



NEWSLETTER

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Shirvan National Park, Goitered Gazelle. © H. Müller (Azerbaijan)

CAUCASUS ECOREGION NEWSLETTER

Issue **3**

Forest by Children's Eyes

August 2014 was not just a holiday for the EU funded Forest Transformation Project as awareness raising and educational event was held for the pupils and teachers of Koghb Art School in the Noyemberyan pilot site located near Koghb community on the territory of Noyemberyan Forest Enterprise of “Hayantar” SNCO (Tavush Region).

The aim of the event was to present the EU funded project implemented by WWF as well as to raise the awareness of pupils and teachers on forests and their protection, the vital role of forests for people and forest transformation in Armenia and related issues. There were up to 60 participants from Koghb Art School and nearby communities, administration of the forest enterprise and related organizations.

The event was launched by welcome speeches and continued with a brief presentation on the project which was followed by the creative contest «Forest and Me» organized with two nominations for different age groups from the Art School. Different types of art - paintings, photos, sculptures, handicrafts, etc - were presented. The winners were awarded prizes for the first three places in each nomination. The awards included tablets, digital cameras and backpacks. All the contest participants received an EU visibility package with T-shirt and baseball cap.

However, the event was not restricted by the agenda, as unexpected surprises for the organizers were ahead. The Koghb Art School children suggested a creative contest for WWF team: - to draw any tree nearby within 15 minutes. After a short inspirational moment the WWF representatives came back with their “pieces of art”. The drawings were reviewed and the best three were selected by the contest announcers. The winners received various hand-made gifts, such as bags, scarfs, cups, necklaces with pomegranate pendant with pretty, tiny illustrations, etc.

Later in the evening a free cultural program started with theatrical and musical performances, poetry, violin music, etc. The event was concluded by watching a video-film about a brown bear and numerous camera traps photos of wild animals.

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Green Economy Approaches Take a Start in Azerbaijan

WWF Azerbaijan first time has started a scoping study to evaluate ecosystem services provided by forests and freshwater resources in Azerbaijan.

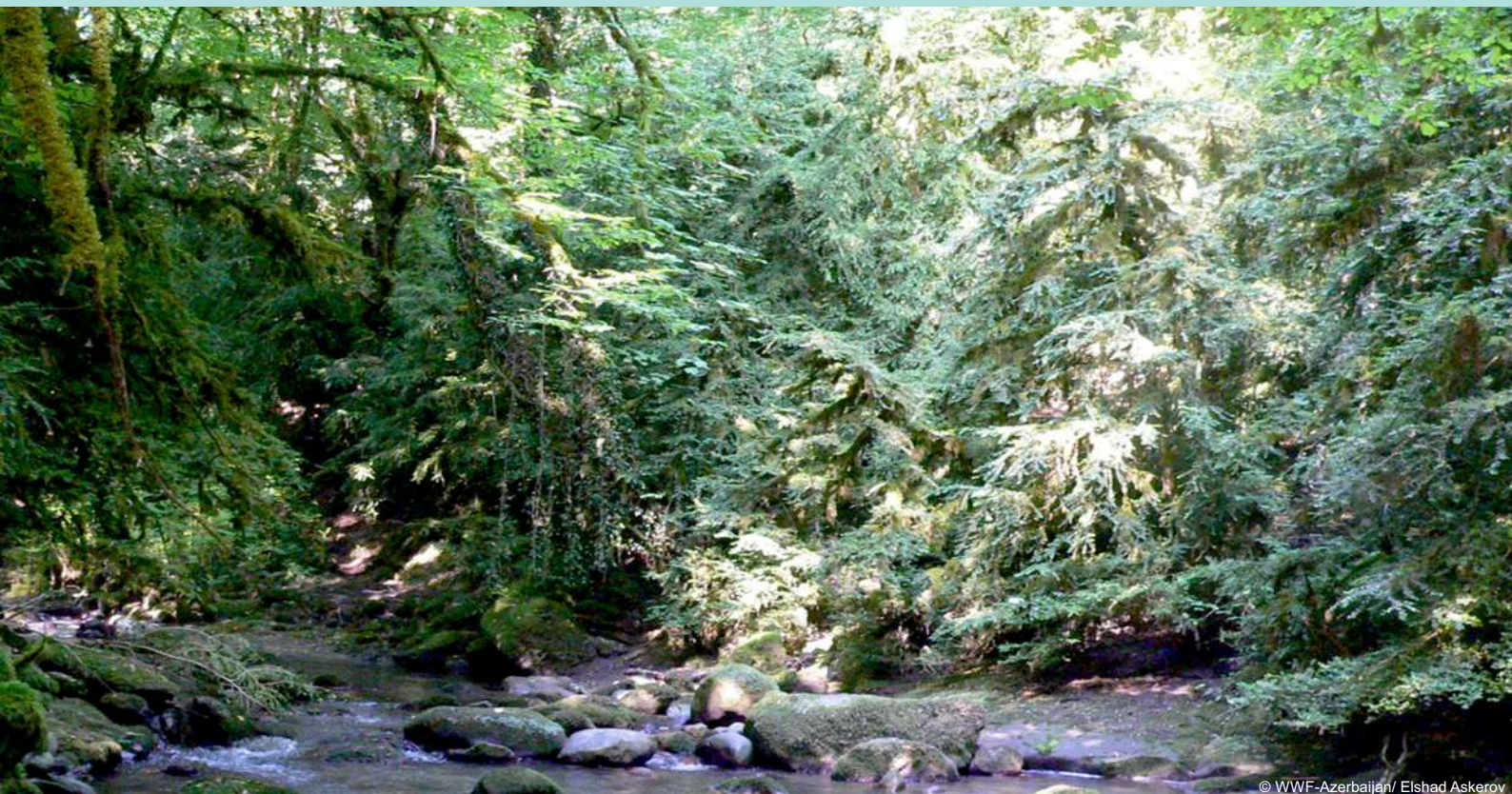
In order to analyze the ecosystem services of forests, “Business as Usual” (BAU) and “Sustainable Ecosystem Management” (SEM) analytical approach was used by local experts. BAU management is a non-sustained use of natural resources yielding only short-term gains. This type of management may maximize benefits in short-term for some stakeholders, causing financial and social damages to local population. Under SEM management economic benefits are maximized through planned and integrated use of natural resources. While economic benefits of some stakeholders under SEM may be minimized for short-term periods, over the long-term periods, economic gains for all types of stakeholders is ensured and sustained.

