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The IUCN/WWF Forest Conservation Newsletter

contents

**2-6 News from around the world**

New protected area in Brazil, WSSD report, B.C. developments, World Bank Forest Policy plus news in brief

7 Livelihoods and Forests

Poverty reduction strategies: capturing the potential

**8-11 Focus**

Learning through experience in forest conservation

**12 WWF News**

Russian model projects

13 IUCN News

New policy initiatives in Central America

14 Meetings and Courses

Forest Definitions, Transboundary workshop and research in brief

15 World Bank/WWF Alliance

Certification in Nicaragua and conservation in the Caucasus

16 Reviews in brief

WWF

IUCN

The World Conservation Union



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“When failure is not tolerated, learning will never take place”

K Redford and A Tabor

Conservation organisations are not supposed to fail. Our donors want to know that their money has been well spent. Besides the occasional scare story, we keep our supporters on a strict diet of conservation victories in order to keep the contributions flowing. We also have a personal interest in looking good: those running successful projects are the ones who get promotion or more funding, and bask in the seductive glow of praise from their colleagues. Conservation professionals rarely take time to reflect on things that go wrong.

But of course conservationists do fail: we fail all the time. Projects and even whole programmes go wrong because of over-ambitious design, lack of attention to context, political problems, poor execution and a host of other causes: it would be unreasonable to expect anything else. Apart from the usual dose of failure associated with the human condition as such, there is also the fact that quite formidable forces are aligned against forest conservation in many parts of the world. Addressing these forces requires new and innovative approaches to be devised and tested, and testing implies a level of failure as well as the occasional success.

Anyway, the word ‘failure’ is probably too loaded. If by failing to reach its objective a conservation project provides experience that helps us to do things better in future, then short-term losses are compensated by long-term gains. But this requires a high level of transparency, a long-term time horizon, a commitment to long-term action and a conscious attempt to test hypotheses and build project frameworks that allow us to benefit from experience. If we bury our failures then we lose the lessons too and commit ourselves to repeating mistakes in the future.

Adopting an approach based on intentional, structured learning and adaptive management is especially important as we switch from a focus on conservation of individual sites to conservation within the broader landscape. This is new territory for conservation and requires us to balance our biodiversity conservation objectives with the needs and aspirations of the people whose livelihoods are anchored in those landscapes. Paradoxically, this switch increases the complexity of what we are trying to do - and multiplies the reasons for failure.

In this issue's special feature, Kent Redford of the Wildlife Conservation Society (with A Tabor) pleads for lesson learning in conservation, while practitioners from IUCN, WWF and the World Bank discuss how some of their suggestions are being put into practice and identify some of the prerequisites for successful lesson learning. The most important prerequisite is willingness on the part of all of those supporting and implementing conservation to embrace the honesty that lesson-learning requires.

Huge new protected area in Brazil..

Mark Hurley, of the Global Forest Programme at WWF-US, reports on what some people are calling the most globally significant tropical forest conservation initiative ever.....

September's World Summit on Sustainable Development generated a great deal of concern over the results of deliberations on topics ranging from global warming to fisheries. However, amidst this concern a pair of groundbreaking announcements raised hopes for global forest conservation. Both announcements concerned large-scale, comprehensive forest conservation initiatives, and

both benefited from longstanding support by the World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation & Sustainable Use.

On September 3, Brazil's President

Fernando Henrique Cardoso was joined by officials of WWF, the World Bank, and GEF to launch the landmark Amazon Region Protected Areas (ARPA) programme, the largest tropical forest conservation initiative in history. The next day, United States Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that the U.S. will commit at least US\$36 million in newly allocated money over the next three years to forest conservation in the Congo Basin (see overleaf).

Over the course of ten years, ARPA will expand the extent of well-managed protected areas in the Brazilian Amazon to 50 million ha, an area equivalent to the size of Spain. In doing so, ARPA will help preserve representative samples of all Amazonian ecoregions with their various types of landscapes, plants, and animals.

Conservation of the Amazon's tropical forests is a top conservation priority because of the area's incredible biodiversity, high rates of endemism, and valuable ecological services and products. It is also home to numerous indigenous cultures, with one of the highest rates of linguistic diversity on the planet. But despite the importance of the Amazon in the ecological and economic activity of the world, it is rapidly disappearing. From 1996 to 2001 uncontrolled logging, forest fires, conversion to agricultural use, and major infrastructure works degraded the Amazon at a rate of approximately 1.8 million ha each year.



K Nascimento/WWF Brazil

Responding to these threats, in 1998 President Cardoso publicly pledged to protect at least 10 per cent of Brazil's Amazon forests. That same year, the World Bank and WWF formed the Alliance with the goal of protecting at least 10 per cent of each of the world's forest biomes. Challenging conservation partners to unite behind the Alliance's goal served as inspiration for President Cardoso's pledge.

An influential group of organisations committed to forest conservation have joined the Government of Brazil to build a foundation that will sustain the protected areas of ARPA and contribute to a healthy forest sector in Brazil. ARPA donors including the GEF, the Government of Brazil, WWF and the German Federal Government Development Bank KfW who have committed more than US\$80 million to the project so far. A trust fund will be managed by the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO) and will enable donor funds to support the protected areas in perpetuity. FUNBIO will also disburse project funds for services and goods needed by the Government of Brazil for protected area management, a novel private-public sector approach to the business side of conservation. The total cost for ARPA is estimated at US\$400 million, with US\$260 million designated for the trust fund and US\$140 million for project investments including protected area demarcation, establishing basic park infrastructure and developing long-term management plans.

There are several categories of protected areas within the ARPA design. ARPA will create new strict-use protected areas totalling 28.5 million ha and implement effective management in 12.5 million ha of existing strict-use protected areas. At the same time, the project will create 9 million ha of community sustainable use areas where certain levels of natural resource extraction are permitted.

Just prior to the signing of the ARPA declaration, President Cardoso announced the creation of the world's largest tropical forest protected area: Mountains of Tumucumaque National Park. At 3.8 million ha, this park is the first instalment of ARPA. Formal declarations of more protected areas in the ARPA system are expected before the end of 2002.

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Rose Brasil/ABr



WWF-Canon/Martin HARVEY



... and in the Congo

The announcement of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership was received with excitement at the WSSD. The new partnership, which will involve governments, NGOs, and the private sector, will support activities that will lead to the conservation and sustainable use of the forest resources in 11 forest landscapes in the Congo Basin. These 11 landscapes have within them up to 10 million ha of protected areas and about 20 million ha of production forests in six Central African countries. The US government has committed US\$36 million to the partnership over the next three years.

The Congo Basin, the world's second largest expanse of rainforest after the Amazon, is a region of virtually unparalleled biological richness, yet it is rapidly being degraded. To tackle the multitude of threats, six regional heads of state (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo) convened the Yaoundé Summit in March 1999 in Cameroon. The Summit resulted in the Yaoundé Declaration, a 12-point plan for the region's forest resources and established the Conference of Ministers on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Central African Forests (COMIFAC), the political framework for its implementation. The World Bank/WWF Forest Alliance and WWF assisted in the convening of the Yaoundé Summit, have been active supporters of the COMIFAC process, and, together with IUCN, look forward to joining with others in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.

