, and that 'if you come on Thursday, we'll even serve you tea and give some biscuits!'

After the date of the first meeting had been determined - February, 8 - Dima composed a simple advertisement and distributed it at Baikal State University of Economics and Law and at IGLU. However, there was a small mistake on the advertisement: instead of indicating that we offer a summer internship (летняя практика), it indicated that we offer a flying internship (летная практика). You can only guess that a week of incessant telephone calls followed. At first it was funny, but even after I got tired of answering phone calls, I was amazed at how many people not only read the advertisements, but also called to find out the details.

About 40 people came to the first meeting. I still wonder how we managed to place all of them in one room!

After our presentations about spending 2

weeks in a tent, cooking over a fire, pesky mosquitoes, carrying heavy sledge hammers and logs, and working with children (!), I was afraid that we had scared a few people off (after all, translators aren't always the 'outdoorsy' type; most of the time they would rather sit at a computer with a cup of coffee than backpack for several kilometers while translating Buryat fairy tales). But I was pleasantly surprised that 32 people signed up for our courses and 15 people agreed to help us translate a book from Russian into English as a part of the translator internship.

The courses have just begun, and I'm hoping that we will be able to train the next generation of GBT interpreters who not only aren't afraid to use their skills as translators, but also willing to get their hands dirty and get blisters on their feet.

*Anna Belova,  
GBT interpreter, crew  
leader,  
Coordinator of GBT in-  
terpreter courses and  
GBT youth club*

## Mind-Opening Translation

We are translators and we were tired of boring technical translations. We wanted something meaningful, something important. And then we got an offer to translate for Joy Barney, an expert from US Forest Service, at a Great Baikal Trail seminar. This was a completely different experience. It was so

wonderful that, thanks to the GBT, people studying theory of translation became a part of the environmental movement. Such events really do change the way you look at an issue, force you to think about what you could do to make our world a better

place to live.

Educational projects presented by Joy gave us a great example of how we can explain complicated issues to children. *Project Learning Tree* and *Project Wet* made a strong impression on every single person.

They are vivid and dynamic. Such projects motivate teachers to make up their own games and creative activities. The thoroughness of each project seemed incredible. Dear Joy told us about all the small details that are so important when you are working with children (how to calm down the noisy ones, how to make

sure kids don't throw paint at each other or spill water). Interactive exchange of experience is a unique thing. No amount of book-learning can compare to it.

We are grateful to GBT for these three days of amazing discoveries and insights. We hope that to-

gether we'll be able to promote conservation education in the future!

By Inna Fomina and  
Kate Maximova  
Students, Irkutsk  
State Linguistic  
University

## First impressions

I'd like to tell you about my first impressions of my work as an interpreter for GBT projects. I was sure I would have a good time and meet great people, but the first day I felt anxious. When a foreign volunteer began asking questions, I understood nothing. He spoke very quickly, and interpreting his complex language made me nervous. However, after two weeks I became accustomed to his speech and answered all of his interesting questions without difficulty, and I helped him to interview the participants in our

project. Because of the curiosity of these volunteers I got a lot of experience and good language practice by answering their questions. The three-hour-long interviews are full of enthusiastic questions and give me the chance to apply my language skills.

When I first started the project I felt unconfident and uncomfortable, but eventually I adapted. Being surrounded by good, positive people helped me to forget my anxiety and challenges and enjoy everything that was happening.

Another part of my obligation as a translator is to entertain volunteers. I organize different games, competitions, and activities, and in general try to get everyone to smile and to laugh. The atmosphere was great and all of the participants



became friends with each other. In the end we felt as if we were a big family. I want to thank the brigadiers and the volunteers who helped me in translating.

I think it is both interesting and useful to work as an interpreter. At the same time, it is difficult, especially for people who are inexperienced. In order to improve, you need to put in the time to gain experience, to practice more, and to communicate with English speakers. Participating in the GBT program gives you all of this! =)

Toma Bukhaeva  
GBT volunteer and  
interpreter



## Resources of the Irkutsk Botanical Garden for Work with Non-Commercial Organizations

In 2009 the Irkutsk Botanical Garden actively worked together with the international non-profitable organization Great Baikal Trail (cooperation between two organizations started in 2008). In March through May we organized training sessions for GBT team leaders, during which future summer project leaders studied basic trail building technologies and principles of working with international volunteer groups, enhanced their knowledge of the Baikal region flora and fauna, learned how to work with various tools and administer first aid in the wilderness.

A practical seminar, "Interpretation of Environmental Trails Using Flora and Fauna," took place on May 23-24. Eighty-five people took part in the seminar, among them university students from Irkutsk and Ulan-Ude, school children, and foreign volunteers. During the seminar participants built a trail and studied the flora and fauna of the "Little Arboretum." We cleared, excavated and covered with crushed stone a passage 150 meters long and 1.2 meters wide. We also cleared 100 square meters of land that will be used for lectures, made a stone drainage system and a two-piece bench that can accommodate 15-20 children during school excursions.

