

### **BioRegions 2014 Work Trip to Orkhon Soum, Bulgan aimag**

This trip, sponsored by the Montana State University Office of International Programs in conjunction with MSU BioRegions and BioRegions International, involved teams for Business, Environment, Health (including nursing for the first time), and Veterinary Medicine (first time also).

#### Participants included

- MSU faculty members: Cliff Montagne (LRES), Susan Gibson (WWAMI Medical Education Program), Michele Sare (Nursing-Missoula Campus), Martha Joh Reeder (Business), Shannon Moreaux (Animal Science)
- Third Year Resident Physician Dr. Adam Stenseth and Mongolian University of Medical Science student Puujee (Purevsuren Batsaihan)[Puujee will also visit physicians and hospitals in Montana in July and August]
- Private Veterinarian Dr. Peter Heidmann, owner of Gallatin Equine Associates; visiting nurse Beth McCurdy from Rhode Island
- Business students and translator: Cassie Cline, Sam Beach, Jacob Ebersole, and Setsen Turbat
- Health and Nursing students and two translators: Bridgett McNulty (WWAMI medical student), Oriana Turley, Lauren Robison, Jessie Hardin, Badamtsetseg, and Oyungerel
- Environmental Science graduate student Badmaa Dovchin
- Colorado State University veterinary graduate student Jennifer Higgins
- Orkhon Coordinator Turbat
- Mongolian staff drivers and cooks

#### **Objectives**

To learn about Mongolian culture and contemporary issues of rural communities; to gain experience through service learning related to projects which make positive differences in business, education, environment, health, tradition, and whole community.

#### **Itinerary May 27-June 24**

After arrival and preliminary meetings with Mongolian collaborators in Ulaanbaatar, the group traveled via overnight train to Erdenet. There we visited the tailings pond of the Erdenet Mining Corporation and the wheat farm of our Orkhon Coordinator Turbat. Then we drove to Orkhon town and our field headquarters in the local government administrative cabin. From here, our teams fanned out to work on projects with Mongolian collaborators. The environment and veterinarian team interacted with herders and local veterinarians with numerous examinations and treatments for horses, including horse hoof care, and attention to the overgrazing situation. Jen Higgins collected samples to determine prevalence of brucellosis in cattle. The health team conducted screenings and trainings, the business team worked with the local government on a plan for tourism. The group traveled to two outlying districts (bags) to conduct additional activities before finishing up with additional training sessions in Orkhon town. The group experiences numerous meaningful sharing interactions with the Orkhon community, including Childrens' Day festivities June 1, a formal sharing and thanking ceremony and dance in the town cultural center,...

#### **Results**

Significant progress was made in the following, not to mention the participant and host co-learning experiences:

- Business team worked with soum officials to create a plan for tourism development
- Environment team followed-up with the Munkhbat family on grazing planning started in 2013

- Health Team
  - Conducted screenings for citizens
  - Provided training for bagh and soum doctors
  - Introduced the concept of a 'staffing', as a multidisciplinary brainstorming session to engage thoughts and mobilize resources to improve a particular health care situation
- Veterinarian Team introduced the concept of preventative hoof care early in a horse's life, demonstrated some field care and operation techniques, shared guidelines for use of medicines, discussed the concept of a group of local veterinarians forming to offer specialized education and training services and distribution of supplies and equipment
- The Mongolian translator staff decided to donate one day's wages each to a university scholarship fund for the cook's assistant. Dr. Moreaux led an effort by the American side to match the Mongolian contributions.

**Follow-up**

BioRegions will facilitate continuation of these projects along with additional projects including design for town parks and single parent family dwellings and participation in the 20 year soum planning process.