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News in brief

3

Illegal invaders: Peru established a reserve for uncontacted peoples in Madre de Dios in the Peruvian Amazon near the border with Brazil this April. The aim was that the area, containing one of the largest remaining mahogany stands in Peru, would be off-limits to loggers. However in August, it was reported that hundreds of members of indigenous tribes had emerged from isolation to confront illegal loggers. Four loggers have been reported injured by arrows in the stand-off.

Source: www.planetark.org/dailynewshome.cfm, 5 August, 2002

SinksWatch and CDM Watch: SinksWatch is a new initiative from the World Rainforest Movement and Fern to scrutinize carbon sink projects related to the Kyoto Protocol. The focus of SinksWatch will be on tree plantation carbon sink projects, particularly in areas where land tenure and land use rights are in dispute. In addition, CDM Watch, an NGO based in Bali Indonesia, seeks to monitor Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects and related issues and development.

Contact: www.sinkswatch.org and cdmwatch.org

Unhealthy Europe: The latest annual survey from the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) and the European Commission has revealed that the health of Europe's forests deteriorated significantly in 2001, with over 22 per cent of trees classified as damaged or dead. The proportion of healthy trees of all species in the EU fell from 42.2 per cent in 2000 to 38 per cent, while the proportion across Europe fell from 34.2 per cent to 32.6 per cent

Source: www.icp-forests.org/RepEx.htm

New Red List: Lowland and mountain tropical rainforest habitats have the highest number of threatened mammals and birds according to the 2002 *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. There are now 11,167 species threatened with extinction, an increase of 121 since the 2000 list. Habitat loss and degradation affect 89 per cent of all threatened birds, 83 per cent of mammals, and 91 per cent of threatened plants assessed.

Source: www.redlist.org

Peru funding: A 'debt-for-nature swap' has been signed between Peru and the USA. The deal commits the Peruvian government to provide funding for Peruvian conservation groups, for conservation work in 10 rainforest areas covering more than 11 million ha. Under the agreement, US\$5.5 million of Peru's debt to the US is cancelled, saving Peru about US\$14 million in future payments. For the first time in a debt-for-nature swap, U.S.-based conservation organisations including Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy and the WWF joined forces with the U.S. Government, together committing more than US\$1 million to the deal.

Source: CNN, 16 July, 2002

Russia protection: 74,400 ha of Russian old-growth forest was declared a National Park by the Governor of the Russian Republic of Karelia prior to the WSSD in Johannesburg. If finalised by federal authorities, the Kalevala National Park would be the third largest protected old growth forest in Karelia. The proposed National Park is located on the border of Russia and Finland and covers the most valuable forests of that area. An important step towards protecting this area came in 1996, following pressure from Greenpeace and other organisations, when two of the largest Finnish paper companies agreed not to buy timber logged in the area of the proposed park. However, the governor refused to declare the area a National Park and in July 2002 a local logging company tried to re-open the area for logging. Following demonstrations, protests and various activities from Greenpeace and local organisations in Karelia, the Governor finally agreed to the creation of the National Park.

Source: Oliver Salge, Greenpeace Forest Co-ordinator for Europe, and www.taiga-rescue.org

World Bank forest policy

In October 2002, the Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank unanimously approved a new forest policy and strategy aimed at enhancing the livelihoods of people living in extreme poverty, who depend on forests, while improving the environmental protection of forests in the developing world. Christian Peter summarises what happened.

The revised Forest Strategy covers all forest types and has been built on three equally important interdependent pillars:

- Harnessing the potential of forests to reduce poverty;
- Integrating forests in sustainable economic development; and
- Protecting vital local and global environmental services and values.

The new policy will proactively identify and protect critical forests in all forest types and all Bank client countries. It will also seek to expand forest areas under protection in developing countries, and strictly maintain a ban on logging in these critical forests. Finally the policy provides scope for the Bank to support sustainable forest management provided that such activities are independently certified in accordance with strictly defined requirements.

The strategy will be implemented through partnerships with governments, civil society organisations and private sector. Programmes and projects will build on strong country and local community ownership. Priority will be given to work with local groups, NGOs, and other partners to integrate forest, agro-forestry, and small forest enterprise activities in rural development strategies and benefit poor people.

Contact: Christian Peter, cpeter@worldbank.org, www.worldbank.org.

For WWF and IUCN views see: www.worldwildlife.org/news/headline.cfm?newsid=441; www.iucn.org/themes/fcp/special/fp1s1.html

Australian Forestry Standard falls short

In October 2002, the Australian Government launched the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS).

Andrew Rouse of WWF Australia isn't happy with the result.

Earlier this year, WWF withdrew from the Technical Reference Committee of the AFS when it became clear that contentious and environmentally damaging forestry practices in Australia were not going to be satisfactorily addressed by the process. For example, WWF was concerned that the AFS was going to rubber stamp ongoing logging of high conservation value forests such as old growth forests, and the large-scale conversion of native forest to plantations. Whilst most states have ceased the practice of forest conversion, it is still widespread in Tasmania, where in 2000-2001, 64 per cent of native forest clear-felled on government-managed land was replaced with plantations, and 67 per cent was replaced on private land (*Forest Practices Board Annual Report 2000-2001*). With some conditions, this large-scale forest conversion could be certified under the AFS.

By failing to address contentious and environmentally damaging forestry practices, the AFS is unable to meet its stated objective of providing assurance to purchasers of Australian timber that it has been sourced from sustainably managed forests. WWF's assessment is that the AFS cannot provide this assurance until the minimum performance requirements are improved to address poor forestry practices such as those mentioned above.

The Australian Government's response to WWF and other groups who are critical of the AFS, is that it is a step in the right direction. This it may be, however by failing to address poor forestry practices the AFS is unable to provide an assurance to consumers and markets that forests certified to the AFS are managed to broadly supported standards.

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News in brief

Cedar protection: A two-year project to conserve the cedar forests of Central Lebanon began in April 2002. Involving four NGOs, the project is part of a larger Mediterranean initiative to conserve a network of biodiversity hotspots in the region.

Contact: Sampreethi Aipanijiguly, WWF MedPo, tel: +39 06 844 97 224

Australia In Reverse: The quality of Australia's environment is in decline, with increasing species extinction, high rates of habitat destruction and land degradation, according to a new report. As much land was cleared in the last 50 years as in the 150 years before 1945. The report reviews progress since the 1992 Earth Summit and is a response to the government's report for WSSD, which was seen as overstating domestic environmental policy achievements. Some 38 per cent of all native forests, between 25 and 32 per cent of eucalypt woodlands, 30 per cent of rainforest communities, 45 per cent of heath communities, and 90 per cent of temperate woodlands and mallee, have been permanently cleared.

Source: The report can be downloaded from:

www.acfonline.org.au/docs/publications/rpt0027.pdf

Cambodia success: A declaration creating the Central Cardamoms Protected Forest in the southwestern Mountains was signed in July by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen. The area was a stronghold of the Khmer Rouge until its collapse in 1998, and is isolated and sparsely inhabited. It had been slated for logging, but in 2001 Conservation International secured a deal to ban commercial logging while the conservationists worked with the Department of Forestry and Wildlife to justify the area's permanent protection. Two wildlife sanctuaries border the newly designated area, bringing the total land area under protection to 990,000 ha, the largest, most pristine wilderness in mainland Southeast Asia. The Cambodian parliament has also passed a new law to combat illegal logging, making the felling of trees in national parks and in wildlife sanctuaries punishable by up to 10 years in jail.