Thus, we now have a new resource that allows us

to accommodate several excursion groups in the little arboretum without bothering each other. The cleared plot of land is currently being used for lectures and developmental children's games.

During our flora study we discovered 32 arboreal-dumetous species (see chart 1), from different regions, along the trail. These are mature plants of normal habitus. The trail gives tour participants a chance to learn about the boreal forest dendroflora.

During the seminar's "creative part" its participants came up with numerous ideas concerning environmental trail interpretation.

An international seminar on "Assessment of the Baikal Region Trails and Future Development of Eco-tourism" took place on September 27, 2009.

The seminar focused on appraisal of existing trails in the Baikal region, potential for development of eco-tourism, trail construction and restoration standards, trail classification systems, volunteer involvement, application of international experience, and trail interpretation.



During the practical part of the seminar we formed an "environmental crew" responsible for clearing the trail and planning future trail building work at the Botanical Garden.

In 2010 we plan to construct 100 meters of environmental trail that will pass through a lilac arboretum and a young pine stand. This new fork in the trail system will allow us to receive more visitors, as well as give them access to the interesting parts of the "Little Arboretum."

Robert Birkby, an American trail-building expert who attended the seminar, ranked highly the quality of the trail, but pointed out that its interpretational component needed more content.

By Snezhana  
Kalinovitch  
Biologist,  
Irkutsk Botanical  
Garden

Chart 1 The environmental trail's hardy-shrub species

№	Name in latin	Name in English	Origin
6	<i>Acer platanoides L.</i>	Norway maple	Europe, the Caucasus
8	<i>Atragene sibirica L.</i>	<i>Atragene sibirica</i>	Europe, Eastern Siberia
32	<i>Berberis amurensis Rupr.</i>	Amur barberry	Far East
4	<i>Betula pendula Roth</i>	European White Birch	Europe, Western Siberia
9	<i>Caragana arborescens Lam.</i>	Siberian pea shrub	Western Siberia
11	<i>Cerasus fruticosa Pall.</i>	Frutescent cherry	Eastern Europe, Asia Minor
12	<i>Corylus heterophylla Fisch. Ex Trautv.</i>	The Asian Hazel	Far East
10	<i>Cotoneaster lucida Schleet.</i>	Hedge Cotoneaster	Endemic in Western Baikal region
31	<i>Cotoneaster melanocarpus Fisch. ex Blytt.</i>	Cotoneaster melanocarpus	From Central Europe to Far East
13	<i>Crataegus sanguinea Pall.</i>	Siberian hawthorn	Siberia, Far East
16	<i>Fraxinus mandshurica Rupr.</i>	Manchurian ash	Far East
2	<i>Juglans mandshurica Max.</i>	The Manchurian walnut	Far East, China
28	<i>Larix sibirica Ledeb.</i>	Siberian Larch	Siberia
19	<i>Ligustrina amurensis Rupr.</i>	Ligustrina amurensis	Far East
15	<i>Lonicera maackii Rupr.</i>	Amur honeysuckle	Far East
17	<i>Malus baccata (L.) Borkh.</i>	Siberian crab apple	South of Eastern Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria
1	<i>Padus avium Mill.</i>	Padus avium	Eurasia
5	<i>Padus maackii (Rupr.) Kom.</i>	Padus maackii	Far East, China, Korea
3	<i>Padus pennsylvanica (L.) Sok.</i>	Padus pennsylvanica	Northern America
7	<i>Phellodendron amurense Rupr.</i>	Amur corktree	Far East
18	<i>Pinus silvestris L.</i>	Scots Pine	Eurasia
20	<i>Quercus mongolica Fisch.</i>	Mongolian Oak	Far East
21	<i>Rhamnus cathartica L.</i>	Purging Buckthorn	Europe, Western Siberia
22	<i>Rhododendron dahuricum L.</i>	Rhododendron dahuricum	Siberia, Far East
23	<i>Ribes diacantha Pall.</i>	Ribes diacantha	Transbaikalia, Northern Mongolia, China, Korea
24	<i>Sorbus sibirica Hedl.</i>	Sorbus sibirica	Siberia, Far East
25	<i>Spiraea media Fr. Schmidt</i>	Spiraea media	South of Siberia, Far East Central Asia
26	<i>Syringa josikaea Jacq.</i>	Hungarian Lilac	Europe
27	<i>Tilia cordata Mill.</i>	Small-leaved Lime	Europe
14	<i>Ulmus laevis Pall.</i>	Ulmus laevis	Europe
29	<i>Viburnum lantana L.</i>	Wayfaring Tree	Europe, Asia Minor, Northern Africa
30	<i>Viburnum opulus L.</i>	Guelder Rose	Europe, Asia Minor, Northern Africa, Siberia

## GBT Strategic Management

Great Baikal Trail (GBT) is an international non-profit organization that is in the process of building the first foot trail in Russia. Since 2003 more than 3500 Russian volunteers have acquired skills in trail-making and communication. The organization is growing both in quantity and quality. At this time of crisis we should work out a program of organization and strategic management, both of which are necessary for the continuation of sustainable development. While creating such a program we should pay attention to corporate culture and professional growth. In this case, GBT will remain united and its resilience will be such that even during this crisis only compatible changes will be necessary.

