



Summer Panda Quarterly, 2014

WWF Bhutan Program



NEC Advisor, Dasho Paljor Dorji inaugurates the 6 acre WWF- Sherubtse Gene Park,

Strengthening old ties to break new ground

WWF celebrates 25 years of collaboration with the Singye Karm Nature Club

Celebrating 25 years of collaboration between WWF Bhutan Program and the Singye Karm Nature and Conservation Society in Sherubtse, a six acre WWF-Sherubtse Gene Park was inaugurated on 13th April.

Through this, the club members plan to gather different species of endemic plants to promote plant genetic diversity.

The facility will also benefit Life Science and Environmental Science students in the college.

The event was graced by Dasho Paljor Jigme Dorji, the Special Advisor to National Environment Commission (NEC) and Netra Binod Sharma, the WWF Co-Manager of Wangchuck Centennial Park in Bumthang. The event was attended by over 300 students and 50 faculty members of the College.

The Singye Karm Club was founded in 1989 by students at Sherubtse College and WWF. It started as a college level nature conservation and advocacy movement in

Partnership

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Eastern Bhutan and the Royal Society for Protection of Nature.

Over the years, WWF Bhutan has also mobilized expertise to start an Environmental Studies module under the erstwhile Delhi University's BA course at the College.

The College also bagged the prestigious 'J. Paul Getty Wildlife Conservation Prize of Wildlife Fund' in April 1995.

Singye Karm has also featured as one of the most frequent nominees for the 2014 Jigme



Singye Wangchuck Outstanding Environmental Stewardship Award.

The silver jubilee celebration has paved way for enhanced future cooperation between Sherubtse College and WWF Bhutan Program to innovatively engage students in citizen science and policy dialogues.

WWF Bhutan is keen on creating appropriate platforms to engage tertiary level institutions in public discourses and develop a critical mass of reflective, internalizing and proactive students to voice growing environmental concerns.





Olakha community members join the plantation along with NEC, Thimphu Thromde & WWF

WWF joins the Green Bhutan Movement

WWF observed the World Environment Day by planting 200 saplings

This year, WWF Bhutan Program observed the World Environment Day with the National Environment Commission (NEC) by planting over 200 tree saplings along the Thimphu-Babesa express highway.

The Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Forests, Yeshey Dorji graced the occasion sharing his commitment to and the importance of the occasion.

Apart from participants representing WWF and the NEC, there were participants from the local community, Thimphu Thromde, Green Bhutan Project and Yangphel Tours and Treks.

To ensure the long term impact of the project, the plantation will henceforth be taken care of by the Green Bhutan Project, NEC and the local community.

The Green Bhutan Project was launched by the Prime Minister last year as a lead up to the 60th Birth Anniversary of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck in 2015.

Under the project, a pilot project of greening Thimphu city has been started which will be replicated in other dzongkhags throughout the country in the years to follow.

Conservation leaders visit Japan

Park managers visit Japan for a research and learning process central to conservation in Japan.

Between 22 March and 2 April 2014, a study tour to Japan was conducted as part of the 'Trans-boundary Manas Conservation Area (TraMCA)' project.

The project includes three southern protected areas (PAs) in Bhutan, namely, Khaling and Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuaries and the Royal Manas National Park.

The tour was designed to give the Park Managers of the three PAs a research and learning experience that is central to the project and to enable project implementers to learn from conservation initiatives undertaken in Japan.

The trip helped participants experience and explore eco-tourism operations and learn best practices in protected area management.

Since community involvement has become crucial in Bhutan, the participants also interacted with and learnt from local Japanese communities who are active participants in or direct beneficiaries of eco-tourism projects in and around protected areas.

The Tour was coordinated and supported by WWF Japan under the research and capacity building program in TraMCA.



Understanding to adapt to climate change

Workshop enables participants to think proactively on climate change.

Groups of people bet on whether the following year would bring a drought, floods, or normal rainfall, and then discuss on planting seeds accordingly.