Source: forests.org, 1 August 2002



Hopes and fears in British Columbia

valleys, following months of international market campaigns demanding better ecological practices from companies sourcing timber in the area. In May 2002, government formalised interim protection of 20 rainforest valleys, prohibiting logging and development until June of 2003. This period will allow First Nations time to complete planning processes for their lands and give an independent team of scientists' time to undertake ecological and socio-economic analysis.

**Clearcut on
Queen Charlotte
Island, British
Columbia**

Negotiation and stakeholder involvement have helped reduce the tensions over forest resources in western Canada, but policies of the new provincial government could undermine this process. Dena Cator reports.

The year 2002 marks 10 years since British Columbia (B.C.), Canada developed a provincial land and resource management planning strategy in response to bitter demonstrations over logging in areas such as Vancouver Island and the Slocan Valley in the interior. Ten years later, land use plans developed through consensus-based stakeholder meetings have been completed or are underway in 85 per cent of the province. Resulting recommendations have increased protected areas from approximately 6 per cent of the land base in 1992 to more than 12 per cent in 2002. An independent 2001 report (see details below) has revealed that many stakeholders, including government, the public, private industry and aboriginals, feel that the strategy has been successful in reducing land use conflicts, improving communication between stakeholders and raising public awareness of sustainable development in BC.

In a province possessing half of all the bird and mammal species in Canada but which logs approximately 50 million cubic metres (1.6 million logging truck loads) of wood annually in the interior alone, finding an appropriate balance between environmental, economic and social considerations is a significant endeavour. One of the strengths of land use planning in B.C. is that people are exploring new ways of resolving land use issues. For example, government, environmental groups and logging companies signed an agreement in 2001 to work together on land use planning in the Great Bear Rainforest, a 7 million ha area containing pristine coastal rainforest

Other challenges with land use planning remain. Although the number of protected areas in B.C. has doubled over the past decade, more than half of the province's terrestrial ecosystems remain under represented (less than 12 per cent protected). At the same time, a provincial economic downturn has caused the new government (elected in 2001) to focus on the economic impacts of parks creation and land use planning. The government's socio-economic review of the Lillooet Plan in the interior of B.C. is a current example. The review may overturn establishment of the Spruce Lake protected area by the previous government, a decision which environmental groups are strongly campaigning against. These groups are also concerned with the new government's reform of the multi-stakeholder, consensus-based decision-making model to a government-led, cost efficient model based on mere public consultation. Individuals are concerned that this new 'fast track' planning style could lead to hasty and poorly researched land use decisions.

B.C.'s evolving land use planning strategy provides useful insights for the upcoming World Parks Congress, where the theme will be exploring benefits of protected areas relating to the environment, economy and society. The province has learned many lessons regarding balancing multiple land use interests over the past 10 years. One pervasive consideration, however, will be maintaining this balance of interests as political agendas change and economic conditions are in flux. This is an issue that all countries aiming to establish robust forest protected area networks will have to consider in the coming decades.

Contact: Dena Cator, Dena.Cator@iucn.org. The report *Socio-economic Impact Assessment of the Provincial Government's Strategic Land Use Plans on Key Sectors in British Columbia*, can be found at on the government website at srmrpdwww.env.gov.bc.ca/rpts/slup_impact/index.htm.



Forests at WSSD

Carole Saint-Laurent reviews the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August-4 September 2002.

A paragraph on forests was included in the Plan of Implementation agreed on by nations attending the WSSD. The paragraph, however, contains no new commitments and few surprises, as it largely represents the consensus reached previously by Ministers during the 2nd session of the UN Forum on Forests in March 2002.

Among other things, paragraph 43 calls for accelerated implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel and Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF), with reporting on progress by 2005. The Summit also urged implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) expanded action-oriented work programme on all types of forest biological diversity. The IPF/IFF proposals for action and the CBD expanded work programme include key forest issues such as restoration of forest landscapes and livelihoods, community-based forest management, protected areas and forest governance. Very few specific issues were singled out in the forests paragraph, although domestic forest law enforcement and illegal international trade in forest products were mentioned. In addition, the paragraph calls for immediate action to promote the means to achieve sustainable timber harvesting; initiatives to address the parts of the world suffering from poverty and the highest rates of deforestation; and recognition of the importance of indigenous and community-based forest management systems.

A number of other sections in the Plan of Implementation also refer specifically to forests. These include:

- Combating desertification through forest management (Para. 39d)
- Addressing deforestation in mountain ecosystems (Para. 40)
- Support for afforestation and reforestation and capacity building for sustainable forest management in Africa (Para. 56n)

Several paragraphs relating to different ecosystems and approaches are also relevant, for example:

- Integrated management of coastal zones (e.g. mangroves) (Para. 29e, 31a, b, c, e, 32)
- Watershed protection, restoration and integrated planning (Para. 7, 24e, 31c)
- Rehabilitation of ecosystems and habitats to deal with natural disasters (Para. 59)
- Ecosystem approach (Para. 61, 31e) and biodiversity (Para. 42, 64e, 67, 69)
- Indigenous and common property resource management systems (Para.6, 38h-i)

Cross-cutting issues addressed in the Plan which have linkages to forests, include:

- Poverty eradication (Para.6)
- Trade liberalization (e.g. subsidies) (Para. 90-95)
- Consumer information tools (Para. 14e, 18c)
- Corporate responsibility and certification (Para. 17a, 45.ter)

In general, the Plan of Implementation - as it relates to forests - does not fulfill the General Assembly mandate for the Summit which specifically called for 'action-oriented decisions in areas where further efforts are needed to implement Agenda 21' and 'specific time-bound measures to be undertaken'. All of this suggests a lack of political momentum behind forest issues at the international level. The main preoccupation of the international community is combating poverty and promoting sustainable livelihoods. While the decision on forests states that sustainable forest management is a critical means to eradicate poverty, the lack of political interest in forests in the Summit process could lead to the conclusion that this has not actually been conclusively recognised.

In contrast to the low political priority attached to forests in the negotiated Plan of Implementation, forest issues were prominent in the non-negotiated outcomes, i.e. the partnership initiatives announced in Johannesburg (see pages 2 and 3).

Agreed commitments on forests combined with partnerships could point the way forward to a new way of doing business on forests which involves bringing different interests together around a specific issue or region in a way that can contribute to implementation of a range of international commitments related to forests. For example, action on forest landscape restoration can implement commitments under the WSSD Plan of Implementation (UNFF/IPF/IFF, CBD) as well as the Framework Convention on Combating Climate Change (FCCC), Convention on Combating Desertification (CCD) and International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA). In order to make this happen, however a number of challenges will need to be tackled:

- Getting on with and demonstrating implementation in the absence of targets and timetables.
- Linking forests more firmly to the poverty and livelihoods agenda, including to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Poverty Reduction Strategies and Plans (PRSPs).
- Effective, credible and transparent partnerships guided by local interests, with new funding and clear work programmes and allocation of responsibility.

Forests in poverty reduction strategies: capturing the potential

Stewart Maginnis from IUCN and Tomi Tuomasjukka from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, report on a recent workshop hosted by the Finnish Government which explored the role that forests can play in poverty reduction strategies.

Creating the conditions under which significant numbers of poor people can attain a sustainable and desirable livelihood over the next 15 years is undoubtedly one of the most urgent priorities for achieving sustainable development. Although the World Bank estimates that 90 per cent of the 1.2 billion people who live in absolute poverty depend on forest resources to some degree, it is still unclear to many policy makers what meaningful role forests can play in developing countries' poverty reduction strategies.

