



Regional Technical Workshop to combat illegal wildlife trade in Central Asia



Four countries and several organizations came together in the first regional workshop, focused on combating illegal wildlife trade in Central Asia. The workshop, held in the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek, on September 17 & 18, was attended by governmental and non-governmental organizations from Kazakhstan, Russia and Tajikistan, representatives of environmental and law enforcement agencies from Kyrgyzstan, and national and international conservation organizations.

Wildlife crime occurring in the region includes poaching, trafficking and trade, primarily in snow leopards, bears, trophy ungulates and birds. Only a small proportion of

these illegally trafficked wildlife products ultimately end up in Central Asia – but delegates at the workshop recognized that their countries are frequently used for transit of such products on their way towards illegal markets in East Asia, the Middle East, Europe and America. All participating countries reiterated their determination to stop these crimes.

Corruption, lack of competence of executing bodies, low incentives, lack of accountability, insufficient coordination between organizations and inadequate capacity of frontline staff were identified as the main challenges to implementing effective law enforcement

strategies to combat wildlife crime in the region. The delegates also identified several opportunities of utilizing existing legal frameworks and the establishment of mechanisms for inter-agency collaboration and cooperation.

A regional network of multi-agency, coordinated, collaborative and strategic regional response, with the support of INTERPOL, was proposed as part of the strategy, focusing on common themes cutting across international boundaries to provide greater control over illegal poaching and trafficking of wildlife; to share intelligence, conduct joint operations, engage in advocacy and identify capacity building opportunities.

Illegal wildlife trade is recognized as one of the global support components under the GSLEP program that transcend beyond national boundaries and go beyond the capacity of one country to address alone.

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ilbirs.

Country updates

Afghanistan

Management planning

The management plan for the Big Pamir Wildlife Reserve (BPWR) was reviewed and approved at the local levels (local communities, district and provincial authorities) and submitted to the central government. Also, the translation of the management plan for Tegghmansu Wildlife Reserve into the local language is under review and will be preceded for approval process.

A web portal has been developed to store and display statistical information from national and sub national sources, geospatial data sets (maps) covering themes such as biodiversity, protected areas, species (population, distribution, habitat classification, and etc.) and habitats. The portal will include information on snow leopard and its habitat to help communicate and disseminate information more efficiently and effectively between governmental and non-governmental agencies.

An assessment of previously implemented Predator Proof Corrals was implemented to

study their effectiveness and identify possible gaps before another round of predator proofing of the corrals in Wakhan and Pamirs. Live-stock depredation surveys with specific focus on depredation by snow leopards were conducted in the Wakhan Corridor. Both these surveys were implemented by involvement of the local snow leopard conservation team who are trained and continually supported by Wildlife Conservation Society.

Research

Snow Leopard habitat modeling was done in Wakhan using existing telemetry data. Minimum Convex Polygons (MCP) and Localized Convex Hulls (LoCoH) techniques were used to estimate home ranges.

The wild ungulate surveys were conducted in the Hindu Kush range within Wakhan. Urial and ibex were identified as important components of present wildlife in Wakhan and they serve as natural prey for snow leopard and other predators.

Preparations for another round of snow leopard collaring are complete in Hindu Kush ranges of Wakhan— a suitable trapping site has been identified and main camp has been set. Hopefully in the next several weeks, more snow leopards will be collared to understand their ranging patterns and behavioural ecology.

Community based conservation

As part of the on-going corral proofing program, 76 household corrals have been predator proofed in three villages of Wakhan to alleviate conflict between human and snow leopard (as the main predator in the area) and reduce their retaliation killings. The snow leopard team, comprised of 3 trained local rangers, continued their work in Wakhan with technical and logistical support from Wildlife Conservation Society.

