



ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Maps of all operational and licensed mining sites in Onon-Balj area were displayed to promote public awareness and enhance monitoring

The Mongolian portion of the Amur-Heilong basin is rich for various mineral resources, including gold, poli-metals, spar, silver, uranium and oil. Several of these are notably in Mardai area, which has 36% of the country's uranium and 30% of fluorite deposits.

During the last decade mining sites in the Mongolian portion of the Amur-Heilong basin has steadily been increasing and as of August 2008 it covers 264 km², increased by 34% compared to 2005.



Display maps ©WWF-Mongolia

Based on the information provided by the Mineral Resources and Petroleum Authority, WWF MPO prepared GIS Maps including all operational and licensed mining sites in Onon-Balj area. The maps show boundaries of mining sites, including overlapping boundaries of the Onon-Balj National Park protected areas. These maps together with the description of proposed mining were displayed on the information board to promote public awareness and enhance their monitoring.

License watchers network is being set up for continued monitoring mechanism. Several trainings were conducted for both local government and local communities. Although an intensive training coupled with study tours at mining impacted areas during the project life/period, it is really need a continued support, at least, for FY10. Unlike the other interventions this type of intervention cannot be covered under the ADB funding.

TV round table discussion was organized in Khenti province. Based on the outcome of the discussion a study tour is planned to take place accompanied by TV reporters for making a documentary on the current situation of Onon River Basin.



2. WWF China Set up its First Amur Tiger Conservation Field Demo Site In Dahuanggou Forest Farm of Jilin Province

Based on the analysis results from “Hunchun-Wangqing-Dongning Area Amur Tiger Conservation Action Plan” and the field survey, the first field demo site- Dahuanggou of WWF China Changchun Programme Office was set up on July 2. Other two sites, Nuanquanhe and Chaoyanggou will be set in August. The establishment of the sites was agreed by SFA, Heilongjiang Wildlife Institute (HWI, the SFA designated WWF –CPO tiger program government liaison) and local forestry administration agencies.



Opening Ceremony ©WWF-China

The overall objective of the field demonstration work in 2009 is to build up field capacity on the three selected WWF demonstration sites in NE China around Hunchun area and on the Sino-Russian border region. Snare removal and anti-poaching activities, monitoring pilot of tigers and prey species, implementation of innovative conservation interventions and tiger-friendly habitat management schemes are the first stage field activities.

If succeeded, good experiences will be expanded on a landscape level in the Amur-Heilong region. Ultimately, by successful showcase in the field, WWFChina aiming to elevate Chinese government's commitment to the recovery of tigers in Changbaishan region to the same level it has set upon giant pandas in western China, a world's applauded conservation endeavor.

3. Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation paid a visit to Far Eastern leopard

Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation, representatives of Primorskii Province Administration and WWF had a meeting in the Land of Leopard dedicated to the Far Eastern leopard and Amur tiger conservation.



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Several very important decisions have been made during the meeting. First, a mechanism was developed for quick forming of full-fledged management structure for the joint protected area in the Land of Leopard. Second, a decision was made to add important leopard conservation forest plots to the refuge territory in order to compensate damage from industrial activities being done in refuge and considered critically important for Primorye and the whole Russia. Also, the necessity to significantly enlarge Leopardovy along border with China as a basis for the expected trans-boundary reserve of global level was approved.



Yurii Trutnev, Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology of Russia thanks Yurii Darman, head of WWF-Russia's Amur branch for the efforts in leopard and tiger conservation © WWF-Russia

4. Preliminary Achievements of Changbaishan Amur Tiger Conservation Planning was promoted to Changbaishan National Nature Reserve

On April 12-13, Natural Resources Conservation Training was co-hosted by Changbaishan Natural Resources Management Center and WWF Changchun Programme Office in Changbaishan National Nature Reserve. During the training, experts introduced forestry laws and regulations, public welfare forests management, forest fire prevention, status and protection nature resources to about 100 staff of Changbaishan NNR staff.