In early October the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs brought together government, civil society and academic representatives from twelve sub-Saharan African countries, four donor countries and staff from a number of international organisations, to consider how forest management and conservation can better contribute to the goal of poverty reduction. In what was probably a 'first' at an international level, the workshop provided an opportunity for senior representatives from Ministries of Finance and Economic Planning to sit and discuss how forests could be better integrated into poverty reduction strategies with their counterparts in Ministries responsible for the forest sector.

There was general recognition by participants that forests already make important contributions to poor peoples' livelihoods by:

- Supporting income generating activities. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone over 15 million people earn cash income from forest-related activities;
- Underpinning subsistence economies and minimising vulnerability to risk. Although such contributions are seldom captured in formal national statistics, life would be even more precarious for many hundreds of millions of poor people without the 'safety net' functions that forests regularly provide;
- Supplying poor rural households' energy requirements;
- Maintaining productivity of poor farmers' land-use systems through intimate tree-crop or tree-livestock interactions;
- Providing a testing ground for pioneering, decentralised approaches to access and benefit sharing, and thus good governance, that deliver tangible benefits to poor peoples' lives.

It is therefore somewhat surprising that one major issue which emerged during the two day meeting was that consideration of forest issues during the analytical phase of poverty reduction strategy processes tended to be superficial and unsystematic. This was partly explained by the fact that analytical tools, such as livelihood-based approaches, which are particularly well suited to drawing out natural resource dependencies of

the rural poor, are rarely used to complement poverty assessments which rely heavily on standard economic indicators such as cash income. Furthermore national forest programmes seldom establish strong links with poverty reduction strategy processes even though the limitations of a purely sectoral approach to forest planning is widely acknowledged and understood. Despite these shortcomings there are signs that some governments have made provision to incorporate forest-related activities into their poverty reduction strategies (PRSs). Such activities include community forestry, reforestation, sustainable forest management and the development of forest-based micro enterprises.

The workshop identified four key responses for enhancing the contribution of forests to poverty reduction:

- Improving knowledge on the contribution that forest resources make to poor households' economic activities. Many policy makers worry that by building subsistence activities into poverty reduction strategies one will, in effect, perpetuate 'poverty traps'. However reality dictates that many people will continue to depend on forests until such times as formal economic growth yields other alternatives, for example, through the creation of jobs. Policy makers therefore need a comprehensive knowledge base that will allow them to address both the need to stimulate the formal economy and safeguard and strengthen existing subsistence activities.
- Enhancing co-ordination between national forest programmes and poverty reduction strategies. National forest programmes need to provide PRSs with a robust analysis of the current and potential contribution of forests and trees. In practical terms this means strengthening the capacity of forest departments to help them participate in poverty reduction strategy processes and ensure that they make effective use of sustainable livelihood approaches which are better adapted to identifying natural resource dependencies.
- Mitigating potential negative impacts of poverty reduction strategies on forests. It was recognised that some measures aimed at stimulating economic growth could have unintended consequences on a country's forest resource, which may in turn hurt some of the most marginalised people. The importance of assessing potential impacts of growth-stimulation programmes on forests at an early stage was underlined.
- Targeting international assistance to help integrate forests into poverty reduction strategy processes. Two major areas were identified in particular: i) assisting national forest departments to develop more explicitly 'pro-poor' forest policies and programmes and; ii) helping senior forest department officials make a more convincing case to their colleagues in the treasury. The identification of a forest 'champion' on the poverty reduction strategy steering committee was recognised as a good first step.

Writing the Wrongs: Developing

Our special feature this time focuses on learning – how we do it, why we don't do it often enough and how we might learn better. In a departure from our usual practice, in terms of both originality and article length, we are reprinting an essay by Kent Redford, head of conservation science at the Wildlife Conservation Society and A Tabor. In the two pages following, IUCN, WWF and the World Bank respond to some of the points raised.

I have learned throughout my life ... chiefly through my mistakes and pursuits of false assumptions, not by my exposure to founts of wisdom and knowledge.

Igor Stravinsky

During the 1980s Robert MacNamara observed that, tragically, years of World Bank investment in poverty alleviation had not significantly improved the lot of Africa's desperate poor; indeed, standards of living had declined. Lessons from development were neither learned nor applied, just relearned the hard way by each project that came along. Despite limited successes in the field of conservation, we may soon face similar, bitter conclusions as we observe accelerating loss of biodiversity worldwide.

Conservationists have not been successful at rigorously measuring conservation successes and at trumpeting them in a compelling way or at forcing biodiversity conservation objectives into the world's development algorithm. In addition, increasing demands on donor dollars to focus on poverty alleviation for the victims of globalisation may further reduce financial resources available for conservation. We are going to have to learn, and change, quickly if

conservation is to be regarded by our societies as something other than a luxury.

A story to illustrate our point: a non-governmental conservation organisation (NGO) was working with an indigenous community in the Southern Hemisphere on a

project of breath-taking ambition. The idea was for the indigenous community's organisation, working with the national government, to co-manage an area of over 5 million ha which included an indigenous area and a national park. This is the sort of thing many of us thought was the wave of the future, an opportunity to create coalitions across frequently combative groups which would be able to withstand extreme predatory development pressures and ensure victories for both local people and biodiversity. The donors agreed, and significant money was put into this project with many positive initial results.

But the NGO knew there was a major hurdle that would have to be crossed before anything approaching project sustainability could be achieved. This hurdle had to do with cultural differences in money management. In many indigenous groups, money goes to a "big man" who fulfils his obligations and consolidates his power by dispersing funds in ways appropriate to his position. This disbursement policy conflicts with the norms of our western society, which expects receipts, disbursements, and full accounting. Further, honest local role models for the tribal leaders were sorely lacking in the broader society of this country, notorious for corruption. Knowing there was going to be a culture clash, and knowing that the indigenous organisation would have to learn and practice the methods expected by the donor, the NGO arranged for an audit of the indigenous organisation. Sure enough, money was unaccounted for, people resigned, and the indigenous organisation showed signs of reorienting its ways. Ironically, the financial mismanagement was perpetrated largely by non-indigenous but local employees whose malfeasance seemed partially racially motivated. The take-home message to the indigenous organisation was to get their financial house in order, watch who they hire more carefully, and redouble efforts to train indigenous accountants. This sounded to many of us like a successful learning experience that might serve as a foundation for sustainable change.

Unfortunately, it did not sound that way to the donor. Rarely accustomed to auditing grantees, or having them audited, the donor is now threatening not to renew funding. What was construed as a learning experience, a necessary step on the path to effective and path-breaking conservation, has turned into a potential project killer. The indigenous organisation, the NGO, and the park all stand to suffer. Why? Because they tried to make learning through experience – through adaptive management where successes and failures are explicitly stated – a fundamental part of the project's implementation.

We come to the point of this editorial. The conservation industry and the donors who fund it have enabled each other



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The future of the Giant Panda remains threatened despite many years of conservation effort.

a Safe-Fail Culture in Conservation

to create a highly dangerous situation. Conservation practitioners rarely write about the work they do; instead, what writing is done in conservation organisations is most frequently undertaken by development staff. This group of people is paid to raise money. No one wants to fund unsuccessful projects, so success is declared in the reports submitted to the donors. Successes are shined and spun out, partial successes are puttied and repainted as successes, and most everything else is ignored. A strong process of self-censorship



Kent Redford (right) and Tom McShane, see article overleaf, from WWF (left) enjoying the forests of New York State.

is employed: why tell development staff what did not work if they are not going to use it? Anything other than success is left on the cutting room floor to be swept up and thrown away.

