

# Newsletter

*Hot in this issue: Sustainable Forestry Models*

***January-March 2009***

Quarterly Newsletter for WWF Caucasus and CEPF – jointly supporting  
biodiversity conservation in the Caucasus

## **Highlighted in issue:**

- **Implementing and Evaluating Sustainable Forestry Models**
- **8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Caucasus Biodiversity Council**
- **Return of the Bezoar Goat**
- **8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CEPF Projects Co-ordination Team in the Caucasus**
- **Protecting Forest Ecosystems in Eastern Black Sea Region of Turkey**



*View to Mt. Ararat from Khosrov reserve, Armenia. Photo © WWF Armenia.*

## Implementing and Evaluating of Sustainable Forestry in Northern Armenia



*Zachary Parisa from Yale University working with forestry students from the Agricultural Academy of Armenia collecting data on the forests – photo by Kathryn Howard.*

The Armenia Tree Project (ATP) recently completed a CEPF funded project that developed sustainable forestry training models that are adaptable to local conditions in Armenia in collaboration with Yale University's Global Institute for Sustainable Forestry. ATP conducted an advanced inventory of the forests stands in proximity to the village of Margahovit in Northern Armenia. Working with WWF-Armenia, students from the Agricultural Academy of Armenia and locals residents have been able to successfully accomplish the following:

- A detailed technical evaluation “cruising” of the forests in proximity to the village of Margahovit, Lori Marz, Armenia
- A 20 hectare model forest was planted using indigenous tree species, which will be the venue for a future sustainable forestry training laboratory.
- A seminar training model was developed in combination with a forestry manual outlining the implementation plan and specifying how Armenian stakeholders would be involved;
- A series of rotational grazing seminars were conducted in demonstrating how such practices can improve forage quality (grass and legumes) as livestock feed and alleviate grazing damage to forest stands;
- Developing local capacity with Margahovit residents and identifying non-forest products that combined environmental education as part of the local school curriculum with a series of stakeholder meetings. The benefits and challenges of community forestry were fully discussed.



Armenia Tree Project now plans to develop a series of sustainable forestry training seminars throughout Armenia.

*ATP grew and transplanted tens of thousands of trees for the sustainable forestry training plot – photo by ATP.*



## 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Caucasus Biodiversity Council



Discussion of current issues and challenges. Photo by WWF.

The 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of Caucasus Biodiversity Council was held on 3-4 February 2009 in Batumi, a city of the Georgian Black Sea coast. Various recommendations were followed-up with concerted actions as follows:

- Evaluation of the first draft of defined ECP priorities and ranking the most urgent ecoregional activities to be funded within the framework of ``2012 Protected Areas Project – Caucasus Ecoregion`` (2012 PAP) and how this would contribute to the

implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Programme of Work on Protected Areas; the ranking of

projects was a key task during the meeting;

- Assessment of the draft "Strategy for the Conservation of Leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion" - this review has now been completed in all countries other than Iran and the Russian Federation;
- The participation of CBC in the Caucasus Day supplemental events during the World Conservation Congress held in Barcelona Spain, 5-14 October, 2008 was discussed. Participants were fully briefed on the Caucasus Day side events and they considered these as having been especially worthwhile and most interesting.

## Return of the Bezoar Goat



The DVD film produced by Pilgrim Studio. Photo by WWF.

The Bezoar goat – a charismatic animal of Georgia's mountains - is facing extinction because of unrestrained hunting and widespread poaching. WWF has come up with a plan for its survival by restoring this species in the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park. CEPF grantee – "Pilgrim Studio" - has produced a short film dedicated to the survival of the goat, which is included in the Red Data Book of endangered species as it desperately needs special protection. Previously the range of the Bezoar goat was widely distributed throughout the world, as revealed by numerous petroglyphs and paleozoological data. However, now it only survives in the wild in a few countries – such as Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Greece, Iran and Turkey. This is unfortunate in light of its current status. The species is rapidly facing extinction - especially in Georgia, and this is attributed to

a lack of knowledge and current economic conditions. Now the Bezoar goat is only found in Khevsureti and Tusheti, Georgian mountain regions, which is on the eastern ridge of Greater Caucasus.

The size off the existing herd does not exceed 100 individuals. The survival of Bezoar goat is multi-faceted and time is of the essence. An attempt has been made to restock goats from Armenia to Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park as part of overall effort to save the species in the southern Georgia. Fortunately the Bezoar goat can quickly acclimatize and it has prolific breeding ability. It is expected that a new generation will gradually increase to sustainable levels in their new home.

## 8th Meeting of the CEPF Projects Coordination Team in the Caucasus



*Discussions during meeting. Photo by WWF.*

The 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CEPF Projects Coordination Team in the Caucasus was held on 9-10 February 2009 in Tbilisi. Various projects were reviewed by respective countries after an initial discussion of the CEPF portfolio implementation plan in the Caucasus. Attention was placed on communication activities: preparing appropriate brochures and organising an international press-trip. Many were interested in the possibility of holding a regional assessment workshop – which is considered to be an essential tool in evaluating CEPF impact in the Caucasus ecoregion.

## Protection of Forest Ecosystems in Eastern Black Sea Region of Turkey

The Research Association of Rural Environment and Forestry is conducting a public awareness project to better inform local media in bringing about an increase in the level of understanding by the general public, locals and state level decision-makers as to need to enlarge protected forest areas. The project aims to develop best-management practices for protected forest ecosystems in the Eastern Black Sea Region. Partners involved in this collaboration for the collection and preparation of necessary information and data include: Faculty of Forestry of Black Sea Technical University in Trabzon Turkey and the Faculty of Forestry of Caucasus University of Artvin. All field related activities are supported by state local forestry directorates and its sub-units. The research association will produce a booklet that has an accompanying CD and calendar prior to the completion of the project. The materials will be distributed to locals, NGOs, media, state forestry agencies and agricultural units, including research institutions, area universities, ministries of forestry, researchers as well as national-decision makers and other stakeholders.



*Lake Karagol near Artvin, Turkey. Photo by WWF Turkey.*

*Lake Karagol near Artvin, Turkey. Photo by WWF Turkey.*



Famers house in Girkan National Park, Azerbaijan. Photo by WWF Azerbaijan.

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*The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.*

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