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INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN DAY SPECIAL

Inside

WWF in the Mountains of Nepal	2
Sacred Himalayan Landscape	4
2005 Highlights	5
Harvesting the Mountains	9
Climate Change Research	10
Smiles for Sunita	12



EcoCircular

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WWF NEPAL PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Sustainable Tourism for Poverty Alleviation in Mountain Areas

क्यातलो लक्षसल ल/ल लगल/लसल नलु ललुल कोळग

Message from Dr Chandra Gurung Country Representative

WWF, the global conservation organization, is honoured to be part of the International Mountain Day celebrations.

The theme for this year is especially important for us in Nepal as tourism is vital to the livelihoods of many communities both in the mountains and in the Terai. For visitors to keep returning to our nation, we must promote sustainable tourism to ensure the safety of the rich natural beauty with which we have been blessed.

WWF Nepal Program believes that conservation and sustainable livelihoods are

interlinked – one will not succeed without the other. From our Northern Mountains Conservation Project in Dolpo to the Sagarmatha Community Agro-Forestry Project in Solukhumbu and the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Project in Taplejung, we actively promote wise-use of natural resources and income generating activities like tourism in partnership with communities, local NGOs and other partners.

The fragile ecosystems of our mountains should not be jeopardized. Let us all redouble our efforts to safeguard our hills and mountains for future generations to enjoy a living planet.





WWF in the Mountains of Nepal

Situated on the southern slopes of the central Himalayas, 86 per cent of Nepal is hills and high mountains. The mid-hills have the greatest diversity of ecosystems and species with nearly 32 per cent of the country's forests. The high mountains are characterized by a large number of endemic species although they are relatively less diverse in flora and fauna in comparison to the mid-hills and lowlands.

Habitat destruction and over-exploitation of natural resources are the main drivers behind the rapid loss of biodiversity in this fragile ecosystem. Also of critical importance is the role of climate change in environmental degradation.

Of Nepal's 16 protected areas, 11 are in the mid-hills and high mountains. WWF Nepal Program has projects in several mountain regions that encompass three WWF Global 200 Ecoregions. To address the tremendous biotic pressure on scarce forest resources in the high mountains and the ensuing threats to endangered species, WWF Nepal Program together with His Majesty's Government of Nepal implement the **Sagarmatha Community Agro-forestry Project (SCAFP)** in Sagarmatha National Park, **Northern Mountains Conservation Project (NMCP)** in Shey Phoksundo National Park and Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, and **Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Project (KCAP)** in Taplejung District.

Our work in the mountains ranges from capacity building for good governance, to wildlife monitoring with local communities and promotion of income generating activities like tourism. With regard to **sustainable tourism**, the following have been undertaken in our project sites:

KCAP

- Hotel Management training for hotel owners
- Establishment of Tourist Information Centre
- Tourism Plan developed and submitted to government for endorsement
- Campsite development
- Snow Post installed
- KCA Tourist Guidebook published
- Conservation signboard installed

SCAFP

- Tourist Information Centre
- Conservation signboard installed

A high tourist rate in Sagarmatha has secured the presence of organizations like TRPAP working closely with local communities to develop tourism sustainably. WWF Nepal Program complements income generating activities with programs that focus especially on community-based agro-forestry.

NMCP

- Distribution of trekkers code (general park rules and values)
- Tourist Information Centre
- Eco-tourism related capacity building activities
- Campsite development





What is sustainable tourism?

'Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing the opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems'.

World Tourism Organization (WTO).

Models of sustainable tourism

ECOTOURISM is designed to counter the trend towards mass tourism, and is widely regarded as a valuable tool for protecting ecologically sensitive areas and species, as well as providing sustainable economic help for often impoverished communities.

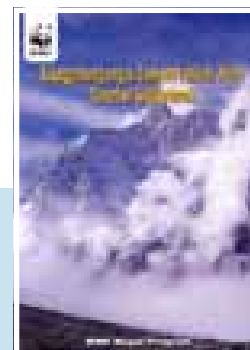
COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM initiatives aim to increase local people's involvement in tourism.

CONSERVATION WITH TOURISM this approach emphasizes the need for broadly distributed local benefits (often cash) as incentives for conservation, or they may support activities that provide an alternative to unsustainable actions.