Such a process of self-censorship on the part of conservation organisations lays the groundwork for this dangerous situation, but the second ingredient is also vital: donors want to report their own achievements, so they want to hear only that their money has been spent successfully. Donors have their own constituents to whom they are responsible. Foundation program officers must report up the line, and the foundation president must report to the board. Bilateral organisations must report to their respective governments, and multilateral organisations must report to their board members and the entities they represent. Further, all three types of funders have their own reputations and institutional egos at stake. Subtle though it may be, foundations are in competition with one another, as are bilateral and multilateral organisations. And, unfortunately, the currency used in this competition is composed of grantee successes.

The atmosphere of enabling is complete. Funders want to report only the successes of their grantees, so only successes are reported to them. Nothing ever goes wrong because no one ever says that anything has gone wrong. To read the record, conservation is an overwhelming success. But we all know this is absolutely not the case. Everywhere you look there are failures, half failures, and almost successes. But to discover these failures you have to find the implementers

and take them out for a beer, or visit the site yourself. Heaven forbid if you should want to read about these experiences, because the cycle of success is actively guarded – renewal of funding is contingent on success. Few have ever been rewarded for anything other than success. We in the conservation business have locked ourselves into a straitjacket of partial truths.

Inside this straitjacket we will not achieve effective conservation because we will never learn. Learning requires experimentation, and experimentation sometimes means failure. When failure is not tolerated, learning will never take place. The slogan should read “no experimentation, no learning, no conservation,” instead of “experimentation or funding.” Although harshly described, and exaggerated to a minor degree, this is the climate in which we work. The incident with the internal audit of the indigenous organisation sends a clear signal to the conservation community: experiment at your own peril.

This situation, in which experimentation, failure, and learning are not tolerated, is a death spiral for conservation. We are being forced into smaller and tighter circles by our own culture and its reinforcement by funders. We and all we are trying to save will not survive if we do not break out of this inward-turning spiral and move into the uneven and unpredictable terrain of a highly self-critical adaptive management approach. We must work with our supporters to develop what Buzz Holling has termed a “safe-fail” environment. Within this environment we must be encouraged to innovate, experiment, and learn. Most of all, we must document what has been tried and what has failed.

Writing experiences down and sharing them with others is a fundamental part of doing conservation – not just the successes but the failures as well, maybe even particularly the failures. We have travelled the world finding countless examples of failed projects, many of them trying and retrying the same things. Why? At least in part because failure of such projects when attempted by others has never been reported. This is a waste of money, effort, and – most important – time. Time is short as we try to slow the juggernaut of biotic impoverishment. We cannot waste time trying things that others have tried and found wanting. But we cannot do otherwise unless we all document our failures as well as our successes. We must unite to change the culture of funding in conservation. We need a new culture in which experimentation and learning are given as much importance as on-the-ground project success. We suggest that the long-term success of conservation depends on our willingness not only to admit our failures but to share them as well.

Measures of success

In Pakistan, mangrove forests are found in the Indus delta and along select areas of the Balochistan coast. Sonmiani

Bay is the only location where three species of mangrove exist naturally. Beside their ecological importance these mangroves play a significant role in the lives of coastal dwellers. Since the existing mangrove cover in Balochistan is sparse, the over-exploitation of mangrove resources by rural communities has been identified as the primary threat to its continued existence.

To address this threat, WWF with support from DGIS, and in collaboration with the provincial forest department, has been working since 1997 on three issues: community use of mangroves, the restoration of degraded mangroves, and public

awareness of the importance of mangroves and wetlands. In response, the project has:

- restored 176 ha of degraded mangrove area (against a target of 140 ha);
- helped the Balochistan Forest Department develop their own nursery for mangroves;
- organised community-based organisations to take responsibility for mangrove rehabilitation and management; and
- undertaken programmes to improve community awareness of the importance of mangrove ecosystems.

On the face of it, a successful project.



However, an analysis of root causes of biodiversity loss in Pakistan's mangrove ecosystems undertaken in 1998, revealed that the greatest impacts were not from those originally identified by the project, but from activities 'upstream' from the project site. Pollution, the diminishing supply of freshwater due to agriculture, and overexploitation of fish stocks were identified as the most important constraining factors. It was clear that if these factors were not addressed, no matter how significant the restoration of mangroves, no matter how well organised the communities in mangrove management, and no matter how aware they were, the mangroves would continue to diminish. It was clear that the original project assumptions about the primary threats were wrong.

As a result, the project is now having to reorient itself to these 'new' threats and is beginning to work to change agricultural policies that contribute to reduced water flows and is involved with cotton growers hundreds of kilometres away in the development of more environmentally-friendly production of cotton, thereby reducing water extraction from rivers critical to maintenance of mangrove ecosystems. The project is also engaging with the Pakistan Navy to monitor illegal fishing and enforce catch limits, and with the Karachi Port Authority to reduce pollution.

The lesson here is that the obvious (resource over-exploitation by local communities) is not necessarily the main problem.

This and other projects are now taking a more vertically integrated approach towards project implementation meaning policy advocacy and change is directly linked to field action on the ground.

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Learning by doing

The aim of the project 'Sustainable Utilisation of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)' in Vietnam, the first phase of which ran from 1998 to 2002, was to explore ways to promote sustainable NTFP management as a means to improve forest conservation and rural livelihoods. The project was conceived as an action-research project where new approaches and methods were a primary output, rather than the associated physical achievements. The project was implemented by the Non-Timber Forest Products' Research Centre, and had technical and managerial support from IUCN. Field activities were implemented by two NGO members of IUCN, ECO ECO and CRES.

Action-research is a cyclical process of testing-analysing-improving in which farmers and researchers jointly learn and collaborate to develop innovations that are appropriate and applicable to the farmers' context. One of the key action research questions for the project was how NTFPs can contribute to both improved livelihoods and improved forest management. Other questions were concerned with the identification of appropriate methods for analysing conservation -development linkages, and of suitable mechanisms for establishing and managing government/ NGO partnerships.

At the onset of the project, the attitude of some field partners was one of 'we know it all' and there was pressure to show immediate physical outputs (i.e. NTFP seedlings). A few things helped to gradually improve the ability of the project to learn from experience.

- At the start, the project committed an implementation blunder in the field: an unsuitable NTFP species was planted with project support. The error was obvious to all involved in the project and led to the conviction that a learning-by-doing approach would be more appropriate than a technocratic one.
- The establishment of monitoring mechanisms allowed lessons to be picked up at an early stage and project activities to be reoriented and adjusted as a consequence. This also helped to increase the confidence of the donor in the approach chosen.
- Training initiatives, in particular an exchange visit to a similar but more advanced project in Lao PDR, demonstrated the practical benefits of adopting a learning approach to project partners.

The project emphasised the recording of lessons learned as a means to promote learning among project partners and share important project results with others. Specific mechanisms built-in to the project were:

- Testing and analysing integrated conservation and development approaches through pilot field activities.