Forests in Azerbaijan provide a broad range of ecosystem services. In most of the rural areas fuel wood is one of major sources of energy. Forested watersheds are the only source of drinking water for the population living in mountain regions.

Freshwater ecosystems, representing highly important areas for biodiversity conservation, play a vital role in human life providing key ecosystem services and benefits. Freshwater ecosystems contain some of the most threatened habitats in the Caucasus Ecoregion due to anthropogenic pressures mainly caused by unsustainable urban water use, industry and infrastructure development projects, agriculture and increasingly developing hydropower sector. Unsustainable development of dams (hydropower, water security, irrigation) is disrupting environmental flows at river-basin-scale. Key negative impacts on freshwater ecosystems ultimately lead to decreasing the landscape integrity and biodiversity as well as to degrading key ecosystem services and benefits to people.

The study looks at key forest ecosystem services and their influence on livelihoods and well-being of local population, as well as importance of sustainable forest management for the country.

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FSC Certification in the Russian Caucasus

This year marked the beginning of voluntary forestry certification by the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) standards in the Russian Caucasus. The first company in the region to commit itself to the FSC standards was the Maykoplesexport wood-processing company, one of the biggest timber producers in the Republic of Adygea. Earlier this year, Maykoplesexport obtained the first in the region FSC certificate.

In 2010, with the support of WWF UK and Tetra Pak the foundation was laid for the development of FSC certification in the Russian Caucasus, the region of high priority to WWF. Since then, the public Council on Voluntary Forest Certification was established in the Forest Department of the Republic of Adygea to help expanding the market for FSC-certified products and a series of educational seminars for forest sector representatives and local communities were conducted. With the assistance of WWF experts, the first case of FSC certification was set in the region. At the moment, there are preparations in place for FSC chain of custody certification of another leading wood-processing company in the region, Kartontara. Also, the assessment for the capacity of FSC forest management certification of a state forest management unit has been undertaken.

“We hope that sustainable forest management and voluntary forest certification practices will become the norm in the Russian Caucasus. This will undoubtedly contribute to the conservation of the rich biodiversity of the Caucasus forests, its endemic flora and fauna, while ensuring the social and economic interests of local communities and producers,” - says Aleksandr Voropaev, the Head the Association of Environmentally Responsible Forest Producers at WWF Russia.

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Turkey's Water Footprint Report

WWF-Turkey, in partnership with the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs and in collaboration with Unilever and OMO, is working on Turkey's water footprint with a specific focus on the nexus: water-trade-production.

Considering increasing globalization, rapidly growing populations, urbanization and climate change, the availability of freshwater resources is becoming a key concern for policy makers, rendering it important to both quantify and qualify the total volumes of water used domestically and globally to produce the goods and services consumed within the country.

Turkey is not a water-rich country and given the rate of population growth, rapid urbanization and industrialization, the country is expected to become a water-stressed country by 2030. Therefore, sustainable use and management of water resources is very critical in Turkey. In order to promote discussion on water resources, the country's water footprint must be analyzed thoroughly. To assess country's water footprint, water use in production and consumption and the volumes of water inherent in Turkey's imports and exports are examined. The water footprint of consumption is almost equal to the water footprint of production. To reach the balance in Turkey's water budget means - water import and export are approximately equal.

Looking at Turkey's blue, green and grey water footprint rates of consumption and production we can see the biggest component is the green water footprint. This situation highlights the importance of precipitation and thus climate variability for the country's production and consumption. The Report scrutinize more deeply into the make-up of Turkey's water footprint of production and consumption, identifying their key components and relating these components to Turkey's growing economy.

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Conservation of Leopard in the Caucasus

It is well over decade since WWF started to work on extremely challenging task of conservation of leopard in the Caucasus Ecoregion. This multifaceted task includes not only direct work on leopard populations, but not less importantly - establishing of protected areas and corridors to ensure movement of wild animals across protected areas, monitoring and reintroduction of prey species, awareness raising, etc. In October 2014 WWF, together with Bern Convention and IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group, organized international expert's workshop to review achievements and discuss new challenges, particularly:

- Discuss and agree on contemporary status of leopard and its prey species in the Caucasus and around: Review available leopard and prey species data from the entire region, based on standardised national Status Reports.
- Develop Expert Recommendations on monitoring and research: Identify gaps within the existing monitoring systems and draft recommendations for improvement.
- Review the implementation of the Caucasus Leopard Strategy and the National Action Plans.
- Make recommendation for the long-term recovery of the leopard in the Caucasus and for improvement on the regional strategy and national scale.

The resulting report will be submitted to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention on behalf of the meeting of the Standing Committee in December 2014.



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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.panda.org/caucasus

Regional projects in Turkish and Russian parts of the Caucasus are coordinated and implemented accordingly by WWF-Turkey and WWF-Russia in close cooperation with WWF Caucasus PO under one vision of Ecoregion Conservation Plan.

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