What needs to be emphasized is that WWF introduced the preliminary results of Changbaishan Amur Tiger Conservation Plan to Changbaishan NNR, to let the NNR know Changbaishan NNR is potential habitat for Amur tiger, and hopefully tiger relocation project can be piloted in Changbaishan area in the near future. At this point, Changbaishan NNR showed their interest to cooperate with WWF.

5. Model plots of the Ussuriiskaya taiga will be preserved in the Russian Far East

Forest Department of Primorskii province held an auction on 27 May in Vladivostok where five best plots of the Ussuriiskaya taiga totaling 560 000 hectares were leased out for 49 years for processing and harvesting edible forest plants and herbs. Three of them include territories of Korean pine nuts harvesting zones (KPNHZ), areas with vast plots of intact Korean pine-broad-leaved forests.



This auction could be considered historical both for forestry industry and nature conservation as about 10% of pure Korean pine forests of Primorye has been leased out for non-timber forest products use! WWF-Russia has made every effort to make this event happen. In conditions, when even forest protective status cannot save Korean pine from extermination, long term lease of Korean pine forests for non-timber use has become almost the only possibility for their conservation as lease holder becomes vitally interested in protecting from cutting the “food-trees” and takes under his personal control forest use in these plots.

The lease right for the largest plot of 460 000 hectares located in the middle reach of the famous “Far Eastern Amazon”, the Bikin River was given to the “Tiger” Community of indigenous people, one of WWF’s partners. This plot is the largest area of intact Korean pine-broad-leafed forests and includes the largest in the Far East PPNHZ – “Bikinskaya”.

These forests are vitally important for indigenous people, Amur tiger, and play a key role in the planet’s climate. That is why conservation of these unique primeval forests has become main goal of the project on reducing global climate change impact, recently launched by WWF-Russia.

6. Russian and Chinese travelers will learn “wildlife products are prohibited for transportation”

16 bilingual (in Russian and Chinese) information boards about illegal wildlife products were produced and put on display at seven Far Eastern Customs Directorate checkpoints along the Russian-Chinese border as part of a TRAFFIC-WWF initiative in the Russian Far East.

The boards provide travelers with information about the legislation governing the transportation of wildlife products. The information boards also feature images of convicted Russian and Chinese wildlife smugglers. Although this is the first time public information boards have been used in the Russian Far East, they have been used elsewhere, notably in Moscow and in international airports in India and the UK.



One of the posters © WWF-Russia



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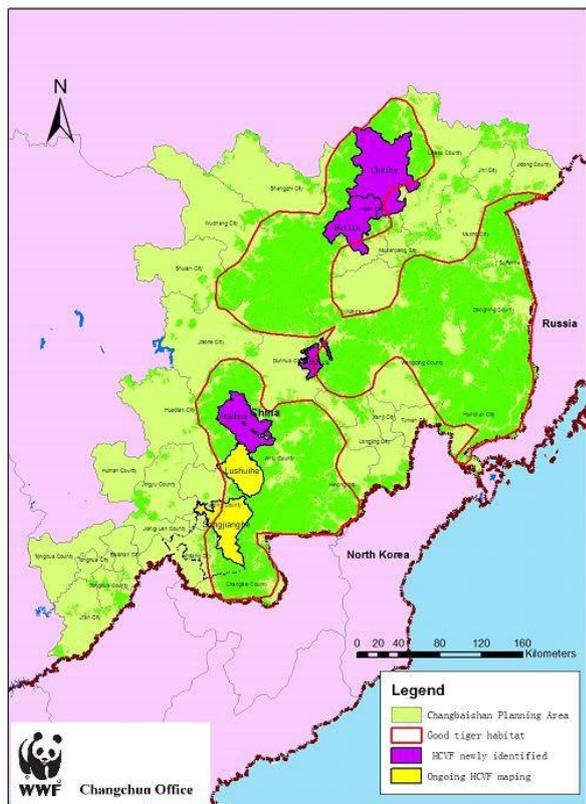
7. Effective controlling mechanisms were promoted for illegal wildlife harvesting in Onon River Basin

As a part of the exercise WWF has carried out an intelligence survey on current poaching and illegal wildlife trade in Headwaters of Amur-Heilong River. The survey indicated that some 20-25 brown bears were illegally hunted in 2007. Therefore, it shows that with the weak law enforcement, those who were caught are actually going back to mountain to illegally regain their losses and fines.

