

miles of driving," says Gardner.

Conscientious music fans all over the country have also helped Reverb sell carbon offset stickers and pass out flyers at shows in exchange for free concert tickets and T-shirts. Melissa Ecker, an engineer in Houston, Texas, volunteered with Reverb at a Barenaked Ladies show in 2004. "I work in an industry that gets a fairly bad rap with the environment, so it's nice to do something on the opposite end," she says.

Reverb has also established partnerships with such environmental groups as the Clean Air Council and ForestEthics, which set up information booths at each concert venue so that fans can learn about environmental ethics, recycling and renewable energy. The group has even helped Warner Music Group replace its plastic CD covers and shrink wrap with post-consumer recycled content. On Guster's recent college tour, Reverb led a full day of activities for students, including a Town Hall Forum on campus sustainability and a tour of the band's biodiesel-powered bus.

With thousands of fans attending each show, rock concerts are a natural venue to promote Reverb's environmental message. Preaching is not part of the platform, but Gardner says, "It feels good to say from the stage in between songs: 'We got here in a biodiesel-fueled bus, and this show is powered by wind.'" By supporting environmental causes, he adds, "rock bands truly can 'walk the walk' and put it on display at their concerts."

CONTACT: Reverb, (718)781-7983, www.reverbrock.org. —*Kathryn Hawkins*

Tigers for Tourists

Protection of tigers in India reached a peak in the late 1980s before deteriorating. According to leading conservationists, both tiger and leopard populations are now nearing extinction levels, despite claims to the contrary by the Indian government.

"I believe this is the worst it's ever been for tigers in India," says the conservationist Valmik Thapar. "We have tried everything," adds Belinda Wright, executive director of the Wildlife Protection Society of India. "Poaching is worse during monsoon season when parks are closed, and smuggling [parts]

into China and Tibet continues to increase." Poachers sell tiger parts, which could fetch \$10,000 or more, for use in traditional medicine.

Preserving tiger populations in India's parks has been derailed by a ballooning human population and the lack of a clear management policy. Tigers are ecological stars for tourists and a rising Indian middle class. Oth-

Poaching and human encroachment threatens Indian tigers.



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ers view the animals as a recreational asset in the history of Indian sport. As late as the early 20th century, hunters shot tigers from the backs of elephants in elaborate safaris called "shikars."

India has four tiger reserves, but all is not well within them. With its 168 square miles and well-oiled management, Bhandavgarh Park gives the impression of a five-star residence for animals. Its small size, high concentration of tigers (56), and its active tracking of the cats by radio-equipped, elephant-riding forest guards allow visitors to see tigers at remarkably close range. Yet when besieged by cars full of noisy enthusiasts, Bhandavgarh begins to look like an amusement park where animals, grown tolerant of vehicles and crowds, perform for the crowds.

Corbett Park on the other hand, with its 819 square miles of reserve forest, has an air of majesty and mystery protected by park management. Mohan Lal Sherma, assistant manager of the state-owned park, says, "Bhandavgarh may have the highest concentration of wild tigers in the world."

Panna and Ranthambore Park give the impression of coasting on their former reputations. When asked about the 337-square-mile Panna Park, Thapar says, "It used to be a jewel, it has become a disaster." To sustain tourism, park officials boast of 35 tigers and 66 leopards. More realistic estimations taking poaching into account grant the park five to 10 tigers and nine or 10 leopards.

A thriving tiger population made the 152-square-mile Ranthambore Park famous at the end of the 1980s. A renowned Indian wildlife expert remembers seeing 16 different tigers in one day. But an estimated 20 tigers have disappeared since the early 1990s, and there are now only 25 or 26.

In two years, India has lost thousands of square miles of forest, of which 14 are potential tiger habitat. And a number of parks are islands where the risk of inbreeding may lead to extinction. Management policies—dictated by the revenue that attends frequent big cat sightings—have short-changed the animals' best interests.

Tigers in India's parks are becoming mere products, as they're seen by poachers and buyers of skins and other body parts.

CONTACT: Wildlife Protection Society of India, (011)91-11-4163-5920, www.wpsi-india.org. —Stephanie Sears



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Liz Moore is appalled at oil sands destruction—and the reaction to her website.

Grandma vs. the Oil-Sands Mine

Eighty-five-year-old grandmothers aren't typically subject to censorship, but Liz Moore is no ordinary grandma. After touring an oil-sands operation in Canada, Moore returned to her home in Colorado and began researching the mining process. Eventually, she spent \$3,600 on a website that chronicles the destructive environmental impacts of oil-sands mining.

"I was appalled at what I saw—the devastation of the land," she says of her visit to a Syncrude mine in Fort McMurray, Alberta. "I came home and decided people in the U.S. needed to hear about this, because we'll be buying more and more oil from Canada."

Soon legal threats arrived. The mining giant Syncrude Canada Ltd. and a branch of the Alberta government threatened legal action if Moore did not remove certain photos from the website, she says.

"It made me angry at a very deep level," Moore says. "I don't like censorship, and if it's done to me, I like it even less." Moore later learned that a release she signed before her tour gave the company the right to limit the use of her photos.

"Syncrude had a right to stop me," she says. "But it was still censorship."

The oil-sands mining company saw things differently. "We see this as an issue of copyright, accuracy and quality," a Syncrude spokesperson told the *Toronto Globe and Mail* newspaper.

Oil sands, also referred to as tar sands, are a mixture of clay, sand, water and bitumen. The latter is a form of oil that does not flow at normal temperatures or pressures. Typically, oil sands are strip mined and then processed to produce extra-heavy crude oil.

Moore's website offers a slide show about the destructiveness of the oil-sands mining process. The show includes photos she took during her trip to Fort McMurray, but 17 of the site's roughly 70 images have been removed and replaced with "censored" banners.

But help is on the way. Moore has been contacted by a Canadian nonprofit organization and individual photographers who have photos to replace the images that were censored.

Those responses, along with hundreds of "you go, girl"-type e-mails and invitations to return to Canada to give talks, have been heartwarming, Moore says.

"It's why I keep it up," she adds. CONTACT: Oil Sands of Canada, www.oilsandsofcanada.com. —Kevin Graham

"It made me angry on a very deep level," Moore says.