PRO-POOR TOURISM (PPT) aims to deliver increased net benefits to the poor as a goal in itself. It aims to strengthen the linkages between tourism businesses and poor people, so that tourism's contribution to poverty reduction is increased and poor people are able to participate more effectively in product development.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM is a growing movement committed to the principle that all forms of tourism can be more responsible, all forms of tourism need to be managed by government, communities and the private sector to enhance positive impacts, particularly economic and social, and to minimize the negative impacts of tourism.

Source: www.fao.org



Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) Tourist Guidebook

Janita Gurung, Ghana Shyam Gurung with Valerie Stori

ISBN 99933-94-05-X

2002, 57 pp

NRs 350

A sample of natural and cultural diversity in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA), this has information on regular trekking trails and the area's rich natural heritage. The tips on tourist facilities along the trail will serve as a guide to visitors and function as a database to track changes in these facilities and commodity prices over the years.

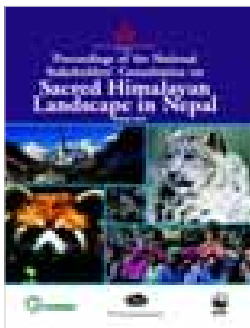
Proceeds from the sale of the book will be channeled into constructing and managing the Child Care Center at Hellok village in the KCA.

NEW INITIATIVE: The Sacred Himalayan Landscape

The landscape level approach to conservation has been carried through into the Sacred Himalayan Landscape (SHL), which extends 30,021km² from Langtang National Park in central Nepal through the Kangchenjunga region in Sikkim and Sikkim in India to Toorsa Strict Reserve in Bhutan. The initiative comes under the greater vision of "Transboundary Partnership for a Sacred Himalayan Landscape in the Eastern Himalayas".

**Sacred Himalayan Landscape in Nepal
Proceedings of the National Stakeholders'
Consultation, 5 April 2005 Kathmandu, Nepal**

MFSC, ICIMOD, TMI, WWF
ISBN 99946-837-1-3
2005, 50 pp



In Nepal, the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation is leading the SHL initiative in partnership with WWF, ICIMOD, TMI and IUCN. With the formation of the core team, this partnership has extended to include the National Planning Commission, DoF, DNPWC, Eco Himal, UNDP, SNV and DFID. A stakeholders consultation was held in Kathmandu as part of the design phase in April 2005. It was part of a series of meetings to develop a better understanding and partnerships for the conservation of the landscape and to find ways to address the issues of local livelihoods through the proposed initiative.

The vision for the Sacred Himalayan Landscape is to conserve the rich biodiversity and enhance local livelihood needs and sustain diverse cultures and traditions in the globally important Eastern Himalayan Region.

WWF NEPAL PROGRAM 2005 HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY

CLIMATE CHANGE DOCUMENTARY:

"Meltdown in Nepal" launched as part of International Climate Witness Project to create awareness among the public and policy-makers on the impact of climate change in Nepal



dropped from 544 in 2000 to 372 - a 31 per cent decline in five years



A team of 25 wildlife biologists and technicians from DNPWC, KMTNC and WWF NP used domestic elephants for the rhino count in Royal Chitwan National Park and its surrounding areas in March 2005

FEBRUARY

RESEARCH CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ON HIMALAYAS:

A Memorandum of Understanding signed between WWF Nepal Program and Department of Hydrology and Meteorology for five-year period for research on climate change impacts in Nepal

WORLD WETLANDS DAY: Importance of wetlands in Nepal highlighted by WWF Nepal Program and partner conservation organizations on 2 February 2005. English translation of National Wetlands Policy released



Conservation Ambassador Payal Shakya and Dr Chandra Gurung applaud as former Secretary of MFSC Ananta Raj Pandey releases the English translation of the National Wetlands Policy

INFORMATION CENTRE INAUGURATED

by Dr Tirtha Man Maskey, Director General of DNPWC, at Majhgaon, Shuklaphanta on 29 March

APRIL

STAKEHOLDERS' CONSULTATION ON SACRED HIMALAYAN LANDSCAPE:

Organized jointly by WWF Nepal Program, MFSC, ICIMOD and TMI on 7 April 2005

WILDLIFE WEEK: 10th year of celebrations together with DNPWC and other partner organizations to promote conservation awareness.



