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May 2012

This e-newsletter kicks off EAI's first fundraising projects for Nepal this year. I hope you will help make it a success by telling your friends and neighbors how far the US dollar stretches in Nepal. Be part of the solution, one world, one elephant at a time!

No More Chains

Between trimming feet and brainstorming about a retirement center for elephants in Sauraha, Nepal, we---you, I and all of EAI's supporters---are about to embark on a very exciting pilot project at the National Trust for Nature Conservation Biodiversity Conservation Center (NTNC-BCC) hattisar (elephant stable).

Pursuing last year's recommendation to create chain-free enclosures for the BCC's five forest patrol elephants, Naresh Narian, an EAI advisor, and other NTNC officials have enthusiastically agreed to allow EAI to build a [chain-free enclosure](#) to demonstrate its functionality.

No chains = cooperative elephants

This is huge. It gives us the opportunity to show mahouts how cooperative elephants can become when allowed the freedom to move around unrestricted.

Eight-year-old Sweetie Kali will be the lucky recipient of this new and improved yard, where she will be off chains 24/7.

In addition to the direct benefits to her psychological and physical wellbeing, Sweetie Kali will demonstrate to the mahouts and NTNC administrators that elephants do not "go wild" when allowed to spend unsupervised time off chains.



Sweetie Kali, her fellow herd members and most of the government elephants are taken to the forest each day. Although they spend eight hours a day wandering the forest foraging for food, they are still under the strict control of their mahouts. Their lives are measurably better than those of privately owned elephants, who are required to give rides to tourists all day and are tethered in a stable overnight.

But, together with NTNC, we can do better.



Sweetie Kali and positive changes to come

Sweetie Kali was chosen because she is the youngest elephant in the herd, born at the NTNC-BCC. Her incessant head bobbing is a concern for the mahouts and management alike. The staff was witness to the onset of her stereotypical behavior, which started when she turned 3, following her formal training and induction into

the traditional world of chains.

Currently, all elephants are tethered under their own private shelters. Once everyone is comfortable that the fence provides the security necessary, chances are that Sweetie's mother will be allowed to join her in the yard. Imagine what a moving reunion that will be.



The new chain-free yard will allow Sweetie Kali to engage in natural behaviors she has been prevented from in the past. She will be able to explore her new yard, dust herself to her heart's content, create mud wallows and feel the soothing sensation of scratching on a huge tree. Instead of sleeping tethered between two poles, she will sleep in any soft and comfortable location she chooses.

EAI's goal is to get this corral up and functioning before I leave Nepal in June. That is a rather optimistic expectation but I am determined to move the project forward as quickly as possible.



Vishnu Narain, a collaborative partner in our Bannerghatta, India, care center project, operates IBEX Gallagher, a

power fence company. We could not be more fortunate to have this connection. I have his bid in hand and a commitment to install the fence as soon as we are ready.

Training and foot care wall -- a prototype for Asia

If we built only the electric fence for the corral it would mean a world of improvement for Sweetie and would keep the cost of the project down. But a training and foot care wall---a two-sided, free standing, steel pipe structure---is essential to our efforts to improve elephant welfare in Nepal. Once the wall is in place, foot care will become a required duty of each mahout, integrated into their elephant care responsibilities, and all the NTNC-BCC and government elephants in Sauraha will have access to it.

The cost of the electric fence, including area preparation, materials, shipping and installation, is estimated to be \$3,240. The training and foot care wall, including pipe, delivery, welding, concrete and labor, nearly doubles the cost of the project. I believe this will be \$6,000 well spent as it will create a prototype that can be duplicated throughout Asia. [Donate now.](#)

Help Us Hire a Veterinarian to Oversee our Nepal Projects!

EAI has the exciting opportunity to [engage a veterinarian](#) in Sauraha, Chitwan National Park. The timing is perfect!

This is our third year in Sauraha. With the ongoing foot care and mahout training and the new chain-free enclosure and training and foot care wall, it is essential that we hire a veterinarian to coordinate and supervise our activities. It will also be much easier to expand EAI's welfare projects in Nepal with a professional in place.

Simply building a chain-free corral and a training and foot care wall for the mahouts and their elephants is not enough. We also need to formalize our Compassionate Elephant Care training and create incentives to encourage the mahouts to become more engaged in all aspects of their elephants' care and wellbeing. Once our collaborative effort to create an elephant retirement home is realized, our veterinarian will monitor the daily care of the resident elephants.

In addition to overseeing EAI's projects in my absence, our veterinarian will work closely with Dr. Gairhe, the senior government veterinarian, assisting in wildlife captures, rhino counts and regular animal management activities undertaken by NTNC-BCC.

EAI will be responsible for the vet's salary as well as all necessary equipment, lab work, travel and any other expenses we deem appropriate. Resumes are currently being reviewed.

Our budget for the first year is \$15,000. Yes, you read that right -- \$15,000 includes the veterinarian's salary and other costs associated with his/her work for EAI.

If you would like to [contribute](#) to this essential aspect of EAI's growth, please earmark your donation for "[Nepal veterinarian.](#)"

Update: Elephant Care and Rehabilitation Center Project, Bannerghatta, India

Earlier this year I learned that a portion of the land intended for our care center project was designated as revenue land.

Revenue land is owned by the government and designated for agricultural use or forest restoration. There are cases when the government can gift this land but the recipient must abide by strict use requirements and restrictions, is never allowed to sell it and the government has the legal right to reclaim it.

The process to acquire permission to use revenue land in India moves slowly and must take into consideration the villagers' needs and legal rights.



EAI collaborating partner Vishnu Narain reports that progress continues for the care center. He has met with local government officials and regulators, who expressed support of the project.

EAI is taking a wait-and-see attitude on this project. Once we have written authorization from the government to fence off and use the land for the intended purpose of an elephant care center, EAI will once again become active in the process moving forward.

I look forward to keeping you up to date on our exciting new projects.

Carol Buckley



Please visit my [Elevisions blog](#) and [my Facebook page](#) so I can keep you updated on our progress as it happens!

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