GBT is a non-profit or-



I came to the GBT office for the very first time in November of 2003.....and now it is February of 2010. Simple math shows that 6 years and 3 months have passed. And that is how long I've been helping out as a GBT volunteer. Of course, every year has differed from the previous one: I have served in various coordinator positions, and have worked as an interpreter, a crew leader, and a projects manager. Plus I've had various training op-

portunities abroad, in many different countries. During all this time I have gone through a number of personal changes. The first time I noticed these changes was during an exchange program in the US several years ago. In more recent years my world perception and overall attitude towards the reality of life have gone through huge transformations, thanks mostly to my life with the GBT. The GBT is really a big part of life. In

lecting funds for the target programs.

Dave Brann, a member of *Homer-Kachemak Bay Rotary Club* in Alaska shared his ideas about fund-raising for social programs in Alaska. They usually announce the fundraising for a certain social project, and you can, for example, come to a winter swimming race on a certain day during which proceeds will fund the social project. This was how members of *Rotary Club Baikal Eco* raised some part of the rent for the GBT office. There are numerous examples of effective fund-raising and they can be practiced by GBT.

By Tatyana Klepnikova  
Rotary Club Baikal  
Eco  
Project Coordinator  
Rotary-GBT

### From a volunteer to....



portunities abroad, in many different countries.

During all this time I have gone through a number of personal changes. The first time I noticed these changes was during an exchange program in the US several years ago. In more recent years my world perception and overall attitude towards the reality of life have gone through huge transformations, thanks mostly to my life with the GBT.

The GBT is really a big part of life. In

other words, it is an institute for life-learning, which excites our consciousness, and has a way of changing our attitudes towards nature conservation. It also introduces us to some terrifically interesting individuals. During all the time with the GBT, I have taken (and will take) great energy from the organization and the people of the GBT. It allows me to do good things, to be close to nature, and simply learn.

Now I'm a head of another group based in Russia, the Tahoe-Baikal Institute.

In my new work I'll have some GBT baggage to bring along with me. Some things will be naturally different; others I will

have to change. But there always will be my GBT experience, which happily I can use for most, if not all of my future work.

*Natalia Luzhkova,  
Director of TBI-  
Russia*

## **Ecological English or how it all began...**

In GBT everybody has the opportunity to find themselves. Each year courses for camp leaders and interpreters give GBT participants the invaluable experience of working with a group of volunteers. After taking part in 3 GBT projects as a volunteer and an interpreter, I unexpectedly had the desire to start my own project. I realized that not all volunteers are capable of working hard on projects every day and that it would be great to live on the Lake Baikal shore while at the same time helping the lake and learning something new. But what could the group of volunteers do during 10 days? Suddenly, I came up with the idea of learning English! Exactly! Ecological English or, "Eco-English Camp!" We could learn English and at the same time benefit Lake Baikal!

It wasn't hard to find people who were interested in my idea. And thus our work for preparing the two projects began. The project aroused great interest and we already had a lot of volunteers registered for our eco camp. Unfortunately, however, half of them had to drop out due to the economic crisis or problems on the job. Nonetheless, in two camps we took 15 participants from Saint Petersburg, Troizk, Rostov-Na-Donu, Ulan-Ude, and Irkutsk. Included in these participants were 3 volunteers from the US and Germany who helped us as teacher assistants. In

particular, we were glad to have a group of teachers and students from the Russian Hydro Meteorological University of Saint Petersburg. They shared their opinions on



the development of ecotourism and were very surprised that GBT could do such great work building trails around Lake Baikal as a non-governmental organization. Together we came to the conclusion that ecotourism on Baikal will someday be developed!

And finally, here's what we got out of it in the end: Every day during the projects the teachers prepared interesting lessons with the help of foreigners. During the lessons we covered a variety of subjects, including ecotourism and ecological problems concerning the lake. We played ecological games and even took some excursions and hikes. At the same time, we didn't forget about building the trails; for two projects we reconstructed about 50

meters of old and overgrown trail, picked up litter from the shore, and created two signs instructing tourists to protect the environment. With all of this work, we almost had no free time!

Everything worked out perfectly, and the pleased participants went back home with a desire to come back and take part in some of GBT's other projects. In fact, one of our volunteers wants to take part in the Eco-English Camp again this coming summer.

Each participant gained something different from the camp. For some it was a great opportunity to rest on Lake Baikal; for others, it was great language practice; and for yet others it was the possibility to see Baikal. For me, this project was an opportunity for self-development wherein we overcame the communicative barrier and with it the border between humans and nature.