Kathmandu valley school students rally in support of wildlife conservation

MARCH

RHINO COUNT 2005: New figures reveal the population of endangered Greater One-horned rhinos in Royal Chitwan National Park has

10,000 BIOGAS PLANTS: MOU signed between WWF Nepal Program and Biogas Sector Partnership - Nepal for five years to install 10,000 Toilet-Attached Biogas Plants in 30 per cent of households in critical TAL areas

MAY

KANGCHENJUNGA GOLDEN JUBILEE:

Seminar on 'Adventure Tourism, Conservation and Development in Kangchenjunga' was organized by Nepal Mountaineering Association in partnership with ICIMOD, TMI, IUCN, TRAPAP and WWF NP on 25 May. Kangchenjunga summiteers felicitated by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev. Two books released on the occasion



SAVE THE RHINO CAMPAIGN: Week-long campaign themed "Ustai Prani Ustai Pida, Milera Jogaun Ek Singe Gaiinda" kicked off on International Biodiversity Day at Royal Chitwan National Park. Successful involvement of local people, celebrities, farmers, journalists, school children and the business community



A ghar-dailo program among the indigenous communities created awareness about anti-poaching activities and laws against illegal wildlife trade

12 YEARS AND COUNTING... on 19 May 2005, WWF Nepal Program celebrated its 12th Anniversary

JUNE

ABRAHAM CONSERVATION AWARDS 2005

presented to five institutions and three individuals for their outstanding contribution to biodiversity conservation, conservation education and sustainable development by WWF Nepal Program in Kathmandu on 10 June



POLICING THE WATERS: Two inflatable motor rafts to enhance anti-poaching patrols on the River Rapti handed over by Dr Chandra Gurung, Country Representative of WWF Nepal Program, to Royal Chitwan park staff on 15 June



Dr Tirtha Man Maskey and Dr Chandra Gurung shake hands at the handover of the inflatable motorboats.

TACKLING HUMAN-ELEPHANT

CONFLICT: Sharing knowledge, experiences and key lessons of human-elephant conflict and mitigation strategies was the main agenda of the regional conference in Kathmandu from 12-14 June

JULY

HIMALAYAN GLACIER PROJECT:

A two-day regional strategy development workshop to explore possibilities of scaling-up existing Himalayan Glacier Project into a much larger regional project and integrate climate change and freshwater programs held in Kathmandu on 20-21 July

PUBLIC HEARING ON TAL PROGRAM

for good governance and feedback overall project performance from stakeholders at annual program review meeting and public hearing session at Bardia

BRITISH EMBASSY SUPPORT for WWF Nepal Program to raise awareness on climate change among Eco Clubs in Kathmandu Valley through financial aid

MOU WITH KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY:

A Memorandum of Understanding signed between WWF Nepal Program and Kathmandu University (KU) on 5 July 2005 to use resources of both organizations efficiently and effectively in order to promote conservation education and research



Dr Chandra Gurung and Professor Puspha Raj Adhikary, Dean of School of Science, Kathmandu University, after signing the MOU

AUGUST

SIGNING OF GRANT AGREEMENTS:

Five separate grant agreements amounting US\$ 1,754,039 signed between WWF Nepal Program, DNPWC and DOF on 15 August 2005 to support biodiversity conservation and sustainable community development in WWF project sites

CONSERVATION EDUCATION FOR MISS NEPAL CONTESTANTS:

Conservation Education session held for Miss Nepal - 2005 contestants, which included a presentation by Dr Chandra Gurung and a briefing from WWF Nepal's first Conservation Ambassador Payal Shakya, Miss Nepal 2004



SEPTEMBER

SIGNING OF WTLCP: The implementation document signed for the Western Terai Landscape Complex Project (WTLCP), an eight-year program for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, by Anandaram Regmi, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Finance, Dr Damodar Prasad Parajuli, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, and Ghulam Isaczai, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP, on 31 August

LETTER OF APPRECIATION: At the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, a Letter of Appreciation was awarded to WWF Nepal Program by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev



OCTOBER

HIGH ALTITUDE WETLANDS IN NEPAL:

An inventory of at least seven priority wetlands in Nepal being prepared and a workshop was organized by WWF Nepal Program in coordination with Forum for Ecosystem Management to share information and recommend future initiatives

GANGETIC DOLPHINS IN

NEPAL: WWF Nepal Program's dolphin research team caught an elusive Gangetic dolphin on camera. Study centered on Karnali River and tributaries in TAL-Nepal



TOP TIGER EXPERTS IN NEPAL:

