



WWF Russia

WWF Mongolia Programme Office

WWF China Programme Office

Amur/Heilong Ecoregion Complex Newsletter

Issue 1, May to Sept 2006

Project Achievements

1. Establishment of WWF Harbin Office

On May 26th, WWF Harbin Office was established. The office was formed in order to improve project coordination on integrated Amur/Heilong River Basin along the Chinese and Russian border, as well as to promote further development of international nature conservation activities in China, Russia and Mongolia.

The opening ceremony of Harbin Office was held in Harbin, hosted by Dr. Zhu Chunquan, Head of Conservation Operations of WWF China. Mr. Dermot O’Gorman, Country Representative of WWF China, gave the key speech. The ceremony was attended by the representatives of State Forestry Administration (SFA), Provincial Forestry Department of Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces, Provincial Environmental Protection Agency, Provincial Department of Water Resources, Provincial Forestry General Administration (Forest Industry Group), Provincial General Administration for Agricultural Reclamation, Chinese Academy of Science, Northeast Forestry University and Green Longjiang. The ribbon was cut by Mr. O’Gorman, Dr. Yang Guoting, deputy chief of Provincial Forestry Department and Dr. Yang Chuanping, deputy president of Northeast Forestry University. Mr. Hu Yuanhui from SFA, Dr. Yang Guoting, Dr. Yang Chuanping and the representatives of Provincial Environmental Protection Agency and Forestry Department of Jilin Province congratulated all the participants on the success of the office establishment and expressed the wish of consolidating efforts to protect the Amur/Heilong River Basin.



Mr. Dermot O’Gorman, Mr. Yang Guoting and Mr. Yang Chuanping cut ribbons for Harbin Office



Dr. Zhu Chunquan, Head of Conservation Operations of WWF China



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WWF China Programme Office

Project Achievements

2. University activities supported by WWF

On July 15 - 16, WWF Harbin Office in cooperation with the Life Science College of the Northeast Forestry University (NEFU) initiated and organized a series of environmental activities for students. The activities included: training of environmental protection volunteers, field trips to protected areas and areas damaged by fire, training on “public awareness of nature conservation” and “forest ecosystem protection”, and designing information boards for nature reserves as well. In the meantime, information and data is being collected on conflagration in the Heilongjiang River Basin to make clear understanding about the influence of forest fires on the ecosystems of Daxing’anling and Heilongjiang River Basin.



Students in Training Class

3. Funding to enhance protection of Amur tiger habitat

Wangqing Forestry Bureau and Hunchun Nature Reserve of Jilin Province, and Dongning Erduan Nature Reserve of Heilongjiang province have received grants and funding from WWF Harbin Office to purchase patrol motorcycles, GPS and digital cameras, establish information boards and mere stones in an attempt to strengthen the protection of main Amur tiger habitat in China.



Forest Landscape of Wangqing



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WWF China Programme Office

Project Achievements

4. In July, at the base of the WWF visitors' center, the "Land of the Leopard" summer ecological school took place. During ten days fifteen students from the "Manchurian" student environmental protection group, the Far Eastern State University and Vladivostok secondary schools learned how to protect the Far Eastern leopard and its land. On the school's agenda were topics such as why does the leopard live here in the south-western part of Primorskii krai, what are the economic and cultural peculiarities of the Land of the Leopard, what are the problems faced by the rare cat and many other topics. Practical activities included helping the Kedrovaya Pad state nature reserve to create a botanical eco-trail, marking plants with nameplates and carrying out a questionnaire in three villages adjacent to the reserve. 250 local people answered a questionnaire of 40 questions. Meetings and concerts organized by the students in each village contributed to the idea that the leopard could only be saved by working together.

5. On July 18, 20 000 larch seedlings were delivered from Khabarovskii krai to Primorye to be planted as fire-preventive belts in the southwest of Primorye. Right after arrival, the seedlings were planted in the nursery at Ussuriisk forestry unit, one of WWF's partners. This amount of larch seedlings will be enough to create three km of fire-preventive belts. The planting of the first trees will start in May next year.