Learning & Innovation Loan

The Learning and Innovation Loan (LIL) is a relatively new Bank lending instrument designed to meet needs in areas where lengthy 'blueprint projects' are deemed inadequate, as in the social sectors where behavioural change and local innovation need support and testing, or in new development areas. LILs are intended to be an agile and cost-effective instrument for testing and piloting innovative development ideas. LILs are loans of US\$5 million or less financing small, experimental, risky and/or time-sensitive projects.

LILs are intended as instruments to facilitate learning and/or innovation in one or more of the following areas:

- piloting initiatives that show great development promise;
- developing and experimenting with a locally based model prior to launching large-scale interventions;



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- Learning by doing - an ongoing process of analysis of activities through monitoring and evaluation teams and systems involving rapid action-learning cycles.
- Specific learning and review exercises such as internal reviews, training courses and project evaluation.

Many of the lessons learned from the project were incorporated in the design of Phase II and have also been documented in a range of reports (most are available on a CD-ROM in Vietnamese and English).

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- promoting consensus, ownership, and broad political commitment among stakeholders;
- enabling the Bank to work in partnership with bi-laterals and NGOs working with similar flexible instruments.

A LIL focuses on experimentation, learning and piloting in search of possible developmental solutions, prior to potential larger-scale operations. It includes clearly stated testable hypotheses and incorporates intensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Developing the institutional flexibility to refine the project in response to M&E is paramount for LILs to becoming true learning tools and not just stand-alone small loans. Thus, the project activities might include a detailed assessment of borrower capacity, stakeholders' response (social assessment), or economic rate of return as part of the project activities, when these are unknown in advance. A LIL includes clear indications of how results will aid the borrower in making decisions about replicability and scaling up.

LILs are predominantly used in sectors or situations in which behavioural change and stakeholder attitudes are critical to progress. They can also help address complex technical or sensitive political situations by keeping the intervention as a small-scale pilot project, with a relatively modest burden on the client country (since the loans cannot be more than US\$5m). The first batch of LILs were approved in 1998 and the Bank has since approved more, covering issues such as adult literacy, preservation of cultural heritage, gender, forestry, indigenous peoples development, land titling, rural micro-finance services, etc.

In the context of sustainable forest management, the Forest Concession Management and Control Pilot Project focuses on improving management in forest concessions by inter alia establishing forest crime monitoring and prevention capabilities of the Cambodian Department of Forestry and Wildlife, and improving its capacity for enforcement. This is a good example of how a LIL has successfully initiated examination of the widely prevalent yet politically sensitive problem of illegal logging, via a small scale pilot scheme to test a locally suitable model for its containment. At the same time, building consensus and commitment among the major in-country stakeholders helps to pave the way for future large-scale interventions.

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New attitudes amongst donors and conservation professionals will certainly help us to be more honest in our lesson learning, but we shouldn't under-estimate the obstacles. To give just one example: we all work under tighter time pressures than we did ten years ago and this in itself hampers the reflective approaches and long planning processes that could have helped avoid some of the problems summarised above. Maybe conservation organisations need to appoint specialised staff to help in developing learning projects? Or supply tangible benefits to those who take the time to record and transmit useful lessons? We look forward to a continued dialogue on these important issues in future editions of *arborvitae*.



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focus

12

Russian Model Forest as Learning Laboratory

The Pskov model forest in Russia is a good example of how local people can become allies of conservation – through cutting edge forestry. Helma Brandlmaier of the WWF European Forest Programme reports.

Participatory and model approaches are a novelty in the Russian context. The Pskov model forest has provided the first opportunity in Northwest Russia for district governments, forest administrators, NGOs and community representatives to come together to discuss and influence forest issues, and has allowed the local population to influence what happens to the 46,000 ha forest from the outset.

A model forest project views a forest as much more than simply a collection of trees. Instead it looks at the values a forest can provide – for nature and for people. The aim of the model is to provide a learning environment where combined expertise and resources are used to develop innovative, region-specific approaches to sustainable forest management. Forest specialists and other interested parties start by analysing the advantages and shortcomings of different types of forest use. Forestry and forest use methods are developed that balance economic and ecological needs, based on forecasting forest dynamics. The model project also helps participants to learn about a GIS based system of conservation planning, new forest use practices and models of forecasting forest dynamics. Ecological trails and demonstration plots in the area are thought to be the tools best suited to convey the key findings.

The WWF model project in Pskov has worked with a wide range of groups from local people and organisations to international partners like Stora Enso and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The involvement of local partners has been particularly successful and a district wide eco-information network has been established through 17 public libraries that helps spread the message about forest conservation and responsible forest management. Educational services are also offered for the community through regular exhibitions, workshops, lectures and roundtable discussions.

Involving young people has been a key to success. In cooperation with the regional educational authorities the Pskov teacher training college has developed a course on fundamentals of sustainable forestry for secondary schools. During 2002-3 this course will be piloted in local schools with the intention of including it in the standard curriculum. In June 2002 a summer school was held in the model forest for young foresters from the region, which included both theoretical and practical components. A 'WWF Friends Club' for children has also been established, where children can learn about forests and the environment through hands-on activities.



E. Yablochikina, WWF

WWF is keen to see the new insights into forestry gained in Pskov exported to other parts of Russia to provide a multiplier effect for better forest management. This is of particular importance as logging intensity has increased in Northwest Russia.

The Pskov Model is already being recognised as a learning laboratory. Forest specialists from other parts of Russia have visited the forest to discuss and learn about new technologies and practices adapted to the Russian context in the model approach. This April, for instance, 30 senior foresters from around Russia came to learn about the region-specific application of sustainable forest management principles. International forest specialists have also taken an interest in the findings of the Pskov model forest. In May, 16 forest researchers from Canada, Sweden and the USA visited the forest to include the Pskov experience in their research on conservation of biological diversity in boreal countries.

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WWF news in brief

Future conservation leaders: The WWF College, based in Zeist, The Netherlands, is designed to help people working for WWF and its partners develop leadership skills, through an interactive learning network that combines new technology with traditional face-to-face training. Participants learn from each other and choose from a range of 18 learning modules, ranging from ecoregion conservation, through vision development to effective communication. Learning modules take on average two hours a week along with occasional residential courses.

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Winter festival organised by the Pskov model forest project in cooperation with the local administration to emphasise the importance of nature conservation in the area.

Central American Forest Strategy

© WWF/Caron/Michèle Pépraz

The IUCN Meso America Office has assisted Central American governments in developing a new strategy that aims to position the forest sector as an agent of socioeconomic development and environmental conservation in Central America.

Alberto Salas explains what has happened

IUCN regards the various regional forest processes underway – e.g. in Central America, the Congo Basin and Southern Africa – as offering more concrete opportunities for positive engagement than the global inter-governmental processes such as the UNFE. For example, stakeholders from the environmental sector across Central America have developed the Estrategia Forestal Centroamericana (Central American Forest Strategy - EFCA) to guide the political framework for the region's forest development for the next 25 years. The EFCA, which was officially approved on 9th October 2002, was designed and promoted by the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), the Central American Council on Forests and Protected Areas (CCAB-AP), the UNDP-Capacity 21 Regional Forest Program (PROFOR) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), with the technical support from IUCN Meso America Office.

