

Title line of email: Invitation to planning meeting on research and study abroad opportunities

The Environmental Policy Initiative at OSU is requesting your ideas and input:

Informational and planning meeting:

Opportunities for Albanian Research and Study Abroad

Monday, May 1st 3:30 pm

Room 105, AA bldg. - 2120 Fyffe Road

This meeting will determine the interest among the Ohio State University community in possible activities – including **Study Abroad, undergraduate and graduate student research, and faculty research and exchanges** – involving **Butrint National Park and Gjirokaster World Heritage Site, Albania, as well as possible activities in neighboring Greece.**

While specific opportunities have been identified, at this stage, everything is on the table – several locations or combinations of locations, several kinds of activities, and a wide variety of subject matter and/or disciplinary topics of possible research and study. Some of the opportunities already identified include:

- Land use – coastal zone planning
- Tourism & Ecosystem management
- Archeological research
- Economic and wetland restoration study

For more detailed information on the projects on which we're requesting your input, please read below.

While we welcome the participation of graduate students and encourage you to forward this message to those who may be interested, we would ask that you respond to either Randal.3@osu.edu or epi@osu.edu whether or not you personally will be able to attend. Please indicate as well if you are interested in further conversations, if you will be unable to attend on Monday, May 1st.

Albanian Leadership

In mid- December 2005, Auron Tare (currently Director of the Gjirokaster World Heritage program, and still deeply involved in Butrint as President of the Butrint Foundation) visited Ohio State at my invitation, and presented a seminar, ***Butrint National Park – 3000 years of Mediterranean History – Protecting a Homeric Landscape***. The timing was good for him, but really bad for most of us. So, while several Ohio State colleagues expressed interest, few were able to meet with Auron or attend his seminar. Auron Tare is an energetic and entrepreneurial figure, who has attracted much favorable publicity for Butrint, and attention from the World Bank and international public and private donors and supporters. He is interested in building ties between Ohio State faculty and students and Butrint/Gjirokaster.

Some brief background materials and web links re Butrint, Gjirokaster, and Greece follow.

Butrint National Park

Butrint National Park, on the southern Albanian coast just a few miles from the Greek island of Corfu, has spectacular ecological, archeological, and cultural resources. It is a World Heritage Site and a RAMSAR wetland site. After a long period of neglect in the post-war years, the change in government and economy beginning in 1992 opened opportunities for protecting and restoring the park's attractions, and developing sustainable uses; but it also created pressures from encroaching settlements and exploitation of park resources. More information can be found at www.butrinti.com . Potential subject matter for study and research at Butrint includes **coastal zone management, wetlands ecosystem management, sustainable tourism, sustainable economic development, landscape architecture, archeology, art, theater, and cultural studies**.

Gjirokaster World Heritage Site

An hour drive east of Sarande (the gateway town for Butrint) across a mountain range, Gjirokaster was a major Ottoman provincial capital. A long subsequent period of economic decline has left its Ottoman architecture, etc, well-preserved. Recently, it has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. While the Gjirokaster World Heritage Site does not yet have its own website, the following sites give some impression of what is there <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/569/>, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argyrocastro> . Today, Gjirokaster is just starting the task of converting its vast historical legacy into an

asset for the future. Potential subject matter for study and research includes **restoration of historic buildings and towns, Balkans culture, art and history, Islamic studies, tourism development, and economic development.** The University of Gjirokaster, while relatively young and modestly resourced, has facilities that might be useful for Study Abroad and/or student visits.

Greece

Southern Albania borders Greece, and ferries serve the Adriatic coast from Patra to Venice, including the Ionian Greek Islands (inc. Corfu, just a few miles across the strait from Butrint/Sarande) and the Dalmatian coast resorts. Study Abroad opportunities might be structured to include Greece as well as Butrint and/or Gjirokaster. While Greece has a vast wealth of attractions that would interest Study Abroad students, I should note that Ohio State is involved in excavations at Isthmia, not far from Patra: <http://isthmia.osu.edu/> .

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