76 corrals have been predator-proofed in three villages of Wakhan to ease human-wildlife conflict. (photo: Wildlife Conservation Society)



Plans are underway to collar another snow leopard in Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor. (photo: Wildlife Conservation Society)

THE
MANAGEMENT
PLAN FOR BIG
PAMIR WILDLIFE
RESERVE HAS
BEEN APPROVED
AT LOCAL LEVELS
AND SUBMITTED
TO CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT



Country updates

Bhutan

Bhutan is moving ahead with the process of developing its snow leopard landscape management plans. Proposals have been submitted to potential donors to support the work. Partial funding has already been secured, and the process of management planning is expected to be finished by the middle of 2016.

A proposal has also been submitted to WWF-Bhutan's program office for GSLEP program implementation. German

organization NABU has shown interest to collaborate with Bhutan in the second phase survey, providing equipment such as camera traps. Formalities are yet to be completed.

This year the snow leopards day will be celebrated at Paro Territorial Division, which is the only territorial division within the snow leopard range. It is for the first time that such a day is being celebrated there, and it will be a

paradigm shift taking wildlife conservation outside protected areas.

A planning and training workshop for phase two camera trap survey of snow leopards took place in Bhutan on 7-11 September 2015. Field surveys have been conducted between 25 September and 10 October. All cameras will be retrieved by 12 December, resulting in a total sampling effort of 60 days.



A training workshop for Bhutan's first countrywide snow leopard survey took place in September.

Kazakhstan

Two projects are currently being undertaken in Kazakhstan under the GSLEP program.

A project funded by NABU and BMZ is currently ongoing in two Protected Areas in Tien Shan Mountains, Kazakhstan. The objective of these projects is to improve the monitoring system within protected areas and gather data on snow leopards using camera traps. The projects are currently underway in the Ile-Alatau State Nature National Park and Kolsay Koldery State Nature National Park. Both projects are being

implemented under the program on Conservation of Biodiversity of trans-boundary region of Northern Tien-Shan. So far 11 and 3 individual snow leopards have been photographed and identified in Kolsay Koldery and Ile Alatau respectively.

Another project is being conducted in Zhongar Alatau Mountains within Zhongar Alatau State Nature National Park and Tokty Zakaznik National park. The project is funded by Carlsberg Kazakhstan. It aims at estimating the snow leopard population from the study area, and de-

velop recommendations for the government to improve protection in the project sites, particularly Zhongar Alatau National Park territory expansion. Carlsberg Kazakhstan has also launched a public awareness program where reality shows are being made to be telecast on television to inform people about the importance of snow leopards. So far three snow leopards have been identified in Zhongar Alatau.

RANGE

COUNTRIES HAVE
MADE TANGIBLE
PROGRESS IN
THEIR EFFORTS
TO SAVE SNOW
LEOPARDS



Snow leopard population monitoring is currently underway in Ile-Alatau State Nature National Park (photo: Association of Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan).

Country updates

Kyrgyzstan



New camera trap photos from Sarychat Ertash Reserve will help estimate snow leopard density in this landscape (photo: Snow Leopard Foundation).

FIGHTING WILDLIFE CRIME HAS BEEN A FOCAL POINT OF ACTIVITIES IN KYRGYZSTAN



In Kyrgyzstan, government officials and interested partners met to discuss plans for a countrywide wildlife survey.

A regional technical workshop to address illegal wildlife trade was organized in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan bringing together representatives from three other Central Asian countries and several government and non-government agencies and organizations. The workshop was supported by INTERPOL, UNDP, the Snow Leopard Trust, and the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystems Protection Program (GSLEP). The workshop was aimed to assess the current status and understand the situation, opportunities and gaps in control and monitoring of wildlife crime at the national, regional and international level.

Immediately after the regional workshop, a five day training workshop was organized by INTERPOL in collaboration with Snow Leopard Trust and Snow Leopard Foundation-

Kyrgyzstan to improve the rangers' capacity for crime scene investigation, operation planning and evidence handling.

