



The making of an elephant friendly future

Letting elephants be elephants at ChangChill
(formerly Happy Elephant Valley)

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“Going back to an elephant riding camp is really hard to bear. Only then do you realise what you have witnessed at a truly elephant friendly venue is very special.”

Dr Jan Schmidt-Burbach, Global Wildlife and Veterinary Advisor, World Animal Protection

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In 2017, Happy Elephant Valley, now known as ChangChill (meaning relaxed elephants in Thai) started its journey. Moving away from an elephant camp allowing tourist to ride its elephants, towards becoming a truly elephant friendly venue.

With the support of World Animal Protection, and some of the world's leading travel companies, ChangChill is now ready to reopen its doors: offering a better life for elephants and a unique experience for visitors.

This is the first of hopefully many elephant camps in Thailand, and beyond, to move from elephant riding to an observation only elephant venue.

The goal is to inspire other elephant camps to replicate this model and help meet the growing demand from travellers for responsible travel experiences.

Both elephants and visitors benefit from not being in direct contact with each other. That's why we've been working with leading travel companies to help ChangChill become elephant friendly, while promoting wildlife friendly tourism.

The transition allows the six resident female elephants the freedom to roam the valley, graze, and bathe in the river, mud and dust, while socialising with each other.

Visitors are no longer able to ride, bathe or directly feed the elephants. They can instead admire the elephants expressing their natural behaviour, including from the new observational deck overlooking the picturesque valley.

They can experience a full or half day with the elephants in an environment as close to the wild as possible, while learning more about these majestic wild animals.

The elephants at ChangChill choose what they want to do at their own pace and in their own time. Letting elephants just be elephants.

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If you would like to include ChangChill in your offering to your customers, please contact AudreyMealia@worldanimalprotection.org



Proving demand by the Coalition for Ethical Wildlife Tourism (CEWT)

The transition of ChangChill is thanks to the Coalition for Ethical Wildlife Tourism, which includes; TUI Group and the TUI Care Foundation, Intrepid Group, The Travel Corporation, G Adventures, DER Touristik Group, Thomas Cook Group, QYER, EXO Travel, among others.

ChangChill stopped allowing tourists to ride its elephants after its owners were reassured by travel industry leaders, and World Animal Protection, that tourists are becoming less accepting of activities that allow direct contact with wildlife.

In September 2017, we presented a business case to a group of around fifteen Thai elephant camps, including Happy Elephant Valley, demonstrating a growing demand for observation only elephant-friendly tourism - and that we were ready to support venues that put the needs of elephants at their heart.

This moved Happy Elephant Valley to make the pioneering decision to transition its business model and allow their elephants to be free to behave as naturally as possible, while tourists experience this natural wonder from a safe distance.

Happy Elephant Valley is now reopening its gates as ChangChill, a new name to symbolise a new start, and ready to share this truly special elephant friendly experience with visitors from across the globe.

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For more information please visit
www.worldanimalprotection.org/cewt

Making an elephant-friendly future

Thousands of elephants still live in unacceptable, captive conditions in Thailand and elsewhere, enduring harsh training regimes to become submissive enough to be exploited for stressful and demanding tourist activities, like carrying tourists in the heat, day in, day out.

But things are changing for elephants and the wildlife tourism industry.

Over 225 travel companies have now joined World Animal Protection and have committed to stop selling and promoting elephant entertainment, such as rides and shows.

These include; TUI, Intrepid, Thomas Cook, TripAdvisor, DER Touristik, Contiki, G Adventure, TripAdvisor and Chinese brand such as CAISSA and QYER.

ChangChill is a ground-breaking development for both elephants, travellers and the tourism industry. It demonstrates that elephant-friendly tourism is possible and is a viable business model for other elephant camps to replicate.

We hope it is the first of many elephant camps that will see the light and transform to observation only alternatives, so we can all build an elephant friendly future together.

Benefits of supporting an elephant friendly venue like ChangChill:

- Elephants can express their natural behaviour, including free roaming, grazing and socialising.
- Visitors have a unique opportunity to experience elephants just being elephants, while learning more about these majestic wild animals.
- Elephants are much happier when they're given the freedom to be elephants, without being in direct contact with tourists, making life safer for mahouts who do not have to resort to cruel methods to control them.
- Further elephant camps are encouraged to move away from tourist activities that allow close contact with elephants, which are the results of harsh training and constant control over the elephants.
- There will be a gradual reduction in the number of captive elephants being exploited for tourism entertainment, as elephant friendly venues commit to not breeding, and are fully transparent about the origin of their elephants.



World Animal Protection is working to end the exploitation of elephants and wildlife for entertainment across the globe, so elephants do not have to suffer in captivity and remain in the wild, where they belong.

For more information please visit
www.worldanimalprotection.org/wildlifefriendly