



Ecotourism NZ Conference 09 NELSON, 5-6 August 2009

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The economic forecast may not be great, but at least ecotourism operators have something to look forward to this year - the annual Ecotourism NZ Conference in Nelson on 5-6 August.

Register now at ecotourismnz.com.

The conference aims to enhance the ecotourism industry by supporting businesses at the grassroots level. It is a practical, hands-on event providing advice, training and discussion on every-day issues facing ecotourism businesses.

“It’s a good investment, it’s relevant and it’s great fun too!” Ecotourism NZ spokesperson Hugh Canard says.

Ecotourism NZ project manager Sarah Caseley says the Nelson region’s natural environment, established ecotourism industry and convenient location make it the ideal location for a conference on ecotourism.

“There’s a really solid industry here and we can learn a lot from this region, particularly how operators and local agencies can collaborate to promote and improve ecotourism at a regional level.”

Each year the conference attracts around 150 delegates from New Zealand and overseas, including representatives from Tourism New Zealand, the Department of Conservation, environmental experts and leading tourism operators. Highlights this year include field trips to Nelson attractions and successful ecotourism operations, a wide range of keynote speakers and fun social events.

This year will see a focus on the economic downturn - a big issue for the tourism industry in the coming year. Mr Canard says operators can expect advice on how to navigate through the tough financial times, and how to add value without adding cost.

“Research indicates that visitors want to experience not only our natural assets but also our New Zealand culture. The best ecotourism products integrate nature and culture, and they engage the visitor at an emotional level,” he says. “The conference will be showing businesses how to profit by delivering products that combine these three elements.”

The conference also looks at the big questions facing the industry, including how best to protect, promote and manage it. Discussion topics include an in depth look at eco-tourists –who they are, what they want and how to attract them; the state of ecotourism and future predictions; and how New Zealand’s environmental policy stacks up against its 100% Pure promise.

Ecotourism NZ is an initiative of Tai Poutini Polytechnic. It has teamed up with Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) to host this years’ event, being held outside of the West Coast for the first time since it started in 2006.

To register for Ecotourism NZ Conference 09 or for further information go to www.ecotourismnz.com.