Kyrgyzstan has also initiated preparations towards developing the management plan for Sarychat-Tien Shan landscape, one of its primary landscapes committed to be secured under the GSLEP program by 2020. A small grant from UNDP-GEF SGP has been sought to develop the plan based on the Management Planning Guidelines released during the Steering Committee Meeting in March 2015. Currently a team of researchers, wildlife photographers and rangers are in the field collecting camera traps from Sarychat Ertash Reserve that were set by researchers from Snow Leopard Trust during early summer. In the next few months, sampling is expected in at least

one more site within the landscape to estimate snow leopard population density.

The Kyrgyz Government is also mulling an ambitious plan of conducting country-wide surveys to assess the status of snow leopard and other wildlife. A working meeting was organized at the Secretariat of the GSLEP to discuss the possibilities with partner organizations and institutions.

A regional proposal was recently submitted to the GEF Secretariat to support global support components of the GSLEP program. The three major components that the proposal hopes to address in Central Asia are knowledge sharing and trans-boundary cooperation, monitoring frameworks, and sustainability of conservation action. The Medium Sized Project proposal is currently under review.

Pakistan

In Pakistan, the Karakoram and Hindu Kush mountain ranges serve as the snow leopard's potential habitat, spreading over an area of about 80,000 sq.km. In continuation of the efforts to

strengthen and expand the program, Snow Leopard Foundation (SLF), Pakistan, confirmed the presence of snow leopards in the Musk Deer National Park, Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

The study was designed to investigate the presence of snow leopards and other carnivore species in the area. Hussain Ali, Senior Research Associate of SLF who was leading the study team ex-

Country updates

plained that snow leopards are facing the biggest threat from herders who kill the big cat in retaliation for loss of livestock. Kashmir is a relatively more populated area as compared to other snow leopard habitats in Pakistan like Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan and people live close to the wildlife habitat.

In populated areas that also have livestock and thick vegetation, detecting presence of snow leopards becomes difficult. Despite the challenges, the team was lucky to get snow leopard pictures from the area.

Tajikistan

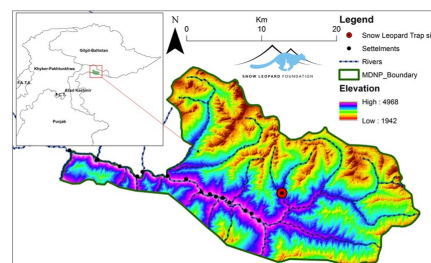
Snow leopard research in Tajikistan is focused on camera trapping, ungulate population estimation, evaluation of key threats to snow leopards, and evaluation of economic losses to communities due to depredation. While much information is available from Badkshan region, little research has been done on snow leopards in the remaining snow leopard habitats.

A project is being developed by the Republic of Tajikistan on conservation of ecosys-

In total, 40 passive infrared camera traps were installed in the mountains of Gurez Valley that falls in the proposed Himalayan landscape. This landscape encompasses Kashmir, Astor, Diamer and some parts of Skardu district in Gilgit Baltistan. Castor based lure was used, at each station to attract the animals. The study area was divided into small compartments based on natural watershed boundaries. Beside snow leopard, other carnivorous species photographed were leopard cat, wolf, fox, stone marten, yellow throated marten and brown bear. The only

wild prey species photographed was musk deer.

After the study, communities in Gurez Valley proudly displayed the photos of camera trapped species to tourists, which is fostering awareness and respect and affection for wildlife, particularly snow leopards. These realizations encourage the local people to shift their behaviors and attitudes towards snow leopards, which are considered as a success to save the big cat, the main goal of GSLEP.



The rescued snow leopard

LOCALS

PROUDLY SHOW
CAMERA TRAP
PHOTOS OF
SNOW
LEOPARDS TO
TOURISTS.

tems of the Tien Shan and Pamir-Alai to protect the snow leopard and the sustainable livelihoods of communities. The main objectives of the project are conservation of ecosystem by generating livelihoods through sustainable use of natural habitats. This project is in its preparatory stage and will be submitted to the Global Environment Facility. It will be implemented by UNDP and the National Centre for Biodiversity and Biosafety in collaboration with the Com-

mittee of Environment of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and the Forestry Agency under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. Apart from the National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities (NSLEPs), the project also aligns with the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity of the Republic of Tajikistan, in accordance with the Aichi Biodiversity targets for 2014-2020.



Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade in Central Asia 2015-2018

Goal

In accordance with the Bishkek Declaration, all participating countries to take immediate action to develop effective mechanisms to stop poaching, and illegal trade and trafficking of snow leopards and other wildlife by adopting comprehensive legislation, strengthening national law-enforcement systems, and enhancing national, regional and international law enforcement collaboration, communication and cooperation.

Our priorities

The participating countries, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan recognize that priority wildlife crime occurs as a result of poaching, trafficking and trade, primarily in snow leopards, bears, ungulates and hunting birds.

- While snow leopards are traded live as cubs, they are also killed and their skins and possibly other body parts exported.
- Ungulates are primarily poached for illegal trophies and meat, and more recently ibex are being sought from Middle Eastern nations for supposed medicinal use of their intestines.
- Hunting birds, mostly live, are smuggled to the Middle Eastern countries and sold into the pet trade.

All four participating countries acknowledge that they are used as transit countries, passing on the wildlife products to a neighbouring country and ultimately reaching destinations either towards East Asia, the Middle-East, Europe or America. Simultaneously, the four countries are also serving as destinations for a small proportion of the illegally trafficked wildlife products. The black markets within the countries function not only as selling points, but also as transit points.

All participating countries recognize that several other criminal activities, punishable to a variable extent under the law of the land, go hand in hand with the illegal wildlife trade. These include corruption, drug trafficking, illegal use of guns, use of chemicals or poisons, fabrication of documentation and causing wild fires.

Our challenges

- A key challenge for participating countries is to develop effective enforcement strategies to be able to respond to the increasing convergence between wildlife trafficking and

other serious crime types including, but not limited to, corruption, drug trafficking, weapons offences and financial crime.

- All participating countries recognize that the lack of capacity and qualification of employees (including frontline staff) of authorized bodies in the field of environment protection, low incentives, lack of accountability, and poor coordination between organizations are the main challenges to implementing effective law enforcement strategies to combat wildlife crime in the region.

Our opportunities

- Greater impact can be obtained in controlling illegal wildlife trade by coupling it with existing legal frameworks for other serious crime types,
- Establishing mechanisms for inter-agency collaboration and cooperation between ministries, law enforcement officials, and representatives of customs and border protection,
- Providing appropriate and targeted training to frontline staff including rangers, police, customs officers and border service personnel is essential,
- Publicity via conventional and social media can be effectively used to educate the public and promote the rule of law,
- Cooperation with international organizations such as INTERPOL, CITES, UNEP and WCO is essential,
- Work more closely with law enforcement agencies of the participating countries including experts in combating corruption and other financial crimes, drug trafficking, and with National Central Bureaus (INTERPOL) to prevent wildlife crime,
- Regular trans-boundary meetings between environment enforcement, customs and border officials is essential,
- There is a need to establish multi-disciplinary wildlife enforcement networks,
- There is a need to improve capacity and provide incentives to encourage frontline staff, and
- There is a need to establish a Regional Wildlife Enforcement Network, guided by strong leadership, expertise, governance and accountability.

Key outcome of the first regional technical workshop addressing illegal wildlife trade in Central Asia

Action points

1. National Environmental Security Task Forces (NEST)

At a national level, a multi-agency response is needed to combat the threat posed by wildlife crime. This multi-agency network will be referred to as a National Environment Security Task Force (NEST), which is designated to nationally address and combat wildlife crime through a co-ordinated, collaborative and strategic response.

The NEST shall be composed of nominated experts from wildlife agencies, police, customs, and NGOs. It will also include experts in investigations, intelligence, prosecutors, and National Central Bureaus with support from INTERPOL's Environment Security Sub-Directorate.