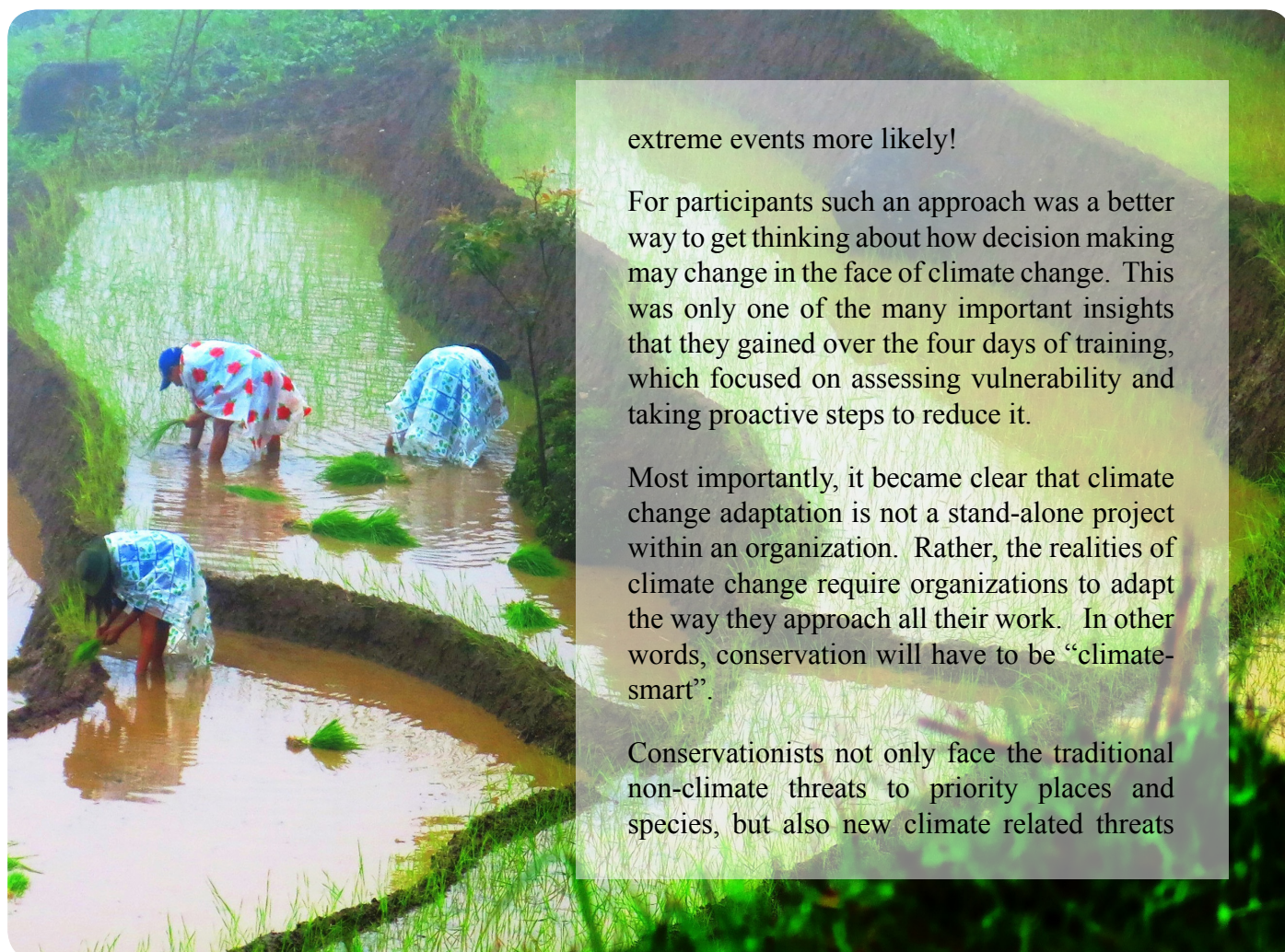
Getting the rainfall predictions wrong or right will result in losing or winning seeds, which determine their livelihoods.

At first, there was only a small probability of floods or droughts. But, after a while, the

probability of floods or droughts increased. How did this make people feel? Vulnerable.

Such was the impact felt by participants in a game organized by the facilitators at the training on Fundamentals of Climate Change Adaptation conducted by WWF Bhutan.

The game demonstrated a concept that was reiterated throughout the training: climate change does not cause extreme events; it makes



extreme events more likely!

For participants such an approach was a better way to get thinking about how decision making may change in the face of climate change. This was only one of the many important insights that they gained over the four days of training, which focused on assessing vulnerability and taking proactive steps to reduce it.

Most importantly, it became clear that climate change adaptation is not a stand-alone project within an organization. Rather, the realities of climate change require organizations to adapt the way they approach all their work. In other words, conservation will have to be “climate-smart”.

Conservationists not only face the traditional non-climate threats to priority places and species, but also new climate related threats

Bhutanese farmers have also reported of climate change affecting cultivation.

Climate Change

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such as melting glaciers, drying water sources, etc.

The training highlighted the need to get comfortable with change and that it can no longer be a goal to maintain or preserve forests or any other ecosystems. Rather, we should aim to facilitate the conditions which make our ecosystems resilient, even if this means that they may have to change.

Through various group projects, games, and presentations, participants were able to learn-by-doing. They learned how to think as “climate-smart” conservationists: adapting to change so that we can facilitate adaptation.



Participants found the training interactive and interesting as it engaged them through various exercises