Dr John Seidensticker and Dr Mahendra Shrestha of Save the Tiger Fund visited the Terai Arc Landscape to observe and assess STF-supported activities in Nepal. They were also exploring new ways of strengthening ongoing partnerships to conserve tigers more effectively in Nepal

AWS FOR EVEREST: WWF Nepal Program presented an Automatic Weather Station (AWS) to the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM), Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology of HMG/N on 5 October 2005. A tripartite agreement between the DHM, WWF Nepal Program and the Society of Hydrology and Meteorology - Nepal (SOHAM) was also signed for research on the regional Himalayan Glacier and River Project



Dr Madan Lall Shrestha, Director General - DHM receives part of the AWS equipment from Dr Chandra Gurung

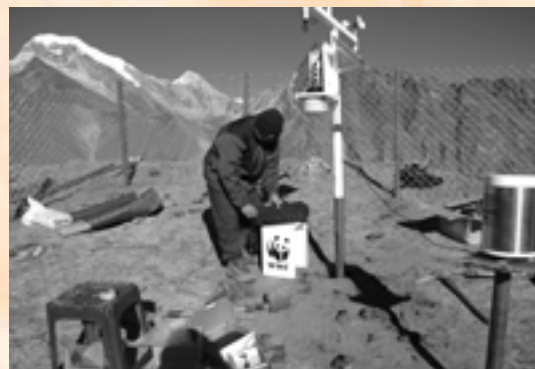
NOVEMBER

MICRO HYDRO IN SAGARMATHA NATIONAL PARK BZ:

Nearly US\$ 200,000 committed by Kadoorie Agriculture Aid Association (KAAA) to WWF Nepal Program for the Ghatte Micro Hydro project in Sagarmatha National Park Buffer Zone on 10 November. Its 70 KW capacity will benefit more than 87 households when completed in September 2006

AWS INSTALLED IN NGUZUMPA

GLACIER by a team from WWF Nepal Program, Department of Hydrology and Meteorology and Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology to collect important data for the Himalayan Glacier and River Project



DECEMBER

RADIO COMMUNICATION SET IN RCNP:

To enhance anti-poaching operations, the TAL Program is supporting the installation of a radio communication set. The masts at RCNP headquarters and the Sauraha sector office were completed in early December and the next two towers will be finished by year end. The radio set will be effective throughout Royal Chitwan National Park

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN DAY

celebrated by Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation together with partners like Nepal Tourism Board, TRPAP, KMTNC, ICIMOD, IUCN, TMI and WWF Nepal Program with the theme of "Sustainable Tourism for Poverty Alleviation in Mountain Areas". His Royal Highness Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev was chief guest at the festivities in Kathmandu on 11 December





School children learn about traditional medicine and sustainable harvesting of NTFPs from an Amchi, a traditional doctor, in NMCP Dolpa

Harvesting the Mountains: Non-timber Forest Products

Bhesh Raj Oli

District Supervisor

TAL PA and BZ

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Nepal's mountains are rich in non-timber forest products (NTFPs) of high value and low volume - therein lies the necessity for sustainable use of this important commodity. NTFPs are defined as all forest products other than timber, fuelwood and fodder. Medicinal and aromatic plants, abbreviated to MAPs, are of special significance to the Nepali economy because of their value to the local collectors, the small traders (villagers and middlemen), herb dealers, Ayurvedic practitioners, pharmaceutical companies and essential oil producing factories. They also have cultural and religious significance as they are used for herbal treatments and religious ceremonies. Many local level enterprises are based on NTFPs/MAPs like *Juniperus indica* (Dhupi), *Daphne bholua* (Lokta), *Edgeworthia gardneri* (Argeli) and *Girardinia diversifolia* (Allo).

The harvest and trade of NTFPs/MAPs are very important to the livelihoods of communities in the high Himalayas. Surveys carried out in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area by WWF found that NTFPs/MAPs contribute between 25 - 90 per cent of the total households' economy, with the poor benefiting more. Twenty NTFP/MAPs species are traded in a high volume from Dolpo, while Kangchenjunga Conservation Area is the source and often a transit for 16 varieties.

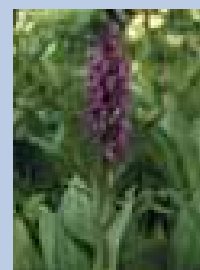
It is estimated that more than 20,000 metric tones of NTFPs/MAPs worth US\$ 18 million is exported/traded annually from Nepal. Trade is almost entirely controlled by India and Tibet. Nearly 90 per cent of the total volume goes to India. While the demand exists, major benefits have yet to trickle down to local communities that lack information and access to prices and markets.