Based on findings of the survey report, the Mobile Anti-Poaching Unit "Irves-5" (Snow Leopard-5) was established in Onon-Balj area in collaboration with the State Specialized Inspection Agency. Currently Irves-5 team is manned only with one person. A state inspector from "Irves-3", who works in the western part of the country, arrived in Onon-Balj area and carried-out on-the-job training for a newly hired "Irves-5" member.

8. Dunhua Forestry Bureau will hopefully get FSC certificates in late July

FSC & HCVF



With WWF's support, HCVFs identification projects of Hailing and Chaihe Forest Farms have been finished on time, Chaihe Forest Farm is applying for FSC certification now. At the same time, Dunhua Forestry Bureau has passed the main auditing of FSC certification with WWF's support on the improvement of HCVFs identification and forest management plan; hopefully Dunhua Forestry Bureau will get the certificates in late July. Two forest management units of Jilin Forest Industry Group (Songjianghe and Lushuihe) have started their FSC application process, the first training workshop on HCVF identification and forest management plan polishing will be held in Changchun soon. All of which will largely enhance tiger habitat protection and forest sustainable management in Changbaishan Landscape.



9. Russian-China cooperation in building trans-boundary protected areas network gets stronger

Positive lessons of the two countries cooperation were discussed at the Working Group on Trans-boundary PAs* on April 9-11 in Chengdu, China. Chinese delegation has agreed with Russian delegation's proposal to start negotiating preparation of the agreement on trans-boundary reserve. Creation of a trans-boundary PA should be the next step in the rare cat conservation. Then, leopard's habitats will increase nearly twice giving the predator a chance to survive. In summer, Chairman Hu Jintao of China will visit Russia so the documents preparation should get started urgently.

* Working Group on trans-boundary PAs and biodiversity conservation acts at a Sub-commission on cooperation in nature conservation which in its turn is part of a Commission on organizing regular meetings of Russian and China Heads of States.

10. Brave "Swallows" eco-club was established

An opening ceremony of a new eco club took place at the Information and Training Centre of Onon River Basin early May 2009. The objectives of the eco club are to provide environmental knowledge to its young members, let them informed of conservation issues and how to adequate use the nature resources.

Children named the new club as "Swallow" from the old legend that a brave swallow saved people's life from extremely hot weather.

At the opening ceremony club members said "even though we are young and small, we will do our best to protect our environment and wildlife like the swallow on the legend".

Local school teachers are committed to facilitate and support club children. They have developed and approved an action plan where the "Swallows" plan to make a simple classroom a fully functional eco classroom. An eco-hiking tour will be organized which aims at building proper understanding and raising awareness on existing ecological issues.



Children playing and learning in the Eco-club

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WWF Mongolia has long-term experience in working with kids clubs and teachers in the Altai-Sayan eco region. Kids are important target audience and communication tool because they perceive the information better and quicker than adults and proved to have multiplying effects on their peers, parents and relatives. The "Swallows" is the first kids club established in Onon-Balj area with support of WWF.

11. "Light the Way Tiger Back Home" – 12 teams got WWF support in 2009 Green Ambassador Campaign

2009 Green Ambassador Campaign is very different from previous years in the shift of wetland conservation to wild animal conservation---more specifically, Amur tiger, and in the core team's members, besides WWF China Changchun Programme Office staff, the core team included officers and experts from Jilin and Heilongjiang Forestry Department, Heilongjiang Forestry Industry Group, Heilongjiang Wildlife Institute, Jilin Provincial Academy of Forestry Science and Jilin Provincial Environment Protection Bureau.