2. Regional network

A network of key officials from participating countries will be established. It will include the National Focal Point of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Programme and representatives of National Central Bureaus (INTERPOL) from each participating country, as well as wildlife, customs and border agency officials. The focus of the network's activities, within the GSLEP framework, will be on common themes that cut across international boundaries in providing greater control over illegal poaching and trafficking of wildlife.

The regional network will meet once every year to review the strategy, discuss the status of the situation, emerging threats, challenges and opportunities, and suggest modifications to the NESTs accordingly. The meetings will provide opportunities to highlight success stories as well as opportunities for improvement. A key role of the regional network is to share intelligence, conduct joint operations, identify capacity building opportunities and advocacy.

The regional network will be known as the Snow Leopard and Wildlife Enforcement Network (SLAWEN). This network will operate in the spirit of cooperation between the participating countries, agencies and relevant non-government organizations. It will work to complement, support and collaborate with existing formal networks such as South Asian Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) and the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEANWEN) and provide a comprehensive conduit for these networks across Central Asia and in particular snow leopard range countries that currently are not members of SAWEN or ASEANWEN.

3. Capacity development

The SLAWEN will explore and implement on-going training and development programs to improve wildlife law enforcement capabilities by drawing on experts in wildlife enforcement, operational safety and investigation techniques.

4. Forensic support

The SLAWEN will review existing national, regional and global forensic capabilities and explore opportunities to link practitioners and investigative officials to enhance wildlife law enforcement outcomes.

4. Information sharing

The GSLEP program has a Secretariat based in Bishkek. A newsletter titled 'Ilbirs' is published quarterly to share information about the progress of various aspects of this Regional Enforcement Strategy. A page will be dedicated to the trans-boundary activities of the SLAWEN.



CONSERVATION
OF THE SNOW
LEOPARD AND
ITS HABITAT IS
STRONGLY
LINKED TO THE
WELFARE OF
LOCAL
COMMUNITIES.



Dear colleagues and friends,

Two years ago, on 23rd October 2013, the historical snow leopard summit paved the way for the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program. We are pleased to inform you that our first newsletter received good feedback. We hope that the newsletter continues to be a vehicle for sharing information about the various activities going on as part of the GSLEP program.

We are happy to share with you all the second issue of Ilbirs, the quarterly newsletter of the GSLEP, published by the Secretariat. We received some excellent up-

dates from some of our partner range countries including Afghanistan, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan. We sincerely urge other range countries and partners of the GSLEP program to also share relevant information via this newsletter.

The key outcomes of the Regional IWT workshop in Central Asia in Bishkek identify the GSLEP program as a viable vehicle to take its activities forward. It also sees huge potential in the existing GSLEP framework to seek convergence between activities of the proposed Snow

Leopard and Wildlife Enforcement Network (SLAWEN) with other networks such as the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN). Ilbirs was recognized as a potential tool to disseminate information about the proposed SLAWEN via a dedicated page.

We hope that with growing interests and contents, Ilbirs will soon become an important mode of tracking the progress being done under the GSLEP program.

— GSLEP Secretariat

Snow leopard conservation and climate change

Conservation of the snow leopard and its habitat is strongly linked to the welfare of local communities. Rapidly changing climate patterns and an increase in the number extreme weather events are having large negative impacts on mountain ecosystems in the Central Asia and Himalaya Region, as well as causing large economic losses to humans residing in these mountainous regions. Therefore it is imperative to link community based snow leopard conservation, a cornerstone of the GSLEP program, with efforts to improve climate

adaptation capacity in this ecologically fragile region.

The upcoming UNFCCC COP 21 meeting in Paris provides an ideal setting to broadly discuss the impacts of climate change on snow leopards, their ecosystems and the livelihoods of local villagers residing in snow leopard habitat. With that in mind, we have decided to host a side meeting on 10th December 2015 on the sidelines of the UNFCCC COP.