There is immense pressure on the natural stock of NTFPs/MAPs because of high demand. Unsustainable and unselective harvesting practices, livestock grazing, slash-and-burn farming, forest fires, illegal collection and over-harvesting further endangers these plant species. Policies that promote sustainable harvesting instead of imposing restrictions and bans will also help address the livelihoods needs and ecological integrity of these precious mountain resources.

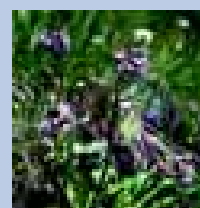
Highly value NTFPs contribute enormously to local livelihoods. A few examples:



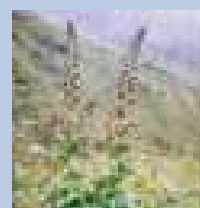
Yarchagumba (*Cordyceps sinensis*)



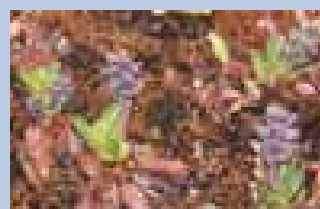
Panchaule (*Dactylorhiza hatagirea*)



Jatamansi (*Nardostachys grandiflora*)



Bikh (*Aconitum spicatum*)



Kutki (*Neopicrorhiza scrophulariiflora*)



Maikopila (*Saussurea tridactyla*)



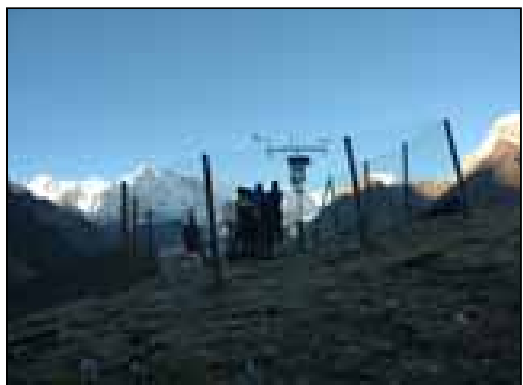
The AWS with Lake Gokyo in the background



Ngozumpa Glacier (4,880m)



Unpacking the Automatic Weather Station (AWS) on the moraine wall between Ngozumpa Glacier and Lake Gokyo



Almost set up and fenced in, the climate monitoring equipment is dwarfed by the Himalayas



The team (l-r): Hira Gurung - WWF, Mani Ratna Chitrakar- DHM, Aarati Gurung - WWF, Dr Arun Bhakta Shrestha - DHM, Rajendra Man Singh Dangol - DHM and Raju Aryal - DHM (not in pic)

CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH: Automatic Weather Station in Ngozumpa Glacier

Aarati Gurung

Climate Change Campaign Officer
WWF Nepal Program
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The US\$ 12,000 Automatic Weather Station (AWS) presented to the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM), Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology by WWF Nepal Program was installed at Ngozumpa glacier (above 5000 masl) in the Sagarmatha National Park on 22 November by a joint team from WWF and DHM.

The AWS will record data like solar radiation, relative humidity, air temperature, soil temperature, wind speed and direction, barometric pressure, radiant heat and precipitation. The constant data on glacier retreat will be recorded that will correlate climate change and glacier retreat in the Nepal Himalayas. It will complement research being conducted as part of the Himalayan Glacier and River Project in India, China and Nepal. In the past few decades, global warming has had a significant impact on the high mountain environment snow, glaciers and permafrost are especially sensitive to changes in atmospheric conditions because of their proximity to melting conditions.

Previous studies have shown that of the thousands of glacier lakes in Nepal, more than 20 could result in Glacier Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) events that have devastating consequences and is one of the most prominent impacts of global warming that causes climate change.

Stopping Illegal Wildlife Trade

The arrest of a dealer in illegal wildlife products in September 2005 in Langtang National Park once again revealed the gravity of the situation regarding international trade in wildlife products.

The major haul of five tiger skins, 113kg of tiger bone, 36 leopard skins and 238 otter skins in a truck at Syabru Bensi in Langtang, which borders Tibet Autonomous Region of China, exposed a new technique used by traders and middlemen to transport contraband. The illegal wildlife products were packed neatly in instant noodle cartons and had passed undetected through several check posts before a patrolling team of Durga Bux Battalion of the Royal Nepali Army deployed in the national park made the discovery (*see pic*).