In the end I want to thank the people who helped to make this project a great success: to our teachers - Varya Koneva and Sveta Savvateeva, and to our interpreters - Ksusha Kustanovich and Igor Dec.

*Dmitry Chuprikov  
Project manager of  
Eco-English Camp*

## To see Baikal for the first time

"What pure water! It's stunning! And so warm! Let's go swimming!" "Oh, what a cute nerpa-seal! I wish we had the same at home." "What tremendous rocks. Take a picture of me with Baikal, and the mountains, and the flowers here near the path." It was interesting to hear the delight and pleasure in the voices of the people who were visiting Baikal for the first time. It seems that they, standing just for five minutes on the shore of our sacred lake, love Baikal more than I, a genuine Siberian, do. I tell them indifferently "Yes it's fine here, but there are still more beautiful places.

These were the thoughts going round in my head the first day of our project, "Eco-English," organized by the Great Baikal Trail - GBT for short. I was the only person from Irkutsk (besides the three project managers) in our camp. It helped me very much to look at Baikal with new eyes and feel the happiness of people who had come here for the first time.

For ten days that August we lived in tents near Baikal around the village Bolshie Koty, studied English language, conversed on ecology, went for walks on the local

ridges "Grebshok" and "Skriper," cleaned up the traces of tourists and reconstructed 50 meters of overgrown trail.

We were lucky that

is, to buy food from the local settlements and villages instead of bringing it in from the city. We complied perfectly with the final re-



almost everyone in the project was connected with ecology, and some of us even worked in this field (for instance, two teachers from the Hydrometeorological Institute and their students). These women told us in detail about the concept of "ecological tourism" and its requirements. In order to be an ecotourist, it is necessary to spend a lot of time and money - in a sense, become a "fan of the business." It is impossible to use polythene packages, plastic bottles and other things made of non-biodegradable materials, iron tent-pegs, and certain soaps. It is also necessary to financially support the local population; that

requirement; as we passed through Bolshie Koty, we bought probably their entire stock of omul and pies with carrots, and then ate it all while sitting on their pier. For our foreign guests and those from St. Petersburg, it was a wonderful experience and everyone enjoyed the authentic Baikal meal.

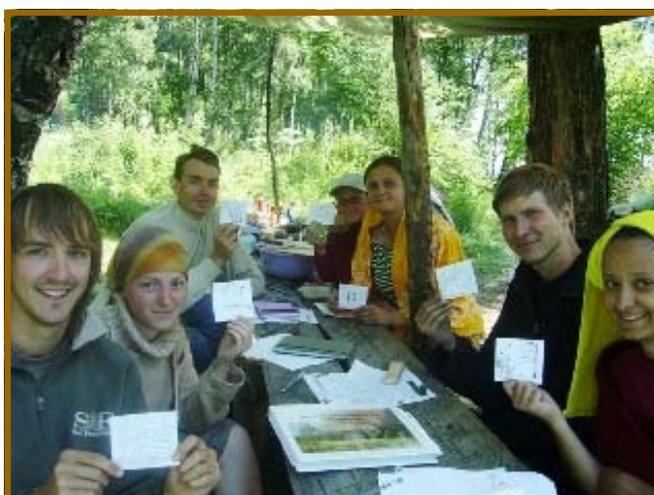
By communicating with people from St. Petersburg, Germany, and the USA, I really learned a lot. We discussed regional Russian pronunciations (Moscow's "akanje" seems to have caught on in the Leningrad region) and words (for instance, they say "karimat" instead of "penka.") One of the German girls had been to Russia five

times, but her first time trying porridge was with us. And Anya, who lived in the United States since she was ten, went camping with us for the first time. She listened carefully to our conversations on life in Russia artfully jumping from English to Russian, speaking both of her native languages. Teachers from the Hydrometeorological Institute taught us how to use the clouds to predict the weather. One type, nimbostratus, lay like a white sheet across the sky for the first two days, making us cold and wet. Fortunately, for the rest of the time cumulus clouds floated above us, foretelling sunny weather. It was strange, but despite the vacillating weather and the two days of cold, the only one who got sick was I - a Siberian supposedly used to the cold winds and strong frosts.

I laughed more in those ten days than ever before. In the afternoons, we played games and sang songs from children's cartoons. The game "Chocolate" was the most fun. All of us sat around our wooden table and took turns throwing a die. The person who rolled a six would shout happily and quickly put on a whole heap of different clothes (a

cap, a scarf, glasses, gloves) and with a fork and spoon try to open a taped-up package of chocolate. We kept rolling the die while he did this, and each time would transfer clothes when a new person began to shout. The game finished on a happy note as the last piece of chocolate disappeared.

Passing time on Lake Baikal in such amiable company inspired creativity in many of us. One person sat on the shore and wrote down his impressions on the noise of the ways, another tried to compose verses about our camp, and a third tried to create advertisements for our cause (Julia and I thought of six different poster



variations, but unfortunately our art hardly matched what we saw). Our project manager, Dmitry, was so refreshed by the pure Baikal air and the beautiful girls that on the second day he started to carve small and beautiful figurines

from wood. By the end of the project, he had made so many little figures that he gave one to each participant - a kitten, a penguin, a small owl, a bear, an elephant, and even a hedgehog.