The EFCA vision is to consolidate a process of forest development that significantly contributes to poverty reduction, to mitigating the region's water and vulnerability related problems and subsequently to human development, through adequate use of the region's resources and with the active participation of the different sectors involved. Specific objectives include:

- Definition, dissemination and consolidation of a common vision for the development of the forest sector in Central America in accordance with relevant international commitments and recommendations.
- The identification and development of regional projects in support of the National Forest Development Programmes that allow individual countries to deal with their most relevant forest related problems and priorities.
- To facilitate the elaboration and/or updating of national forest policies and programmes in the region as well as their implementation through dynamic and participatory processes.
- To strengthen the official participation of countries as a regional group in the international forest dialogue and to

IUCN news in brief

13

Experts evaluate the management of Lake Baikal World Heritage Site:

In July 2002, a dozen Russian experts participated in the evaluation of Lake Baikal's World Heritage Site. One working group (WG) focussed on improving the management of the system of protected areas, the major components of which are three zapovedniks (strict nature reserves) and two national parks. The other evaluated the management effectiveness of the Baikalsky zapovednik, using IUCN's WCPA Framework for assessing the management of protected areas, adapted to the Russian context. The first WG suggested that the Association of Lake Baikal Protected areas be strengthened in order to help park Directors find joint solutions to legal problems as well as to coordinate research, tourism and funding activities amongst others. The second WG helped the Baikalsky zapovednik Director and staff find workable solutions to inherent problems they have been experiencing since the establishment of the park in 1969. The next step will include the development of an action plan to implement recommendations. The evaluation of the Baikalsky zapovednik served as a model evaluation for the other protected areas of Lake Baikal, which experience similar management problems.

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promote the more efficient use of international co-operation resources in this field.

The EFCA mission is to promote and facilitate the creation of a political framework that will strengthen the current institutional and operational frameworks that support national forest development processes in close relationship with the results and guidelines from the international dialogue on forests. Thus the scope of the EFCA will be:

- Internationally, to facilitate the presence of the forest sector in international dialogue;
- Regionally, to facilitate and promote synergies, transfer knowledge and strengthen national processes; and
- Nationally, to support the political positioning of the forest sector in each country.

The EFCA establishes targets for 25 years with the main purpose of contributing to poverty reduction in the region, as well as reducing ecological and social vulnerability. To do this it identifies implementation mechanisms on the basis of National Forest Action Plans, which include indicators for forest sustainability and a financial strategy to put in place identified activities. Amongst the expected concrete results, the EFCA states that:

- by 2005 all Central American countries should initiate or update their forest policies and National Forest Development Programmes;
- by 2010 the foundations to allow forests to accomplish a relevant economic and social function should have been created; and
- by 2025 the region should have recovered 45-60 per cent of its forest cover.

The CCAD has designated IUCN-ORMA as the implementing agency of the first phase of the EFCA.

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Forest Definitions: Take 2

A second expert meeting on Harmonising Forest-related Definitions for use by Various Stakeholders, was held at the FAO in Rome in September 2002, following a first meeting in January (see *arborvitae* 19). Mark Aldrich was there.

'Priority land use' is an important factor dealt with differently by international processes in their definitions of forest. For example should the trees in this picture be classified as 'forest', or 'trees outside forest' (on agricultural land)?

Using a draft analytical framework developed with the guidance of an interim task force, this second expert meeting (attended by more than 50 participants) discussed and agreed proposals towards the harmonisation/improved compatibility of a number of key forest-related definitions developed by four prominent International processes, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, FAO Forest Resource Assessment and International Tropical Timber Organization.

These recommendations (along with the analytical framework) are being communicated to the various International processes, and FAO as secretariat of the process has agreed to monitor and report back to the meeting participants on follow up actions made by the relevant processes in response. In general WWF and IUCN, who both contributed to the process, were pleased with the outcomes. In particular, the objectivity of the process which did not simply look to harmonise at all costs, but also documented some of the clear differences between definitions, and why they are likely to remain.

Contact: Mark Aldrich, maldrich@wwfint.org or Simon Rietbergen, simon.rietbergen@iucn.org. The full report of the meeting, containing the key recommendations is available at: www.fao.org/forestry/fop/fopw/Climate/climate-e.asp

Transboundary Conservation Areas Workshop

IUCN and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) are organising a workshop on increasing the effectiveness of transboundary conservation areas in tropical forests. The workshop will be held from 17-21 February, 2003 in Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand.

The workshop will bring together practitioners involved in the implementation of ITTO's transboundary conservation areas (TBCA) programme, experts from IUCN and other interested organisations.

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WWF/Canon/John E Newby

Research in brief

Deforestation and its causes: Government claims that improvements in Brazilian laws have reduced threats to forests are questioned by researchers who found that absolute and per caput rates of forest loss have accelerated significantly in the last decade (*Environmental Conservation* **28**, 305-311). A study by the EU reports the area of rainforest destroyed from 1990-1997 to be 23 per cent less than the widely quoted FAO figures: however it argues that the rate of destruction is still alarming: moist forest loss was estimated at 5.8 million ha a year plus or minus 1.4 m ha and carbon fluxes from tropical forest loss were argued to be much lower than IPCC estimates (*Science* **297**, 999-1002). A review of 152 studies of tropical deforestation concluded that no one set of policies can control forest clearing. In most cases farmers cleared the forest. In about half the cases commercial logging also played a major role. About two-fifths of the studies reported that poverty contributed to deforestation. A similar number found that powerful public officials and private investors had promoted forest clearing for their own ends (*BioScience* **52**:2). A review generated by the Biological Dynamics of Forest Fragments Project suggests that edge effects play a key role in fragment dynamics and that many Amazonian species avoid even small (<100-m-wide) clearings. Fragmentation impacts alter species richness, species invasions, forest dynamics, communities' trophic structure and other processes (*Conservation Biology* **16**:3, 605). Nearly half the world's vascular plant species and one-third of terrestrial vertebrates are endemic to 25 biodiversity hotspots. None of these have more than one-third of their pristine habitat remaining, and today their intact habitat covers only 1.4 per cent of the land. Many of the hotspot endemics are threatened with extinction (*Conservation Biology* **16**:4, 909).



Forest Certification and Indigenous Communities in Nicaragua

Steve Gretzinger, Conservation Director for WWF-Central America, reports on the Alliance's work on sustainable forest management and FSC certification with the Nicaraguan Miskito and Sumo-Mayangna indigenous communities.

The Autonomous Atlantic Coast Region of Nicaragua (RAAN) is a critical testing ground for the FSC's ability to address economically impoverished social groups in remote areas with high conservation value forests. The RAAN is the largest remaining intact forest in Central America, and is the source of substantial hardwood, including mahogany, which is exported throughout Central America and the Caribbean. Companies in the region have been active in the development of national guidelines and training activities and some have recently undergone FSC certification assessments. Despite these positive developments, the indigenous communities, who essentially own the forest resources, are not aware of FSC requirements or opportunities, and frequently view such outside schemes with suspicion.

In September 2002, WWF staff joined forces with the local university in a pioneering approach focused on key forest communities, and held workshops in the isolated communities of Puerto Cabezas, Layasiksa, Rosita and Tasbayra. One hundred rural dwellers from 34 villages participated in the one and a half day workshops, which were conducted by indigenous extension agents, previously trained in sustainable forestry and FSC certification as part of the initiative. A trainer's guide was prepared outlining the course and providing educational tools and games, and radio interviews were transmitted throughout the region to get the message out to those communities that could not participate.

