



News Briefs

Ecotourism meet:

The Tourism Authority of Bhutan together with tour agents of Bhutan organized a talk on the "conservation in tourism" on the 16th of June. Officials from government, RSPN and WWF attended. The talk focused on the hazards of uncontrolled tourism and the rules and regulations that can be set in place for eco-friendly tourism.

VSAT:

With support and help from Greg Smith and WWF US IT section, VSAT system was successfully installed in WWF Bhutan office. Internet upload speed has been increased to 191 kbps and download speed to 440 kbps.

National Assembly's resolution for district environmental officer:

The people's representatives of Bhutan prevailed in their push for independent environment officers in the districts.

Takin birth:

Takin enclosure – Another baby takin was born in April this year in the enclosure bringing the total amount to 10. Late last year too a takin had given birth to a healthy calf. This was one of the successful births in the enclosure.

Fund Raising workshop:

A fund raising workshop was conducted in April with inputs from all the units of the office. There were good brainstorming discussions on the various scenarios that the program office is likely to experience. The strategy for fund raising will be completed soon.

Staff:

Chadho Tenzin, Conservation Director, left WWF office in April and has joined FAO.

Durba Chhetri, joined as LINKPA project the field accountant. He will be stationed in Thrumshingla National Park to facilitate financial works on the project sites.

CEPF program begins in Bhutan



The launching toast for the fund

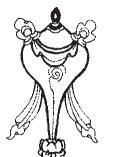
CEPF (Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund), is a joint initiative of Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. CEPF strategically targets priority areas while focusing on select hotspots in the developing world. The CEPF profile for the Eastern Himalayas hotspot encompassing Bhutan, northeastern India and Nepal was launched in Bhutan on the 26th May with participation including senior government and CEPF officials as well as NGOs and civil society representatives.

Following the launch of the profile, the opening of the invitations for the letter of intentions was advertised. An inception workshop was held on 17th June during which stakeholders were briefed on the processes and procedures for grant application and project formulation and implementation.

WWF is coordinating the CEPF program in Bhutan.

ICDP (Integrated Conservation Development Project)

The second phase of ICDP project in the three pilot sites, funded by WWFUS, is progressing well. The second phase activities were identified based on the terminal evaluation conducted for the phase one activities. The project will mainly focus on income generation activities, skills development, environmental understanding through environment education and group management.



Panda Quarterly

Panda Quarterly is published quarterly by the Communications Unit of WWF-Bhutan Program Office, P.O. Box 210, Thimphu, Bhutan.
Email: ttshering@wwfbhutan.org.bt

Thrumshingla National Park (TNP) & LINKPA

The Project Steering Committee meeting for TNP was held on 14 April. The committee was briefed about the progress of the project to date and presented with the work plan for the next twelve months. PM also informed the members that the auditing was complete and the audit observations were helpful toward rectifying management gaps and issues. Issues were discussed openly and changes as per auditor's recommendations were agreed to be implemented. The PSC approved the work plan and budget for the next six months and recommended to hold the next PSC meeting in September this year.

LINKPA

Dr. John Singh, a conservation consultant, was in the country from 20 to 28 April to work on the regulatory framework for corridor management. Dr. Singh and Mr. Nawang along with WWF counterpart held series of consultations with various stakeholders besides desk researches. The preliminary draft regulatory framework for biological corridor was presented to a meeting comprising of officials of the nature conservation division, UNDP and WWF.

The Draft Regulatory Framework for the Biological Corridor connecting RMNP, TNP and JSWNP has been published and is in circulation among the stakeholders. The Park Manager and his team will take this to the communities and other stakeholders for further consultation and endorsement.

Dr. John Singh is planning a second visit in August to prepare the management plan for corridors and train national parks staff on wildlife survey methods. Further, he will also help the park management to improve the data base and identify research priorities for TNP.

The mid term review of the LINKPA project is due to happen during the month of July (12-26). The review team will be meeting with the government, UNDP, WWF and other stakeholders, do a desk review as well as visit the project sites. The official presentation of the draft report of the review is planned for 27th July.

The result of the surveys on plants, birds and mammals on LINKPA done purely by the national staff is also now available. Having all the reports available, LINKPA is now in a very good position to develop a corridor management plan.

Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary

Evaluation of the first phase of Sakteng project is completed and the findings were shared with the Government in a formal presentation. The report was well received by the Government and will be circulated to all stakeholders.