Our project manager also loved trail building, and I don't know why our group didn't prompt him to carve obscure American tools from wood to help us dig out and level the ground. During our primary safety precaution discussion, he admitted that the moments during which he built trails were his happiest. Within three hours we were enthusiastically building trails, but soon after we began we fell prey to weariness from the hard work, and it dampened our enthusiasm. It wasn't as easy as gardening (although maybe I just don't garden very much). We had to use a pick to remove a layer of the ground and use another special tool to get rid of the trees and roots.

Anastasija  
Klimova  
Volunteer

## The Wild West

*We love the earth and all things of the earth, and the attachment grows with age. Nature purifies, heals and makes us stronger. It teaches our children that it is what you do that matters, not what you say. Sometimes we would sit motionless and watch some small animal at its work and ponder its industry and ingenuity, or we lay on our backs and look long at the sky, and when the stars come out make shapes from the various groups. **Knowledge is inherent in all things. The world is a library, and its books are the stones, leaves, grass, brooks, and the birds and animals, rivers and mountains. Everything is possessed of personality, only differing from us in form.***

Ever since we were children, we have had this set of personal images associated with different countries: The Eiffel Tower in Paris, Big Ben, the Beatles and bowler hats in England, Carnivale in Brazil. Later on, when we find ourselves in those countries, we are so excited to recognize all those images taken from the hundreds of books we have read and films we have seen. We feel as if we have been there before.

Starting out our recent journey to the western states of America, I thought fondly of indigenous people and cowboys, deserts and oceans, hippies, rock-n-roll, the beat generation, and our car rushing through a dusty prairie to face the storm. Needless to say, all of this came alive for us and turned into reality.



Lake Baikal is absolutely unique, exactly because it is almost impossible to imagine if you have never seen it before. There is no associated image of the type I mentioned above, no image that would be able to fit with a sight so magnificent and powerful. People who come here for the first time seem to be disarmed in front of all the beauty and greatness of the lake, unlike all else in the world. Wherever we stopped in America (and by "we", I mean our entire exchange team, which included three GBT volunteers, one

representative of a tourist business from Irkutsk, and Gary Cook - the GBT fairy godfather of sorts - along with the GBT co-founder Ariadna Reid and the trail expert and writer, Robert Birkby) - well, we heard people say that we have so much to admire and so much to protect in our home country around Baikal.

The entire American journey took us one month - we started in Tucson, Arizona and ended up in Seattle, Washington. Before we reached the final destination, we enjoyed a lot of beautiful places along our way - there were Phoenix and nearby Montezuma Castle National Monument, the Grand Canyon, Joshua Tree National Park, and a beach along the Pacific Ocean not far from Los Angeles. There were the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Santa Barbara, Carmel-by-the-

Sea, Berkeley, San Francisco, Evergreen College in Olympia, Bainbridge Island and Eco-center called Islandwood.

We had many things on our agenda; the most important was to find answers to the following questions: what kind of service do western geo-tourists who come to Baikal need? How can we make the region more attractive for them? How can we organize real eco-tours that do no harm? What is the best way to present the information we want to share, and make it clear and fascinating? And are there any settlements in the US that can strike one as living in harmony with nature? We were finding the answers along the way, in places so different - in national parks and wilderness reserves, with non-profit organizations, museums, eco-centers, tourist agencies, and colleges, and sometimes even in the little things around us.

The eco-culture in the United States is, to my mind, literally blossoming; it has become an influential trend for everyone. It is worth saying though, that Europe is

far ahead of both the US and Russia in this regard. Speaking of our country - it has a definite potential. A little responsibility to do the right thing mixed with some love is all it takes. We truly need to be responsible for what we have on earth, and love what we do. Throughout our journey one thing, which impressed me the most, was not the splendid scenery or appealing comfort. It was the love, the way all people we met were devoted to what they were telling us about. All of them - those who worked in the museums and centers, volunteers, teachers, home-stay hosts, rangers, researchers and scientists - all were so passionately interested in their work that you could not but feel that you really want to help them too. None of them get a lot of money for this work (some of them do not get paid at all); but all of them know that it would be so unfair **not** to give the generations of the future the same chance

we've had - to be standing by a vast canyon, or the ocean, or a lake, and feel so alive, so real, as if we were a part of all this strength and beauty.

I am absolutely certain that we have not really seen a typical America - all the people we met were rather more like exceptions than rules. They are as extraordinary for their country, as GBT volunteers are for theirs. On the other hand, it is another proof of the fact that personality never depends on mentality, geography or cultural stereotypes. We all have the potential to be who we might want to be.



Varya Koneva,  
GBT volunteer.