The impact of climate change on the mountains can be multifold. From direct

impacts caused by altering weather patterns and receding glaciers and snowlines, to cascading effects of extreme weather conditions on communities leading to increased conflict and reduced tolerance. There is a lot at stake with climate change.

With 60% of the world's population dependent on snow leopard habitats for water, the need to work together and garner global support for snow leopard conservation cannot be overemphasized.

Climate Change could push snow leopards over the edge

Urgent international action must be taken in the face of climate change to save the snow leopard and conserve its fragile mountain habitats that provide water to hundreds of millions of people across Asia, according to a new WWF report.

The report, *Fragile Connections: Snow leopards, people, water and the global climate*, reveals that more than a third of snow leopard habitat could be rendered unsuitable for the endangered big cats if climate change is not checked. Warmer temperatures could see the tree line shifting up the mountains and farmers planting crops and grazing livestock at higher altitudes, squeezing the remaining snow leopards into smaller pockets.

It is not just snow leopards that are at risk, since their high-altitude habitat spans many of Asia's major watersheds. Over 330 million people live within six miles of rivers originating in snow leopard territory and directly depend on them for their daily water supplies, according to the report. Climate change could drastically alter the flow of water down from the mountains, threatening the livelihoods of vast numbers of people across the continent.

There could be as few as 4,000 snow leopards left in Asia's high mountains, and their numbers are continuing to fall. Increased habitat loss and degradation, poaching and conflict with communities have contributed to a 20% decline in the population in the past 16 years and left the species barely hanging on in many places. Unchecked, climate change will exacerbate these threats and could push the species over the edge.

Addressing these challenges has been the primary impetus of WWF's Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities project (AHM), which was launched in 2012 with support from USAID. By both working in Asia's high mountain communities, where many impacts are already being felt, and influencing policy, which governs natural resource management across the snow leopard's range, we are contributing to a future where both people and biodiversity can thrive, even in the face of climate change. Working with both climate and snow leopard scientists is helping create development strategies that improve livelihoods, build resiliency, and maintain crucial snow leopard habitat in key locations across the range.

WWF has also committed itself to supporting countries make climate-smart, landscape management plans that can serve as models for others in the region.

The Fragile Connections report also revealed that less than 14 percent of snow leopard habitat has ever been covered by either research or conservation activities.

Efforts to scale up these efforts are underway. In 2013, the twelve snow leopard range states signed up to the ambitious Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP) in Bishkek. The landmark agreement signaled an unprecedented level of commitment to conserve the snow leopard as well as a new era of collaboration between governments, international organizations and civil society groups.

OVER 330
MILLION PEOPLE
LIVE WITHIN SIX
MILES OF RIVERS
ORIGINATING IN
SNOW LEOPARD
TERRITORY AND
DIRECTLY DEPEND
ON THEM FOR
THEIR DAILY
WATER SUPPLIES



Who we are: *National Focal Points*

Afghanistan



Mr. Wali Modaqiq

Bhutan



Ms. Dechen Lham

China



Mr. Chen Difei

India



Mr. Shaktikant Khanduri

NATIONAL
FOCAL POINTS
ARE THE KEY LINK
BETWEEN THE
GSLEP (STEERING
COMMITTEE &
SECRETARIAT)
AND RANGE
COUNTRIES

Kazakhstan



Mr. Azbaev Bagdat
Orazaldyevich

Kyrgyzstan



Mr. Bakhtiyar
Abdiev

Mongolia



Mr. Bariushaa
Munkhtsog

Nepal



Mr. Fanindra Raj
Kharel

Pakistan



Mr. Syed
Mehmood Nasir

Russia



Ms. Irina Fominikh

Tajikistan



Mr. Neimatullo
Safarov

Uzbekistan



Mr. Aleksandr
Grigoryants

Who we are: **GSLEP Secretariat**



*Kyial Alygulova,
Manager*

Worked as an expert at the Offices of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic as well as a Deputy Minister of Youth, Labour and Employment of the Kyrgyz Republic for 5 years. Has also been a consultant for UNDP and the World Bank. Specializes in the field of environmental protection and law.