Green Ambassador Campaign Biding © WWF-China

21 school environmental conservation associations from 12 universities of Heilongjiang and Jilin Provinces were involved in the bidding process by submitting their proposal. Finally, after experts' evaluation, 13 teams won the bidding, communication and education activities will be carried out during next university semester. Preparation work starts from now on.

12. China-Mongolia-Russia Picture Exhibition Walked into Manzhouli Youth Palace of Inner Mongolia

The third section of China-Mongolia-Russia—Duaria International Nature Reserve United Committee has realized environmental education in international nature reserves should attach importance to the inheritance of national culture and education on children. According to this recognition, the United Committee pointed CMR-Children Drawing Exhibition as a long-term task in the united work plan, which began in 2005.



Appreciation Children Pictures © WWF-China

From May 2009 to July, the pictures that drew by Chinese, Mongolian and Russian children were exhibited from elementary and middle schools in Halaer, New Left Baerhu, New Right Baerhu, and Youth Palace of Manzhouli City. This exhibition and publication of the drawings will enhance culture exchange among Chinese, Mongolian and Russian children, cultivate their nature conservation awareness and make people aware of Dauria grassland protection. Taking this advantage, 10 posters from Free-flowing Study were

designed and exhibited during the whole process. In these posters, WWF suggests planning and construction of big Hydraulic Engineering project should be treated prudently to keep a healthy Amur River.

OTHER INFORMATION

1 A herder B.Battsogt from the Dadal soum of Khentii aimag discovered a dead Eurasian otter in the junction of Balj and Tengeleg rivers. After inspection, the otter found to be a female of 3.9 kg in weight and 93 cm in length. The Eurasian otter is one of the fourteen mammals observed in Mongolia and listed in the CITES (Appendix I).



The dead Eurasian otter © WWF-Mongolia

2 In October of 2008, 171 square kilometers of Heixiazi Island was returned to China and then it became one of the most original wetland areas in China. In order to protect precious and endangered the wetland and wildlife species, to enhance the communication and cooperation on wildlife conservation between China and Russia, WWF China Changchun Programme Office supported Heilongjiang Forestry Department to establish a wetland type Nature Reserve, by which to build a nature reserve network together with Sanjiang, Bachadao and Honghe Nature Reserves.



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3 Scientific-methodological expert center started its work in February 2009 in Vladivostok branch of the Russian Customs Academy. Over 10 years most expertise evaluation on wildlife products and derivatives are being done upon Customs agencies' request. Creation of the expert center was very much on time. Only within the last 5 years TRAFFIC program and WWF Amur branch has held 78 expert evaluations of seized wildlife products and derivatives, 21 of which were connected with species enlisted in Russia Red Data book such as Amur Tiger, wild ginseng, Amur goral or saiga.

4 Changbaishan Amur Tiger Conservation Planning International Experts Meeting was held in Changchun. Experts report will be submitted in August for internal review.

5 WWF-Russia has provided urgent help for medical treatment of the Amur tiger being kept at Utyos rehabilitation center. Money was needed for drugs, cure of a professional vet, and special diet. The tiger was in a critical condition when it was brought to the center. By now the cat's well-being has improved. It is too early to speak about its complete recovery but Utyos staff does all possible to "put the tiger on its legs". It is not decided yet when the tiger be released into the wild.

6 At the initiative and partial financial support of WWF and TRAFFIC customs officers from the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia were being taught how to identify wildlife products such as trophies, stuffed animals and plants, basic ways to determine their value and origin and how to store such items. They received State certificates to enable them to conduct such biological and merchandising evaluations of confiscated wildlife goods. High quality, professional evaluations of wildlife products are key to investigations into smuggling operations. The courses were held on 25-30 May at the Irkutsk Agricultural Academy.



Trainings customs on how to identify wildlife products © WWF-Russia

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