## On the other side of the world.....

For the past five years young leaders from the Lake Baikal region have been traveling to Seattle, WA. You may be wondering, "What brings these leaders all the way to Seattle?"



The GBT Association has a lot of international partners, but it has only been through the EarthCorps trainee program that GBT has sent more than 10 its volunteers to the US over the past five years, giving them an opportunity to improve their leadership skills, work as international volunteers, and learn more about American and international projects within the environmentalist sphere.

EarthCorps is a Seattle-based non-profit whose mission is to build a global community through local environmental service.

This type of work isn't original or new; in fact there are about 15 other conservation corps in Seattle alone. But only EarthCorps provides 20 international participants each year with the opportunity to take part in conservation projects, learn about new things, and share our cultures not only within EarthCorps, but also within broad audience of international volunteers.

Last year I was lucky enough to proudly represent GBT as a part of the EC program. Those that had been working with EC for a while

knew about our trail-building project in Siberia, and for those who didn't - I filled them in. In September we participated in World Night - an event organized by EC for cultural exchange where we

had about 200 guests.

Russia and GBT had double attention - we had a big bright poster with pictures, a sampling of Russian food, and a 15-minute international presentation about Lake Baikal, the importance of conservation, and the role that GBT plays in all of this. The best part was when 15 people came up to me after the presentation with a genuine desire to help us asking me questions how to get to Siberia, etc. It was amazing! Our project interested them!



It's difficult, but we did it! Even before my program started I knew that GBT and EC are pretty different organizations, but international experiences open your horizons. Working on a team with people from Honduras, Armenia, Cambodia, Brazil, France, Kenya, Panama, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Ghana,

During the summer we had couple of camping trips during which our crew went into the wilderness and worked on the territories of national parks and national forests in the state of Washington. It was an interesting experience that was not much different than the projects that we organize here at Baikal.

Autumn was the volunteer event season. Every year EC leads about 10,000 volunteers from all different age groups. Each corpsmember not only works

close to volunteers, but also leads them. The group can be up to 30 people, and each corpsmember is expected to make scope of work: bring all necessary tools, try to be on time, make sure everybody is following safety instructions, and monitor the quality of work. The latter is probably the most difficult part; for example, school kids sometimes don't understand why they have to dig out a 10-foot long ivy root instead of fighting each other with the shovels. =)

the Philippines, Morocco, Nigeria, Russia, and different states in U.S. makes you realize that in spite of cultural differences, all people are very similar!

It also makes you realize that if you have a goal and you really want to reach it, you can do it because you're young and entire world is open for you!

*Svetlana Shokhonova,  
GBT volunteer*



## TBI's Summer Environmental Exchange Program or "A Whole Life One Summer Long..."

When I was listening to the Tahoe-Baikal Institute's alumni tell about their participation in the Summer Environmental Exchange Program (SEEP), I was a little envious. It seemed to me that I didn't have the slightest chance to take part in it some day. I was beside myself with delight when the Great Baikal Trail Association (one of TBI's partners) suggested that I apply for SEEP! After having participated in the program, I would like to share my impressions about the summer I spent within the TBI family circle.

Participants in SEEP's 19<sup>th</sup> annual exchange came from all over the world. Although most of the group was comprised of students from Russia and the US, this year SEEP admitted its first participant from Pakistan, with other international participants coming from Mongolia and Belorussia. TBI is a unique experience in every respect, combining academic knowledge and hands-on experience in environmental studies and learning about the cultures of other countries. The cornerstone of SEEP is exploring two of the most beautiful lakes on our planet - Tahoe and Baikal (in fact, Tahoe is sometimes called "the younger brother of Baikal").

The program started

in the US on Fallen Leaf Lake, a place that became our "home sweet home" for the first 5 weeks. The schedule was very intense: Every day we had presentations, meetings, and discussion panels. We participated in projects carried out by organizations focused upon the exploration and conservation of Lake Tahoe. Lake Tahoe is the 2<sup>nd</sup> deepest lake in the US and the 10<sup>th</sup> deepest in the world (and, in my opinion, a lake unsurpassed in "blueness" of water). We had a unique opportunity to work hand in hand with key specialists of Tahoe's watershed and to observe the cooperation of governmental authorities and non-governmental organizations. The next 5 weeks, which were spent in the town of Baikalsk on Lake Baikal, were unforgettable as well. Similar to the program at Tahoe, we were assigned 2-week research projects with experienced specialists in the Baikal region.

Other aspects of the program were less formal, but by no means less important: Fascinating trips, interesting people, parties, heart-to-heart talks around the campfire playing guitar and singing, and international cuisine night (just to name a few). All in all, the program provides an opportunity to explore the cultures of other people through communication; to see things through another's eyes, hear it,

taste it, let it sink in. Each participant could get something from the program, but at the same time everyone enriched it with something special and inimitable. The most unique part of TBI is that 16 people from different countries can find a common language with each other and become not just good friends, but a single big family. All of



this wouldn't be possible without the TBI staff, individuals who give of themselves to the program, partners, alumni, friends, donors and other supporters of TBI and the SEEP.