Yury Darman and Anatoly Petrov at the presentation of the film "The Last Leopard"



Project Achievements

6. On July 28, in Birobidzhan (Evreiskaya autonomous oblast, EAO) a WWF program “Green Belt of Amur” was reviewed during the meeting of the Council on Ecology at EAO Government. The meeting was devoted to the status of specially protected areas. The main purpose of WWF’s program is aimed at establishing the territory’s ecological framework. This is a network of refuges and reserves, a so-called “green belt” that should protect Amur and its inhabitants. WWF has recommended to the Government the establishment of a number of PAs as an input of EAO into “Green Belt of Amur”. EAO Government has approved the program and agreed to take it into consideration while planning the establishment of POs.

7. In August, WWF published a school diary “Land of the Leopard”. This is an obligatory document for all Russian schoolchildren, which registers and monitors the child’s learning process. The diary is a special one. It is designated for the Khasanskii district of Primorye, (the Land of the Leopard - as WWF and partners call it) - the only place in the world where the Far Eastern leopard lives. This year 3500 local kids between 11 and 17 have received the diary free of charge. It gives the child, his teacher and his parents pieces of environmental information about animals and birds inhabiting the surrounding area, about organizations working to solve environmental problems, rules of behavior in the forest, instructions on how to prevent forest fires and a calendar of environmental dates.

The school diary, “Land of the Leopard”, is a joint publication of WWF and Phoenix Fund.

8. On August 16-20, at the base of Lazovskii State Nature Reserve, the annual seminar of the Far Eastern Union of environmental press-clubs was held. Created in 2002 from the initiative and support of WWF, the Union combines four NGOs of professional journalists highlighting the nature conservation issues in Primorskii and Khabarovskii krais, Amurskaya and EAO. Every August, about 40 journalists get together to sum up the results of the past year, to define plans for the coming year, to discuss key issues of nature conservation in the Russian Far East and to decide how to cover them in mass media. This year, among the key issues was the new drafting of a Forest code. The journalists not only discussed the topic but also joined WWF’s campaign “Logging is not allowed”, sending post cards to the President of Russia.



WWF Russia

WWF Mongolia Programme Office

WWF China Programme Office

Project Achievements

9. On August 30, in Vladivostok, at the Fourth International Film Festival “Pacific Meridians” an NHK documentary “The Last Leopard” was shown to the public. WWF invited its partners, supporters, and representatives of conservation organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, to come to this special event. After the film presentation, spectators addressed lots of questions to Yury Darman, head of WWF FEB and Anatoly Petrov, the cinematographer, asking about the process of filming, the present state of the leopard and the efforts WWF and other conservation organizations are making to save the last 30 Far Eastern leopards. Anatoly Petrov was awarded a special prize by Vneshtorg bank, which was presented to him during the closing ceremony.

10. On September 4-8, at the base of the Far Eastern State Marine Reserve, WWF gathered together 24 educators of the 15 Far Eastern reserves. The main purpose of the meeting was to plan joint activities for the reserves and to exchange experience. WWF works more effectively in the Amur River basin, having the staff of the reserves as its main partners. For the past four years, the reserves have been promoting the idea of Amur River conservation. This year 12 reserves participated in the moving exhibition “Friends of Amur”. Also this year, five reserves joined WWF’s campaign “Cedar – the Tree of Life”. During the seminar, a work plan was drawn up, defining the role of each reserve and WWF in the sphere of nature conservation and public awareness.



WWF Russia

WWF Mongolia Programme Office

WWF China Programme Office

Press Releases

1. International Workshop on Trans-boundary –Recovery of Wild Population of Amur Tiger” was held in Yanji, Jilin Province

On July 24th –25th, an international seminar on the “**International Workshop on Trans-boundary Recovery of Wild Population of Amur Tiger,**” co-hosted by State Forestry Administration (SFA), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and WWF, was held in Yanji, Jilin Province.

In the meeting, an agreement was made to develop and implement the “Amur Tiger Conservation Action Plan” within the Changbai Mountains and Wanda Mountain areas.

Amur Tigers are species in severe danger, with only approximately 500 left in the world and less than 20 in China. Concerns such as threats and relevant measures to be taken in the trans-boundary recovery action plan of wild population of Amur Tiger were highlighted in this meeting. Some key issues decided upon at the seminar were to enforce international cooperation, integrate the efforts of non-governmental organizations such as WCS and WWF, and strengthen the relationship on species, forest and wetland conservation.

