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Ring of Darhad Expedition To Engage Students in a Wildlife Survey of Mongolia

Bozeman, MT March 12th, 2013 - [Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation](#) (ASC) is pleased to announce the [Ring of Darhad Expedition](#). This 400-mile circumnavigation of the northern most region of Mongolia will serve as the region's first systematic winter wildlife track survey. While skiing with backpacks, four adventure-scientists and a National Geographic photographer hope to engage thousands students during the expedition through National Geographic Education. The team has developed a comprehensive [curriculum](#) targeted at third through seventh grade students in partnership with Montana State University.

Students are encouraged to follow the expedition through the rugged mountains surrounding the Darhad Valley as the team searches for hairs, scat, tracks and other signs of about 20 species with a primary focus on the wolverine. The team will answer questions and post updates on the Ring of Darhad Expedition website and teachers can access [seven lessons](#) for classroom use. The lessons will enhance students' understanding of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) with hands on and inquiry based activities. Sections covering ecosystems, biodiversity, wildlife ecology and climate change, provided by the Montana Institute on Ecosystems via its Climate in My Backyard program (CLIMB), will help students relate the research techniques used in mapping the biodiversity of Mongolia to their own school yards.

The team consists of team leader, Gregg Treinish- ASC Executive Director and 2009 National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, Polar explorer Forrest McCarthy, Jason Wilmot- Executive

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Director of the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative, Rebecca Watters- Director of the Mongolian Wildlife and Climate Change Project, and Jim Harris- a National Geographic photographer.

When the Mongolian Government issued a request for information on wildlife populations in the region, the idea of a winter survey to search for animals that are elusive and hard to find in the summer began to take shape. “We're doing a big transect that has the potential to provide some pretty interesting insight on wildlife that's detectable in winter, and the survey will give us baseline knowledge about where wolverines are in the landscape,” explains Watters.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has identified the wolverine as a species in need of protection in the lower 48 states due to a decrease in habitat spurred by rising climate temperatures and human encroachment. Wolverines in Mongolia face similar threats as mining operations and other development projects expand into their habitat. While researchers are beginning to learn about wolverines in the US, there is very limited scientific or DNA evidence of living wolverines in Mongolia. This winter survey will help Watters and other researchers living in Mongolia to determine areas in the region to continue future survey efforts. With this evidence Mongolian officials can make better informed decisions about managing the region's unique natural heritage.

[The Ring of Darhad Expedition](#) and [Educational Curriculum](#) would not be possible without a grant from the National Geographic Expeditions Council and the help of generous sponsors including Mountain Hardware, Osprey Packs, Clif Bar, Horny Toad, Rite in the Rain, Supai Gear, The Brunton Group, NRS, AlpineAire Foods, Primus, Big Agnes, Steripen, Smith Optics, Madshus, Baffin, Kahtoola, and Voile.

For more information, educational resources, and to keep track of the team please visit www.mongoliaexpedition.com or contact Gregg Treinish at gregg@adventureandscience.org.

About Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation

Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation was founded in January of 2011 with the understanding that many people traveling in the outdoors genuinely want to do more for the places they visit but often struggle with how to help. ASC exists to bridge this gap by pairing adventure athletes already traveling to some of the earth's most difficult-to-reach places with the scientists who need information from these areas. ASC also has the goal of creating unique and

innovative learning experiences about science while also saving the scientific and conservation communities millions of dollars in data collection costs. For more information visit www.adventureandscience.org

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