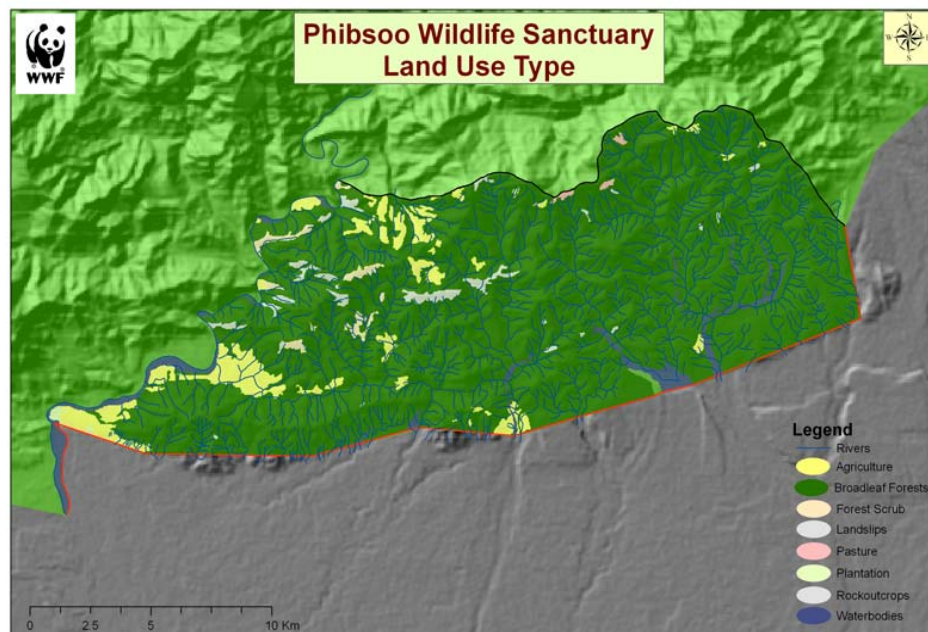
Other works in the park include the completion of the park's head quarter .

Starting June 17th 2006, the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary management conducted a two day Land Management Campaign in the park area. Activities during the campaign included planting of trees, stem cutting, broadcasting fodder grass seeds, constructing check dams and other necessary techniques in the degraded areas of Sakteng. The purpose of the campaign was to check and prevent further loss/ degradation of land and biodiversity and secondly to take the message of "Land Management Campaign further to the remote parts of the park.

Royal Manas National Park

The overall biodiversity survey for the the park was started in April and has been completed. The surveys include wildlife survey, socio-economic and plant surveys. The survey of the corridors around the park is still going on.

Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary, adjacent which is not yet officially opened is presently being managed by the staff of the RMNP. A motorola communications system to help in the anti-poaching patrols was installed there. During the installation of the Motorola communications equipment, Echay, WWF Bhutan Program Office, found out that the habitat in the area is still intact and well preserved.



Alternative Energy (DGIS)

WWF has facilitated the dealership agreement between Dolma Enterprises, Thimphu and NATsteel India, manufacturer of Bulk Electric Cookers. This agreement provides legal rights for Dolma Enterprises to market and stock Bulk Electric Cookers in Bhutan. This is a good news for the institutions which are using the cookers. Now they can easily procure elements in Thimphu and also avail technical assistance for maintenance and repair of bulk cookers as Dolma Enterprises will also have trained technicians.

A new DGIS project worth Euro 64,500 was signed between WWF International and WWF Bhutan for bulk electric cookers to be supplied to eight institutions from within RMNP area and other institutions that have multiplier effect demonstration like Thimphu General Hospital and Army Training Institution. The sets of bulk electric cookers are expected to reduce substantial amount of fuel wood currently consumed by the identified institutions.

Non wood forest product

A tripartite project was signed in March 2006. The project aims to develop data base on NWFPs, develop inventory methodology and management guidelines. According to the agreement, WWF will support the procurement of computers that will facilitate the data base management, train staff of FRDD and territorial divisions while SNV will provide technical consultant for two periods. A consultant from Netherlands has been identified and expected to join FRDD by the second week of July.

The consultant for this three party collaborative project between SNV, WWF and Forest Resource Development Division, Department of Forest, Dr. Chandrasekharan, conducted a presentation for all the stakeholders.

He presented his findings on the viability and the importance of the non-wood forest products programs in the country. His research identified various products, some medicinal, that Bhutan could



utilize as non wood forest products in the future. His papers included some prospect on Bio-diesel areas too.

