



Participant Information Sheet

(This is yours to keep for reference)

Research Title: Seven Summits Sustainability Project

Principal Investigator:

Dr Chrystie Watson

Faculty of Arts and Society

Charles Darwin University (CDU), Australia

Research Team:

Dr Kim Caudwell (CDU)

Dr Matthew Abunyewah (CDU)

Dr Suman Laudari (Australian National University)

Dr Michael Erdiaw-Kwasie (CDU)

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. Please read the following information about the project so that you can decide whether you would like to take part in this research. Please feel free to ask any questions you might have about your involvement in the project.

If you decide to participate in this research, please keep in mind that your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to stop at any time, and you would not need to give any explanation for your decision to stop participating. If you choose to stop participating, your responses will be removed from the study, where your responses are identifiable. Please note, the removal of your data from published findings may not be possible. Your decision whether to take part, or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with Charles Darwin University (CDU) or Climbing the Seven Summits (CTSS).

This Participant Information Sheet is yours to keep and an Informed Consent Form will appear at the start of the online survey.

What is this research about?

This project combines ecosystem science, environmental management and psychology to better understand, manage and conserve the ecosystems of the highest peaks on each continent. Climbing 'The Seven Summits' has become an increasingly popular goal of adventurers around the world which has come at a cost to the surrounding ecosystems. Coordinated efforts between researchers, environmental management agencies and climbing organisations is deemed imperative for effective management; the attitudes and behaviours of users in relation to environmental protection initiatives being equally important. Through this project the research team will collect insights and data on the key impacts, management strategies and user behaviours in these areas through engagement and collaborations with researchers, management authorities, the climbing industry and mountaineers. The project leader will

also climb each of the Seven Summits to observe conditions and behaviours. The findings will inform recommendations and initiatives aimed at reducing the impacts on the relevant ecosystems, through industry practices and management strategies.

Study aim(s):

Charles Darwin University (CDU) and Climbing the Seven Summits (CTSS) have partnered to investigate the impacts of the mountaineering industry and activities on the Seven Summit ecosystems. The aim of the project is to better understand, develop and implement initiatives that reduce these impacts.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By taking part in this study, you will be helping the research team and industry to better understand your climbing experiences, knowledge and understanding of the potential impacts of mountaineering activities on the Seven Summit ecosystems. The study findings are expected to inform potential adjustments to industry practices, for the benefit of the social, environmental and economic aspects of the mountaineering industry in the Seven Summits regions. The study findings will also be evaluated and communicated to management authorities in relation to the ecosystem management strategies employed in each region.

What are the possible risks and disadvantages of taking part?

The risks associated with taking part in this study are deemed low. The study has been designed to minimise any identified potential risks. As a potential participant of the study survey and interview stages of the project, you will be invited to participate at times which do not interfere or intrude on expeditions as your primary focus. This will mitigate the risk of distracting you from the required safety protocols during expeditions, as directed by CTSS and your nominated guide(s).

What will I need to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey which is expected to take no more than 15 minutes to complete. The survey will include a variety of question types, including open-ended questions. At the end of the survey, you will be invited to participate in an interview with a member of the research team, which will take no more than 60 minutes and will be audio/video recorded for transcription purposes. The survey and interview are voluntary, and you can elect to participate in the survey only, both the survey and interview or neither.

If you participate in or guide more than one Seven Summits expedition with CTSS, you may be invited to participate in the study survey and/or interview more than once. This allows the researchers to collect longitudinal data and draw comparisons between different expeditions, regions and implemented initiatives. Participation in one or more surveys and/or interviews is voluntary and you do not have to complete additional surveys/interviews based on participation in previous surveys/interviews.

What will happen to the information about me?

All information collected about you will remain confidential. If there are a small number of participants and/or rare identifying factors of your data, it might not be possible to guarantee complete anonymity.

Data collected through this study will be stored as per the Charles Darwin University data storage requirements. The research team will have access to the data to conduct analyses and share study findings. Future research projects may draw upon the data collected in this study. Permissions to access the data for future research will be given at the discretion of the principal investigator.

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forms. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified, except with your expressed permission.

The research will be published in academic journals and other publications and presented at conferences and industry/management meetings. We will also be asking your permission, through the 'Informed Consent', to use your data in other projects. This allows us or other researchers to use what you have said in interviews and survey responses at other times rather than having to speak to you again. You do not have to give this permission. If you choose not to, your data would be destroyed after 5 years as is standard practice in other research projects.

Can I hear about the results of this research?

The research findings from this study will be shared by CDU and CTSS through academic, media, industry and other public platforms which may be accessible to participants of the study.

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This project is being managed by Dr Chrystie Watson, Faculty of Arts and Society at Charles Darwin University. If you would like more information before you decide to participate, please contact Chrystie by email chrystie.watson@cdu.edu.au. You may also use this contact at any time during the project, if you need information or wish to withdraw.

This project has been approved by the Charles Darwin University Human Research Ethics Committee ID number H24056. If you have any questions or concerns that you do not want to direct to the researchers, you are invited to contact the Charles Darwin University Research Integrity and Ethics team on (08) 8946 6063, on the toll-free number, 1800 466 215 or by email, ethics@cdu.edu.au.

The Research Integrity and Ethics team can pass on any concerns to the Charles Darwin University Human Research Ethics Committee (CDU-HREC) and appropriate officers within the University.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research.

Dr Chrystie Watson