The Alliance has been working through WWF-Central America to ensure that the social structures of traditional communities can respond to difficult, modern demands placed upon them by globalisation. The increased interest of large forestry companies in the wood resources controlled by indigenous groups has caused economic and social problems. Project staff spent two weeks in the remote communities of Layasiksa, Kukalaya, Haulover and Awas Tingni, developing a working organisational model to complement the traditional system of 'Consejo de Ancianos' and the 'Sindicos'. While these systems are superb for maintaining cultural identity and managing internal issues, they have been less successful in engaging in contract negotiations, financial management and administration of timber sales. The team returned to meet with community leaders to discuss proposed administrative structures and model contract language designed to meet both modern and traditional needs.

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Conference on forest conservation and sustainable use in the Caucasus ecoregion

15

The Caucasus is a globally significant terrestrial ecoregion. Forests, covering more than 20 per cent of the ecoregion, are comprised primarily of broadleaf species and serve as important habitat for threatened and endangered species of birds and mammals. Unfortunately, the socio-economic crisis of the past decade has exacerbated forest exploitation and diminished government management capacity. The result has been a drastic decrease in forest quality and associated biodiversity values. In an effort to highlight the importance of the ecoregion and to take stock of recent conservation efforts the 'Donor and Implementer Conference on Forest Conservation and Sustainable Use' was held in Tbilisi, Georgia on 11-12 September 2002. Government and NGO delegates from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Russia, and Turkey were joined by representatives from donor agencies and NGOs including the World Bank and WWF. This was apparently the first time that government and NGO representatives from the region had met to discuss conservation issues.

The Conference, supported by the World Bank/WWF Forest Alliance, was designed to present data on forest condition; examine cross cutting issues such as the relationship between rural livelihood practices and biodiversity conservation; share lessons learned from the implementation of various projects; and advance thinking about the concepts of ecoregional planning and transboundary cooperation. Building on the country reports presented by government delegates, plenary and group discussions focused on the threats and the challenges of moving forward in ecoregion planning and implementation.

Key threats identified included the high demand for fuelwood given the lack of alternative energy sources and the impact that this has had on forest quality. While this has long been an issue in certain regions it has, over the past 10 years, become more pronounced throughout. Illegal logging, primarily due to weak governance structures and limited institutional capacity to manage the resources, was also determined to be a critically important issue. Furthermore, the conference discussed the challenges of addressing the technical aspects of conservation planning – accessing and analysing data and engaging stakeholders in decision making processes – with the political challenges of integrating the conservation/ sustainable use agenda within a broader framework of economic development and international relations. It was stressed that human resources constraints, conflicting legal/policy conditions, and a shortage of funds would, for the foreseeable future, retard conservation efforts.

One major outcome was a decision to form an 'Ecoregional Council' to advance conservation discussions within and between the five countries. Its composition, terms of reference and financing were not fully elaborated, but the commitment to form such a body represented an important first step in integrating the conservation agenda of the nations. The World Bank, WWF, the German government, Conservation International/Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, the MacArthur Foundation and others all expressed interest in continuing active engagement in this important ecoregion.

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Forest Wellbeing

Available from: Danielle Cantin, dcantin@iucn.ca, IUCN Canada or www.iucn.org

The Wellbeing of Forests is a report and accompanying CD that together comprise an e-tool for assessing environmental and social sustainability of forests, bringing together 26 indicators of human and ecosystem wellbeing, using IUCN's Sustainability Assessment method. Accompanying software allows users to explore different standards and combinations.

Non-timber forest products

Available from: Earthscan books: www.earthscan.co.uk. £24.95 (full price), online discount 15% £21.21.

Uncovering the Hidden Harvest: Valuation Methods for Woodland and Forest Resources, edited by Bruce M Campbell and Martin K Luckert, the latest edition in the People and Plants Conservation series, is a practical handbook describing the 'hidden harvest'; i.e. the diverse products and services provided by forests and woodlands.

Forests and poverty

Available from: WWF Macroeconomics Policy Office, Washington D.C. Download from www.panda.org/mpo; for print copies contact Brent.Nordstrom@wwfus.org

Forest Conservation and the rural poor, A Call to Broaden the Conservation Agenda, by Pablo Gutman. The paper reviews the literature on causes of deforestation, and discusses whether the rural poor are a threat to forests, whether forests can provide income for the rural poor and why so many local sustainable forest management initiatives fail. It distinguishes three types of benefits of sustainable forestry: local ones (e.g. increased marketability of products), national ones (e.g. watershed conservation) and international benefits (e.g. globally threatened biodiversity) and advocates mechanisms to pay the rural poor for the national and international benefits of forest conservation.

Natural forests in Chile

Available from: Global Forest Watch, download from: www.globalforestwatch.org

Chile's Frontier Forests – Conserving a Global Treasure by Eduardo Neira, Hernán Verscheure and Carmen Revenga, the latest study from Global Forest Watch, found that of the roughly 30 per cent of forests classified as frontier forests in Chile, only about a quarter are in protected areas. Most frontier forests are in areas with steep slopes or located at high altitude. Today they face several urgent threats, such as illegal logging, conversion to plantations of exotic species, and unsustainable management practices.

African compendium

Available from: WRM International Secretariat at: teresap@wrm.org.uy. Free to NGOs and IPOs, otherwise US\$10 (shipment included)

Africa: forests under threat gathers a selection of articles published in the monthly electronic bulletin of the World Rainforest Movement (WRM), analysing the processes leading to the destruction of African forests and highlighting the initiatives taken by civil society to protect and use these forests adequately.

New owners, new opportunities

Available from: www.futureharvest.org/news/forests.shtml

Making Markets Work for Forest Communities? from CIFOR and Forest Trends stresses that improving the lives of individuals residing in and around forests is vital to forest conservation. The report notes the transition in ownership and control of developing countries' forests, where rural communities and indigenous people are successfully asserting control over forestland, now owning or officially administering at least 25 per cent of the developing world's forests, or nearly 300 million hectares. This trend is expected to accelerate over the next several years. However, despite their holdings, local communities often do not have authority to fully use and capitalise on their forest assets. The report stresses the importance of partnership between the forest industry and local communities and calls for the removal of government policies that thwart efforts to develop local forestry operations.

Equality in protected areas

Available from: www.poam.org/articulos-estudios/genero/moduloapi.shtml. Available in English and Spanish.

In search of the Lost Gender: Equity in Protected Areas provides tools, techniques and recommendations to promote the integration of a gender equity perspective in protected areas management. 'This is the first book in the world which explains in a concrete way how to apply the perspective of gender in protected areas through the management plan, which is the main working instrument for the environmental management of these areas', said Guiselle Rodríguez, one of the authors, of IUCN-Mesoamerica.

Going, going, gone...

Available from: <http://archive.greenpeace.org/politics/wto/Doha/reports/wto.pdf>

Trading away the last ancient forests discusses the dangers to forests from further trade liberalisation measures recently adopted by the World Trade Organization (WTO). The study aims not only to clarify the dangers, but also to show the ways to reach solutions. The study was commissioned by Greenpeace and conducted by Richard Tarasofsky, Stephanie Pfahl, Steven Shrybman and Hedwig Friedrich.

Message to AV readers

The AV distribution list is due for a major review.

Also we are constituting an Email distribution list so that we can send occasional Email updates in between paper issues.

Please send your full contact details (name, title, organisation, mail address, fax, phone, Email, website) to forests@iucn.org or by fax to Mette Bovenschulte +41 22 999 0025.



arborvitae

The next issue of *arborvitae* will be produced in April/May (copy deadline March 2002). If you have any material to send or comments please contact:

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