The 10 short weeks that I spent as a part of the TBI family passed in a friendly atmosphere of exploration, discovery, adventures, laughter, and love. Although it was short, it felt like a whole lifetime. One summer long.

*Yulia Misevich,  
TBI 2009,  
GBT volunteer 2007-  
2010, translator on the  
projects,  
GBT Volunteer Coordinator*

## Rotary - GBT 2009

Rotary - Great Baikal Trail (GBT) is a project that was developed in celebration of the 100 anniversary of Rotary International. Rotary District 5010 has been a trail restoration project sponsor for 6 years. The trail under restoration is situated in the south of Lake Baikal between Listvyanka (Village of Leaves) and Peschanaya (Sandy) bay. This part of trail is the most frequently visited because most foreign and Russian tourists come to Baikal from the city of Irkutsk, which is only 67 kilometers away. The creation of the trail here is a very important task because the Baikal shore at this location is steep and barely passable, making hiking difficult and dangerous. Beginning in 2004 GBT together with Pribaikal'skii National Park and Rotary clubs from the US, Australia, and Sweden started building the trail and developing other Lake Baikal conservation projects.

From June 9 - August 22, 2009 volunteers from six different projects helped to build trails between Listvyanka and Peschanaya bay on part of the trail close to Bolshoe Goloustnoe

village between Bolshie Koti (Big Cats) village and Malaya Sennaya bay. Included in these volunteers were 58 foreigners from Germany, USA, Sweden, Great Britain, France, Switzerland, and other countries.

In 2004, volunteers built, marked, and cleaned approximately 60km of new and old trails. This trail building also included the creation of resting areas, tables, fireplaces, and other difficult structures, including steps, stairs, small bridges and side-walks.

Along with trail building on the Lake Baikal shore, GBT also runs social and educational projects, such as eco-education for locals and summer camps for kids from poor families. Since 2005 GBT has held annual 2-week summer camps for kids sponsored by different chapters of Rotary International, including Malmo International (Sweden), Epping (Australia), SeaTac, Seattle International (USA), and West Seattle (USA). Participants are from Meget Village Art School. Most Meget citizens are unemployed or only hold part-time jobs, and for this rea-

son the village suffers from problems with drug and alcohol addiction among adults and teens. During the summer camp kids work on the trail, create paintings, and make small sculptures. In 2009, 20 kids and 3 art teachers from Meget participated in a camp at Malaya Sennaya bay from July 22<sup>nd</sup> until August 4<sup>th</sup>. The preparation and operation of projects like this are hard work for both Rotary club members and GBT staff.

We see how kids



change after summer projects - they develop a keen interest in foreign languages, learn new skills, and broaden their horizons. These results inspire us to continue and improve upon our projects in the future.

*Tatiana Klepikova*  
*Rotary-GBT project*  
*coordinator*

*Rotary club Baikal-*  
*Eco district 5010*

**Generalized final report of the non-profit organization  
Great Baikal Trail according to main projects  
(March-September 2009)**

(created by the head of the Great Baikal Trail organization according to project managers' and team leaders' reviews)

24 September 2009 year

№	Date	Project place	Number of partici-	Main kinds of work and results
A	21 – 31 March	Buryat Republic Severobaykalsk town, Novy Yoyan village Hakusi warter resort	7	The purpose of the project was to engage eco-tourist school groups from Severobaykalsk in the region's use of internet resources.  Formed a group of local computer science teachers, school children, and volunteers who started designing a new website.  80 school children participated in the project in Baykalckoe village.
B	24 – 25 May	Irkutsk region, Irkutsk Botanical garden of Irkutsk State University	85	Cleared 150 meters of trail; excavated 150x1.2-m of trail and created a trail bed of crushed stone and gravel filling; settled 1 drainage system; built a bench for 15-20 school children
		<b>Results of spring period</b>	<b>92</b>	
1	9 – 18 June	Irkutsk region Prebaykalsly National park	27	Reconstructed 100m of the trail to Hole mountain; built approx. 10 rock stairs, some carved in rocks.
2	12 – 22 june	Buryat Republic Severobaykalsk region Recreation center "Echo" in the area of Cludyanski lakes Children project	14	Children aged 2 to 10 took part in the project. The main types of work included cleaning the trail corridor, replanting trees from the trail bed to create a green space at the recreation center "Echo," marking the trail, watering young plants, collecting trash along the part of GBT trail "The way to Boguchani," and mak-
3	12 – 26 June	Buryat Republic Severobaykalsk region Recreation center "Echo" in the area of Cludyanski lakes	10	Cleared fallen trees from 24 km of trail; cut down trees on the territory of the recreation center "Echo" (area=1 hectare); built a wooden footpath (30 m x 55 cm) leading to the dock of the small Cludyanski lake; restored information sign "The way to Boguchani"; made and installed new information signs "Routes of Recreation center Echo," "The trail to the past", and "The capture of Bas-
4	28 June – 15 July	Buryat Republic Severobaykalsk region Dagara area (the mouth of Upper Angara) – the mouth of Froliha river (Froliha Adventure Coast Trail pro-	4	Participants passed along 30 km of the trail, cleaned and marked 22 km of trail, built 2 17-m bridges, and installed one informational sign.

