

Newsletter

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Monthly newsletter for WWF Caucasus and CEPF mutual effort for biodiversity conservation in the Caucasus

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View to Mt. Kazbegi (5033m) - Georgia. Photo © O. Abdaladze.

Promoting Sustainable Resource Use among Local Communities



Newly purchased tractor. Photo by FBCAH.

Fund for Biodiversity Conservation of Armenian Highland (FBCAH) is conducting a project to promote sustainable resource use in local communities which are surrounding protected areas in southern Armenia. The project is being implemented in partnership with local communities of five villages in the Southern Armenia, namely Aldara, Nrnadzor, Kajaran, Shikahogh and Tsav. A partnership is made with Shikahogh Reserve, Meghri Fotest Enterprise as well as with “Khustup” NGO and “Ecotourism Association”. Several meetings were organized with leaders and councils of all five communities while developing the project. The most useful options for alternative livelihood for each community were discussed

and identified at the meetings.

Shikahogh Community. The community has 150 ha of cultivated areas, out of which only 15 ha is used for grain growing. There is no appropriate machinery for cultivation in the community. Promoting two tractors will allow the community to cultivate most of the lands and generate income from grain growing. Having more cultivated lands and consequently more income generated for community will mitigate impact on use of natural resources contributing to biodiversity conservation in Shikahogh reserve.

Tsav Community. The community is located just near Shikahogh Reserve which is a core habitat for many endangered species like leopard, bezoar goat, bear etc. The community has possibility to generate alternative income from sheep and bee keeping as there are quite large areas of pastures and hay lands (more than 5000 ha). A cooperative unit is established for managing sheep and bee keeping in the community. In two years the cooperative will also compensate villagers if their livestock is attacked and killed by predators by providing sheep and thus changing the attitude of local people to wildlife and contributing to the species protection.

Aldara Community. The community is mainly focused on pomegranate production and wine growing. There are two sand fields in the community that can be used for the production of construction blocks. In Syunik region there is no any enterprise producing construction blocks. Establishment of the construction block production enterprise will create jobs for villagers and generate income for the community. The production of construction blocks will promote social-economical development of the region and thus reducing the impact on use of natural resources.

Nrnadzor Community. The community is the most remote site of Armenia and there is a narrow road linking the village with Meghri. The community is mainly focused on pomegranate production.

See related story on the CEPF Website: Building Communities Preserves the Environment at www.cepf.net/xp/cepf/news/in_focus/2008/april108_feature.xml



Rabbit farm supported by the project. Photo by FBCAH.



Newly purchased tractor. Photo by FBCAH.

There is a need to establish pomegranate processing enterprise which will allow to double income of the community and to develop their own capacity. The enterprise will consist of processing and storage departments as well as will have a track taking products directly to wine and juice producing companies.

Kajaran Community. It is the only community located near the planned Zangezour SPNA. The community has possibility to generate alternative income from sheep and

bee keeping as there are quite large areas of pastures and hay lands (more than 5200 ha). A cooperative unit will be established for managing sheep and bee keeping in the

community. A farm building will be renovated and about 200 sheep and 50 goats will be purchased and given to the cooperative. A cheese-making department is being organized within the farm. Bee keeping also is being developed by providing additional 100 beehives to the cooperative.

Honey Production - Promotion of Non-timber Forest Products Use in Kvareli Forests



Final product ready for sales. Photo by Durujis Madli.

Many villages located along the border of protected areas undergo dramatic shortages in income and their dependence on natural resources is very high. This often generates conflicts between the local communities and protected areas. Providing alternative income generation solutions in these conflict areas will help to improve local economy and provide solid background for better acceptance of the protected areas by local population.

NGO "Durujis Madli" is working in this direction and successfully conducted the project promoting honey production in Georgia and demonstrating its economical and nature conservation benefits in a model community - Kvareli district. The project successfully

completed all planned activities: 1) setting-up a pilot honey production farm in Kvareli by adding 100 new bee families to the existing 20 sets; 2) marketing the natural honey from Kvareli forests - with advertisements, articles, printed materials, etc.; and 3) sharing experience at local and national levels. Apart from above, the project used part of the generated income in nature conservation activities, namely, the Biodiversity Fund for Kvareli District was established; as well as commitment to transfer 25% of income generated by honey farm to the Biodiversity Fund annually. The "Durujis Madli" also developed application guidelines and procedures for issuing small grants for biodiversity conservation.

Initiative for Forests Supervision and Participation of Society in Forests Management of Lori Region



Diploma on achievements from European Eco-Forum. Photo by Lore Eco Club.

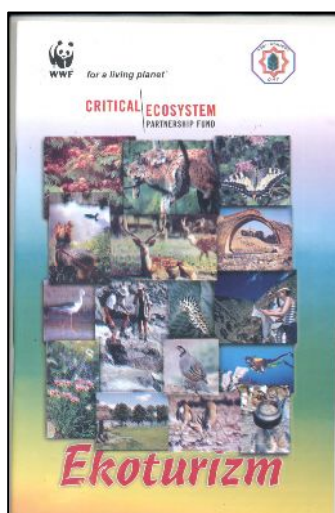
NGO "Lore Eco Club" has conducted a project dedicated to establishing a public information point, fighting corruption at forests state controlling agencies, and implementation of anti-corruption awareness initiatives to raise local population's responsiveness towards participation in democratic governance of forests. To achieve effective implementation of the project, the following objectives were planned:

- To achieve transparency in governing forests and to decrease the level of corruption within state forests controlling agencies;
- To accelerate the application of western approaches and standards of society's participation in forests management;
- To organize a conference in Stepanavan aimed at exchanging ideas on the issue, revealing the degree of corruption at state forest controlling agencies, raising public awareness and developing ideas for involvement and participation of society into the management of forests, developing a strategy to be

undertaken for improving the situation.