Two of the dealer's accomplices were arrested at Chhetrapati of Kathmandu. One of the accomplices is a Tibetan refugee who is also reported to be a trader. The dealer arrested in Langtang also admitted of trading tiger skin in the past. Another Tibetan national was arrested on 20 June 2005 in Chitwan District in central Nepal for poaching and trading in rhinos. The arrest of four Indian nationals with tiger skins and bones in Kathmandu on 10 August 2005 sheds further light on how trade is conducted from countries of source to demand.

"Illegal dealers make use of the open, porous border between Nepal and India to transport illegal wildlife products as a thorough check of the hundreds of trucks and vehicles that enter Kathmandu every day is quite impossible," says Diwakar Chapagain of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), who works as a coordinator for the CITES Unit set up by WWF Nepal Program. "The problem in the mountains is that there are fewer check posts in remote mountain areas adjoining Tibet Autonomous Region, and these are understaffed. The strategic pullout of security forces from outposts has further complicated matters."

"Nepal's tiger and rhino population is



© Langtang National Park

regularly monitored and the record of wildlife mortality is closely kept. The number of seized tiger and leopard products and the mortality of endangered wildlife in and around our protected areas does not match," says Jhamak Karki, an ecologist at DNPWC.

A stiff penalty of up to a 15 years in jail or a fine of up to NRs 100,000 or both for wildlife poaching and illegal trade in wildlife products has not succeeded in completely deterring wildlife crime. The country witnessed a sudden rise in rhino poaching in the last few years, coinciding with the general breakdown in the law and order situation in the country. Very often poaching and illegal transaction take place outside the protected areas and is beyond the jurisdiction of protected area managers. In such cases, district forest offices take on the cases.

Apart from providing support for the preparation of a CITES Bill, which is presently awaiting approval from the Parliament, the CITES Unit conducts regular sensitization training programs and workshops for Nepal Police, members of the Royal Nepali Army deployed in protected areas, customs officers, postal staff, judicial officials and other concerned individuals.

"WWF Nepal Program has also joined hands with DNPWC and initiated coordination and cooperation with the India and Tibet Autonomous Region of China, and share information to deter wildlife related crimes in the transborder areas," says Dr Chandra Gurung, Country Representative of WWF Nepal Program. The foresters and park managers of the transborder protected areas of Nepal and India have also been holding periodic field-level meetings for a joint effort to curb wildlife crimes in the border areas.



Basanta Subba

Smiles for Sunita

This WWF volunteer is the first Tharu woman to study forestry!

If you'd like to know more about our volunteer and intern programs, contact:
Bandana Yonzon Lepcha
Human Resources Officer
WWF Nepal Program
hr@wwfnepal.org

Her eyes crinkle up when Sunita Chaudhary flashes an infectious grin. This 24-year-old is the first Tharu woman to study forestry and possibly the first also get a Masters Degree in Protected Area Management, on a full scholarship to the prestigious University of Klagenfurt in Austria. Her latest achievement is a testimony to the hard work she put in the past. The youngest daughter in a family of six, Sunita grew up in a family where environment issues were always important. Her father, Sukhdeo Chaudhary, is a Professor at the Institute of Forestry in Hetauda. After finishing high school from Makwanpur, Sunita won a one year scholarship to do her Bachelor's in Forestry at the

institute. She won two consecutive scholarships - the last a **WWF Prince Bernhard Scholarship** in 2003, and graduated with excellent grades. When she had time to spare earlier this year, Sunita decided to volunteer at WWF Nepal Program. She made such an impression that she was asked to stay on as an intern to work on a database of camera-trapped tigers and snow leopard monitoring analysis in the mountains. This remarkable young woman reads technical reports for leisure and enjoys Nepali pop music; Nima Rumba has found favour here. We asked her if she was likely to return to Nepal in the future. "Of course I'll come back to Nepal, but only after one more thing - a PhD! I really enjoyed my time at WWF, everyone was cooperative, helpful and fun, so perhaps you'll see me here sooner or later," she says, laughing. As Sunita finishes her time at WWF and begins a new chapter of her life, WWF wishes her a future as sunny and bright as her smile.



For more information:

Trishna Gurung

Manager, Communications & Education Unit
WWF Nepal Program

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