*Chyngyz Kochorov,
Fundraising Specialist*

With a degree in international relations, international economics and public administration, he has more than 6 years of experience and took an active part in the organization of the Global Forum on snow leopard conservation in 2013.



*Ilia Domashov,
Expert on Field Researches*

Represented non-government movement in Kyrgyzstan for international environmental processes. For the past 10 years, conducting research on biodiversity conservation, and training scientific and environmental staff at the Faculty of Biology of the Kyrgyz National University.



*Keshav Saran Varma,
Senior International Advisor*

With more than 30 years of experience as a civil servant and senior World Bank official, focusing on complex urban policy issues (including urban development issues in India), reconstruction programs, climate change, and conservation to enhance sustainability of infrastructure growth. Headed the Global Tiger Initiative as its Founding Director.



*Dr. Koustubh Sharma,
International Coordinator*

With a PhD in Wildlife Zoology, involved in active research and conservation for 15 years. Working with the Snow Leopard Trust as Senior Regional Ecologist since 2007, assisting in snow leopard research, conservation and training programs in several countries including India, China, Mongolia, Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Nepal and Tajikistan. Specializes in GIS, training and ecological studies.



To secure at least 20 landscapes with viable snow leopard populations by 2020.

NEWSLETTER OF THE GLOBAL SNOW LEOPARD AND ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION PROGRAM

SNOW LEOPARD SECRETARIAT

Address - 142 Gorkii Street,
Bishkek city, Kyrgyz Republic,
Zip code 720001

Phone:

+996 312 564 195

E-mail:

info@globalsnowleopard.org

The snow leopard range countries and partners unanimously agree to the shared goal of the GSLEP for the 7 years through 2020. The snow leopard range countries agree, with support from interested organizations, to work together to identify and secure at least 20 snow leopard landscapes across the cat's range by 2020 or, in shorthand – "Secure 20 by 2020."

Secure snow leopard landscapes are defined as those that contain at least 100 breeding age snow leopards conserved with the involvement of local communities, support adequate and secure prey populations, and have functional connectivity to other snow leopard landscapes, some of which cross international boundaries.

We're on the Web!

www.globalsnowleopard.org

Next steps!

Management Planning of the 23 landscapes: The immediate next and most critical step under the program is that of developing management plans for each of the 23 landscapes. With the help of the management planning guidelines, it is hoped that by the end of 2015 or the latest by early 2016, detailed management plans will be prepared for each landscapes.

Briefing meeting at UNFCCC COP: The upcoming UNFCCC COP 21 meeting in Paris provides an ideal setting to broadly discuss the impacts of climate change on snow leopards, their ecosystems and the livelihoods. During the meeting, we hope to also discuss progress on management planning, information sharing mechanisms (website, newsletter, etc.), status of GEF and other grants to achieve GSLEP goals, engagement with industries and economic evaluations of snow leopard landscapes, and partner activities in support of the GSLEP process.

Collaboration with Global Tiger Initiative Council: The Global Tiger Initiative (GTI), which was a catalyst from the onset of GSLEP program, has been reconstituted as GTI Council with a broader objective of bringing convergence and higher impact in policies, resource mobilization, and raising awareness about tiger and snow leopard conservation. The GTI Council will help connect our program with other countries, agencies and organizations that do not converge naturally or with issues that are in need of greater support. Mr. Robert Zoellick, ex-President of the World Bank is the Chairperson. Mr. Keshav Varma, the founding Director of GTI and the Senior Advisor to the GSLEP Program, will be the Executive Director and CEO of the GTI Council. The details of the collaboration and its structure will take shape over the next few months and we will keep all our partner countries and organizations updated via this newsletter.