Under the framework of this project, a Forest Monitoring Center was established and two TV programs on the problem of transparency in forests management, corruption and the preservation of woodlands produced.

Community Based Ecotourism Development in Azerbaijan's part of Hyrcan Corridor of the Caucasus Ecoregion

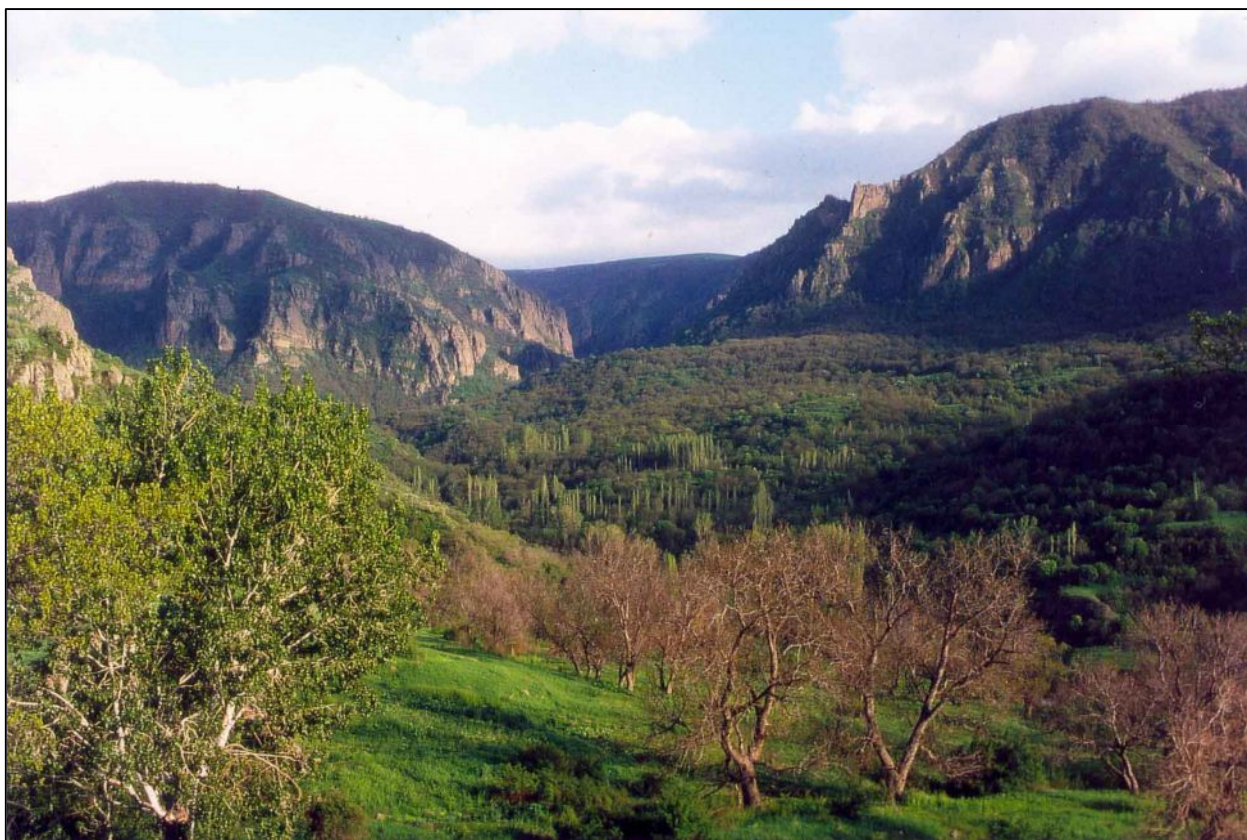


Brochure on benefits of ecotourism. Photo by Agro-Meslehet.

NGO "Agro-Meslehet" is conducting a project aimed to support capacity building and professional skills of rural communities related with development of ecotourism in order to promote alternative income generation and rational use of the natural resources. Within the project the emphasis is put on the carrying out of trainings for the local communities, preparation and edition of the brochure on community based ecotourism and local sites reference guide book. The project also aims at working out a facultative rate for high schools about ecotourism and its connection with nature protection, biodiversity and social-economic development in Azerbaijan's part of Hyrcan Corridor of the Caucasus Ecoregion.

Expected outputs of the project are:

- 1) Transition to more rational and sustainable use of natural resources, preservation of biodiversity and reduction of negative anthropogenous influence by natural territories;
- 2) Definition of optimal ways and participation forms of local community members in ecotourism activities and their practical introduction;
- 3) Creation of the working modeling objects of ecotourism, indicative routes and service packages and;
- 4) Nature protecting education and formation of the positive public opinion; Involvement of the local population to the business activity.



Mountain landscape in Khosrov Nature Reserve in Armenia. Photo by WWF Armenia.

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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.

www.panda.org/caucasus/cepf/