

## **Darhad Valley and Greater Yellowstone Parks and Protected Areas Exchange trip, May 10-27, 2014**

### **Participants and Objectives**

Participants included BioRegions staff Rebecca Watters, Cliff Montagne, Badmaa Dovchin, Mishig Jigjidsuren, and Badamtsetseg; health team members Dr. Tersh McCracken and Ian McCracken; and environmental team members Dr. Lance Craighead of the Craighead Institute, and Kristin Legg and Dr. David Thoma of the US National Park Service. Trip objectives were to

- Strengthen the development and administration of Darhad Valley National Parks and Strictly Protected Areas (SPAs) by sharing examples and training from the US National Park Service, the Craighead Institute and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem
- Build capacities for health care and preventative health practices
- Assist with the annual Darhad Blue Valley Festival
- Connect with the Bayanzurkh community with regard to the 2015 festival, reconstruction of the local museum, the litter issue, and a potential grazing management project

### **Results**

- The environmental team facilitated a workshop in Ulaan Uul with about 40 ranger and local official participants. **See the pdf: Mongolia National Parks Trip Report for details.**
- Dr. Tersh McCracken and Ian McCracken shared information back and forth with health professionals in the Ulaan Uul and Bayanzurkh hospitals.
- The Blue Valley Festival, held in Ulaan Uul, attracted a group of high quality singers and orators along with artisans who displayed their products for judging. The performance hall was packed with spectators.
- Bayanzurkh projects
  - 2015 festival: In Ulaanbaater we met with Oyungerel, Minister of Culture, Sport, and Tourism. She recommended having the festival for several years at the Bolshoi Rock on the Delger Murun River. We met with local officials and visited the proposed festival site as a first step in the planning process. We were impressed with the environmental fragility of the site.
  - Museum reconstruction will occur in the near future. They asked BioRegions to facilitate curation of the exhibits.
  - The team visited a tributary valley with extensive overgrazing and slope erosion and made contact with a progressive herder interested in cooperating in improving grazing management.