Dr. Zhu Chunquan, Head of Conservation Operations of WWF China office, stated:

In recent years, WWF has initiated several projects in Northeastern China, such as Protected Areas (PAs) Management Effectiveness Assessment (RAPPAM) Project in Jilin, Heilongjiang provinces and Inner Mongolia, Capacity Building and the Management Plan Development for Hunchun Nature Reserve, High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) Identification that setting up tiger and leopard conservation priority areas in Changbai Mountains and Wanda Mountain with HCVF maps as a result. WWF helped promoting the forest certification of Forestry Bureau of Baihe in Jilin Province and Youhao Forestry Bureau in Heilongjiang Province, funding on the establishment of three Nature Reserves in Heilongjiang Province (Dajiahe in Raohe county, Erduan in Dongning county and Taipinggou in Luobei county) and holding the ceremony of “Heilongjiang - a Gift to the Earth”. This meeting will surely promote the coordination of the government, international non-governmental organizations and other relevant institutions and enhance the trans-boundary-recovery of wild Amur Tiger population .



[Press Releases](#)

2. Forest certification and HCVF training seminar held at Baihe Forestry Bureau, Jilin Province

On July 18th-21st in Baihe, the Chinese Academy of Forestry Sciences, WWF and Rainforest Alliance co-hosted a seminar focusing on advanced training for forest management, certification and HCVF identification. Relevant specialists and enterprises, including representatives from the State Forestry Administration, Beijing Forestry Bureau, Heilongjiang Forestry Department, Jilin Forestry Department, and NE Forestry University attended the seminar to improve their skills in forest management, in development of forest certification and sustainable management, and HCVF identification abilities.

3. The “China’s 7th National Symposium on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use” held in Changchun on August

The “China’s 7th National Symposium on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use,” co-hosted by the Chinese National Committee—DIVERSITAS (CNC-DIVERSITAS), the China Biodiversity Committee of Chinese Academy of Sciences SFA, CEPA and WWF was held in Changchun, on August 3rd-5th. Dr. Zhu Chunquan, Head of Conservation Operations of WWF China, made an opening speech and a presentation titled “HCVF Identification and Mapping of National Forest areas in Northeast and Inner Mongolia.” WWF provided funding for the meeting and set up the “Excellence Award of Nature Reserve,” which aims to reward outstanding post-graduate students in this sphere of study.

4. “Srednyaya Krylovka” nature reserve is the first protected area of local level in Primorskii Province

WWF Russia celebrates the establishment of “Srednyaya Krylovka,” a protected area of 3,875 hectares of pine and broad-leaved forests in the Primorskii Province. The statement establishing “Srednyaya Krylovka” was signed by the head of the Kirovskii district on the 10th of July, 2006. This territory’s defining characteristic is a high concentration of Korean Pine species.

Yury Bersenev, coordinator for the Protected Territories Program of WWF Russia, Far Eastern Branch, believes that the founding of a new protected area is an important event for the following reasons. First, this is the first protected area established in Primorye in the past few years. Second, this is the first protected area of local level created on the land of the State Forest Fund. Third, the authorities of the region initiated its establishment. Decisions made at the international forum “Nature without Borders,” held in June 2006, at Vladivostok, led to the establishment of the Protected Nature Reserve Area in Primorye. The launching of the protected area became possible with the efforts of the regional authorities of Kirovskii district, Nature Resources Department of Primorskii Province Administration, and Department of NPA of Rosprirodnadzor. WWF Russia provided assistance with the ecological and economic assessment of “Srednyaya Krylovka” and also promoted state ecological expertise procedure.



WWF Russia

WWF Mongolia Programme Office

WWF China Programme Office

Press Releases

5. Ecological journey to the “Land of Leopard”

July 26 was the last day of the 10-day ecological school at the base of the WWF visitor-center “Land of Leopard”.

The ecological school’s 15 participants were the members of the nature protection brigade “Manchzhur” of Far Eastern State University, the students of Ussuriiskii Pedagogical Institute, and the students of the Vladivostok secondary schools.

Through the ecological camp’s activities, the students learned about the projects carried out by WWF, and “Phoenix” Foundation on the “Land of Leopard,” and studied the “Red Data Book” flora and fauna species. They also learned about the problems of forest fires and the protection system of the Khasanskii district. The ecological school participants organized questionnaires and interviewed local population on such issues as the protection system of “Kedrovaya Pad” Nature Reserve and the conservation of the Far Eastern leopard. 250 local people were interviewed over four days. Students also participated in establishing an ecological trail in “Kedrovaya Pad” Nature Reserve.