National Renewable Energy Policy

UNDP is financing a project on the formulation of a National Renewable Energy Policy and Programme for sustainable Development. This project aims to facilitate the access of about 4000 off-grid rural household to modern form of energy services and also achieve the vision of "Electricity for all by 2020".

The Inception workshop for the National Renewable Energy Policy and Programme for Sustainable Development was organised by UNDP in collaboration with Department of Energy on 9th May, 2006. The workshop with participation from a wide group of stakeholders brainstormed and discussed the framework for the policy documents. The policy will however deal with only decentralised mini-micro hydels, solar photo voltaic, wind power, biogas, etc. The senior program office, Vijay, represented WWF at this workshop.

B-mobile – WWF scheme first recipient

Namgay, a businessman from Gelephu is the first person to claim the WWF-Bmobile gift scheme. Started a few months back, the scheme was to spread the message of conservation to the mass of Bhutan. Since the spread of the Bmobile users are wide in the country, WWF saw the opportunity to use their recharge vouchers to start the scheme. They not only use the vouchers to recharge their mobile phones but at the same time learn about the flora and fauna of Bhutan.

Namgay, who had heard about WWF, was never aware of the term conservation. On inquiry he expressed his desire to learn more about nature and conservation. He said that his interest in nature developed while inquiring about the identities of the animals in the recharge voucher that he collected.

"Prior to this, I knew there were animals but they never evoked the interest in me to learn more about them," said Namgay. He felt like a small kid identifying the names of the animals. He had heard about Takin, but had never before seen one so he found it quite educational to learn about it in the recharge voucher card.



Johnson & Johnson Project

The second phase of the project under J&J was also identified based on the experience of the phase one project. The second phase are to be implemented in Gangphey and Zizi villages and focus mainly on three priorities: watershed management, environmental sanitation and sustainable livelihoods. Under the watershed management the project plans to protect the water source from stray cattle through fencing and plantation. Activities for the environmental sanitation include sterilization of stray dogs, supply of waste bins, construction of community waste incinerator and awareness education.

Gangphey and Zizi were selected as the project area mainly considering its economically backward condition and poor hygiene and sanitation. The project has already started the baseline initiatives to improve the sanitation and hygiene of the area. Basic facilities like garbage bins have been distributed; awareness and training in the form of cleaning campaigns, interactive workshops and study tour were implemented. It is hoped that such programs will not only help improve the quality of life of the local people but ultimately help harbour local resident's good-will towards conservation.

A more organized and hygienic piggery and poultry is picking up in Gagphey and Zizi. It is expected that the people in the villages will soon enjoy additional income from the activity because of the quality and quantity of product that they can produce through the facility. Positive feed back from the beneficiaries has also prompted other villagers to replicate the models in their house, this is a very positive outcome from the project development. We are hoping that by the end of the year, the activity will also start taking off in other areas other than the target areas. The project has successfully established the basic facilities for

Hygienic piggery initiatives in Gagphey



sanitation and hygiene in two of the most backward villages in Phobjikha. This has facilitated improvement of general sanitation in these areas particularly in terms of waste disposal and management. At the same time, awareness level of these communities has been raised to a large extent. They are now in a better position to understand and tackle the issues relating to sanitation and hygiene. The project has been able to bring tangible benefit to the local communities and at the same time influence positively on other projects like Ecotourism.



Organized poultry is starting to bring in income for the Gagphey and Zizi village

Award for cleanest village

Several activities have been initiated in the past to encourage cleanliness in the Phubjika valley, however response has been slow and inconsistent. Therefore, as a means to foster consistent cleanliness habit among the people, award system for the cleanest village/town was initiated. The activity involved a week long joint assessment of the villages in the valley by RSPN and the local Basic Health Unit. The team visited all the villages and individual households in the valley and looked into waste management practice by the local communities and condition of the toilets, animal sheds, waste pits, and drinking water source among others. During the assessment, the team also took the opportunity to educate the individual households on health and hygiene issues. The final result was based on the integrated record from the assessment and the health and hygiene record maintained by the Basic Health Unit of Phobjikha. Kumbu village secured the highest mark with 76.75 out of 100 and Santana secured the second highest with 62.5.

Accordingly, Kumbu and Santana have been declared as the two best areas for award for the cleanest villages. 28 numbers of garbage bins have been ordered from the City Corporation in Thimphu to be distributed to the two selected villages.