5	28 June – 15 July	Buryat Republic Severobaykalsk region the mouth of Froliha river– Ayaya bay (Froliha Adventure Coast Trail project)	12	Built and marked 20 km of trail; made one switchback.
6	28 June – 15 July	Buryat Republic Severobaykalsk region Ayaya bay (Froliha Adventure Coast Trail project)	8	Cleared 6 km of trail from Ayaya bay to Froliha lake; created 800-m bypass trail and 6 temporary bridges; made 11x5-m bridge 1 bridge in the mouth of the stream Ayaya.
7	28 June – 15 July	Buryat Republic Severobaykalsk region The area Hakusi - Ayaya bay (Froliha Adventure Coast Trail project)	6	Marked and cleaned 20 km of trail where there had been obstructions caused by fire; cleaned a part of the trail from elfin wood.
8	9 – 22 July	Irkutsk region Prebaykalsky National park B. Koti village – Bolshoe Goloustnoe village Malaya Sennaya fold	13	Cleaned 50 meters of trail and built an additional 150 meters of trail; closed the dangerous part of the trail; constructed 5 benches, a table, and a fireplace.
9	9 – 22 July	Buryat Republic Kabansky region Tanhoi village Baykalsky Biospheric reserve Osinovka river	12	Cleaned 200 meters of trail; constructed 175 meters of trail, 6 rock stairs, and one rest wall.
10	20 July – 2 August	Buryat Republic Bauntovsky region Goryachy kluch village Baunt health resort – Hapton mountain	15	Cleaned and marked 5 km of trail; made and installed signs.
11	22 July – 4 August	Irkutsk region Prebaykalsky National park B. Koti village – Bolshoe Goloustnoe village Malaya Sennaya fold Children project	23	The purpose of the project was to eco-educate children and provide them with volunteer experience. Also improved 108 meters of trail.
12	22 July – 4 August	Buryat Republic Kabansky region Tanhoi village Baykalsky Biospheric reserve Osinovka river	27	Cleaned 350 meters of trail; built 25 rock stairs. The Tahoe –Baikal Institute group took part in the project (12 people).
13	22 July – 4 August	Buryat Republic Ust-Barguzin area Maximiha village	15	Cleaned 1200 meters of trail; built a toilet area, fireplace, and bench; cleared trash from the area.

1 4	22 – 29 July	Irkutsk region Prebaykalsly National park B. Koti village – Bolshoe Goloust- noe village Malaya Sennaya fold	20	Prepared the material for making steps (26 steps and 2 platforms) for the next group; re-routed and upgraded the trail between B. Koti and Varnachka.
1 5	25 July – 3 August	Irkutsk region Prebaykalsly National park Listvianka village - B. Koti village	9	The main purpose of the project was eco-education, language practice, and informing participants about the Baikal region and trail building. Also improved 25 meters of trail.
1 6	4 – 17 Au- gust	Irkutsk region Prebaykalsly National park Listvianka village - B. Koti village	13	Built 50 meters of trail, 30 wooden steps, rock stairs, and a rest wall.
1 7	4 – 17 Au- gust	Buryat Republic Kabansky region Tanhoi village Baykalsky Biospheric reserve Osinovka river	18	Built 250 meters of trail and 12 wooden steps; repaired 2 bridges.
1 8	12 – 21 August	Irkutsk region Prebaykalsly National park Listvianka village - B. Koti village	13	The main purpose of the project was eco-education, language practice, and informing participants about the Baikal region and trail building. Also improved 30 meters of trail.
1 9	17 – 30 August	Buryat Republic Ust-Barguzin area Maximiha village	18	Built 1500 meters of trail; excavated difficult parts of the trail (width=2-2.5 meters); marked 3 km of trail; scouted and marked future switchback (length=1-1.3 km).
2 0	22 August – 2 Sep- tember	Irkutsk region Sludyanski region Novo-Snezhny village Snezhnaya river	21	Built 240 meters of trail including a switchback; closed 15 meters of trail.
2 1	12 – 23 August	Buryat Republic Kurumkansky region	9	Marked and cleaned 4 km of the trail.

As a result there were **21 international summer volunteer projects in which 307 people took part. Cleaned, built, reconstructed, and marked approx. 110 km of trail**, Main types of the work at projects included building structures such as switchbacks, bridges, wooden and rock steps, information signs etc. Children took part in some of the projects. During almost all projects trash was collected and taken out. During all of the projects information about ecology and protection of the environment was distributed to tourists and locals.

**Future plans include creating a description of the trails and determining the number of kilometers comprising each part of the trail.**