6. 20,000 larch seedlings delivered from Khabarovsk to Primorye

On the 18th of July, 20,000 larch seedlings were delivered to Primorye from Khabarovsk as planned by the WWF Russia project for the restoration of native forests in the Far Eastern leopard habitat. This first shipment of larch seedlings was organized in order to establish fire-preventing belts in southwestern Primorye.

This is the first of many steps to be taken in the restoration of coniferous and broad-leaved forests in southwestern Primorye. The forest restoration efforts will contribute to conservation of the rare formation of black fir species, the preferable habitat of the Far Eastern leopard. Due to the forest fires and illegal loggings in recent years, the total area of these forests has been reduced to half its previous size and the forests are gradually being transformed into poor secondary forests.

Denis Smirnov, head of the Forest Program of WWF Russia, Far Eastern Branch, comments on the concept of the project:

One of our goals is to prevent forest fires. If we are able to manage it, then these forests have the potential to natural restoration.

According to our experts’ forecasts, if implementation of the project is successful, in 50 years, the area of coniferous and broad-leaved forests will triple.

In the first stage of the project, 90 kilometers of fire preventing belts will be established. Larch seedlings delivered from Khabarovsk is enough to establish the first three kilometers of firebreaks, which planting is planned in May 2007. Two million larch seedlings are necessary to implement the whole project. This is the first occasion of such a wide-scale production of larch seedlings; production will be based in Primorye.



Other Information

A tiger killed an old farmer

On 15th September 2006, an old farmer from Dongning county of Heilongjiang Province disappeared after he went to collect mushrooms in the forest. The next day his body was found, and he was considered to be killed by a wild tiger. In the morning of 15th September 2006, Leng Hongwen, a farmer from Chaoyang village of Sancha Kou town of Donning County, went to the forest to collect mushrooms. His son gave him a ride to the forest site. That evening the son came to the site to look for his father, and only found the remains of the body. The local police found the farmer's mushroom basket, and remains of his body. Tiger's footprints, hair and lying mark were observed not far from accident site. According to the footprints it can be considered that it is a wild Amur tiger, whose weight is about 150 kg.

An old farmer succeeded in escaping from a wild tiger

Recently, in Hunchun a wild tiger attacked and hurt an old farmer. The blood marks and tiger footprints of about 15 cm in diameter were found at the accident site. It happened on 21st September 2006 in Xi Jia Shan village Jing Xin town of Hunchun city in Jilin Province. The farmer was putting his cattle to pasture and he was attacked by the tiger. After fighting with the tiger the man succeeded in escaping.

Amur tiger is one of the most endangered species under national protection. Recently, there are less than 20 wild Amur tigers left in China and only about five hundred left in the world. WWF China Harbin Office has provided financial support to Dongning and Hunchun nature reserves to improve the patrol and communication capacity.



The policemen inspecting the accident site



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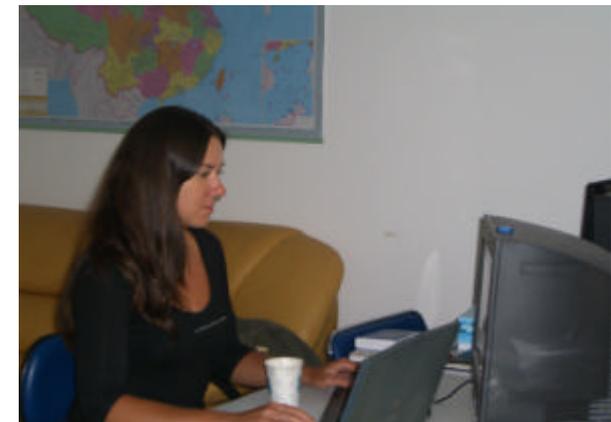
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Communication training in India

On the 9th of September, Kang Tiedong traveled to India to have communications training. 13 WWF communications officers from different countries and offices gathered in India to participate in this training. WWF Netherlands organized the training in order to make communication plans and promote communication activities.

WWF Russia Far East visits Harbin Office

On September 22nd, Miss Sass arrived in the Harbin Office. For one month, she will be working with staff of Harbin Office on the joint project launched in the Amur/ Heilong River Basin. The purpose is to promote coordination of Sino-Russia activities to develop strong relations on conservation issues of the Amur/ Heilong Eco-regional Complex. Joint activities will help WWF China and WWF Russia build strong relations and exchange conservational experience.



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