

Woodland Park ZOO Society Awards \$65,000 Challenge Grant to ISLT

Zoos are no longer just a place to look at animals. They are now a place to learn about the plight of endangered species such as the snow leopard, and are committed supporters of projects and research that help conserve endangered species in their native habitats.

Nowhere is this more true than at Woodland Park

Zoo in Seattle, Washington. In 1998, Woodland Park Zoo Society joined the Trust's Natural Partnerships Program by contributing \$10,000 to pay for the hiring of a full-time snow leopard conservationist in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. To further demonstrate its commitment to the snow leopard,

Woodland Park Zoo Society this summer has announced a \$65,000 challenge grant that will enable us to intensify our conservation efforts overseas.

The grant will be renewed next year if ISLT can raise matching funds. That means that this year, every dollar our members give to ISLT actually means two dollars for snow leopard conservation!

Conserving snow leopards in Northern Pakistan takes more than biological knowledge--someone has to spend a lot of time convincing area villagers that mountain biodiversity is important and that they

should become a part of saving the snow leopard. That takes a full-time snow leopard conservationist and this is why Woodland Park's contribution has been such a large part of snow leopard conservation in Pakistan. The zoo's contributions have sponsored trainings for local wildlife officials in snow leopard tracking methodology, sustainable grazing workshops with local communities and countless surveys that monitor the wild snow leopard population in northern Pakistan.

The work with local villagers has paid off. In April of 1998, herders from the vil-

lage of Jamalabad caught a snow leopard attacking their goats. Instead of killing the animal in retribution or for its pelt and bones, the villagers captured it and released it back into the wild farther away from the village. The herder whose goats were attacked, Ulfat Karim, said, 'We could have hit it with something and killed it. But we decided to let it go. There are very few in the area:

While stories like this one are heartening, there are unfortunately not enough villages like Jamalabad. Important conservation work that helps communities understand the importance of habitat and sustainable grazing

practices must continue if the snow leopard is to survive in the wild.

ISLT would like to extend its gratitude to Woodland Park Zoo Society and particularly, Carol Hosford and Joan Gray, Co-Chairs of the zoo's Conservation Education Committee, who have made this most recent contribution possible. The strengthened partnership between Woodland Park and ISLT ensures that visitors to the zoo can see snow leopards first-hand, but know that far away, on peaks unimaginably high, wild snow leopards will continue to roam.

Completes Search for Conservation

Director and Program Officer

ISLT is pleased to announce that we have chosen Dr. Tom McCarthy as our new Conservation Director and Priscilla Allen as our new Program Officer. Dr. McCarthy spent several years researching snow leopards in Mongolia and has a firm understanding of the economic and social issues related to snow leopard conservation. He will be primarily responsible for overseeing ISLT's conservation programs overseas. ISLT's new Program Officer, Priscilla Allen also comes to us from Mongolia where she initiated a new NGO called Irbis Enterprises. Irbis Enterprises successfully weaves together community-based economic development as a strategy for snow leopard conservation. Ms. Allen will be strengthening the already successful program at ISLT in the hope of starting similar programs in other snow leopard countries. Please join us in welcoming Tom McCarthy and Priscilla Allen to ISLT

Volunteer Needed!

The Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, Washington needs a volunteer for four hours a week during business hours to help review medical reports on snow leopards and collate data for the veterinary department. This is a great opportunity for Seattle area ISLT members to learn more about snow leopards or for those who might want to work in a zoo someday. Please call us at 206632-2421 or send an e-mail to islt@serv.net if interested.

Thank you to the E.B.R. Foundation and Charlie Morse! The E.B.R. Foundation generously donated \$10,000 to ISLT for capacity building. ISIT thanks Charlie Morse and the E.B.R. Foundation for their generosity and commitment to snow leopard conservation. With this donation Charlie Morse becomes the ISIT'S newest Founder's Circle Member.

Thanks and congratulations to author Peter Matthiessen who directed \$5,000 of his Heinz award to the ISLT. The writer and naturalist, who is also a Zen teacher, has been described as 'putting his audiences in touch with worlds and forces which transcend common experience: Peter Matthiessen has a long association with the snow leopard. He accompanied Dr. George Schaller on a trip to the Himalayas in search of the elusive wild cat and that journey provided the basis for his 1978 book, *The Snow Leopard*.

The snow leopard is making its way into fiction as well. John C. Robinson has written a book entitled *Secret of the Snow Leopard*, a futuristic novel where

the snow leopard holds the secret to humanity's survival. Mr. Robinson has become an ISLT member and has given out ISLT membership information at book signings.

Congratulations to ISLT Administrative Assistant Jon Campbell. Jon has completed a Master's Degree in International Affairs specializing in Chinese Language and Area Studies. He is currently traveling throughout the Middle East and will be heading to China on a scholarship to study Chinese. He is replaced by Rachel Neville who is a graduate student in Environmental Policy at the University of Washington. Ms. Neville holds a B.A. in Russian Language and Area Studies from American University in Washington, DC and has spent the last three years in Kazakhstan, first running an educational exchange program and later managing democracy development programs for the US Agency for International Development. She is fluent in Russian but despite efforts to learn the language, can only count to ten in Kazakh.

Donate to ISLT on the Internet without Spending a Cent!

Imagine our surprise when we opened the morning mail and found a check for \$177 from www.zeal.com, an internet start-up that is building a search engine website much like yahoo.com or altavista.com. They have created an ingenious way to build their search engine. Zeal.com is asking internet surfers to send them their favorite websites and to rate others. The website asks people to register and choose their favorite charity. Then each time that person sends a website to zeal.com or rates one on a scale of one to five, zeal.com gives that person's designated charity ten cents.

It may not sound like much, but zeal.com has so far raised \$54,000 for 600 different charities, including ISLT. So, if you like to surf the net, visit zeal.com and turn your internet time into contributions for snow leopard conservation.

Seven Snow Leopards Spotted in Chitral Gol National Park in Pakistan

ISLTs Snow Leopard Conservationist (SLC) Abdul Haleem Siddiqui, has reported that shepherds and park rangers living and working around Chitral Gol National Park in Pakistan have spotted seven snow leopards in the park.

Chitral Gol is located in the Northwest Frontier Province in a deep narrow valley. The peaks rise as high as 14,557 feet and the entire terrain is steep and rugged. Situated roughly where naturalist Dr. George B. Schaller took the first photograph of a snow leopard in the wild, the area was declared a national park only in 1984. Despite its protected status, snow leopards were not seen in the park for fifteen years after Schaller's encounter, leading many to believe that they had disappeared from the area. In 1996, however, a pair of snow leopards with two cubs were sighted in the park.

ISLT has studied Chitral Gol and the surrounding areas for many years and has had a full-time Snow Leopard Conservationist there since 1998. ISLTs most recent study, funded by the Woodland Park Zoo, heard reports of seven snow leop

ards and evidence that confirms the presence of snow leopards in Chitral Gol. Despite this good news however, the study also found that livestock killings by snow leopards are on the rise and programs that encourage sustainable grazing and discourage snow leopards from killing livestock are essential to the animal's continued existence in Chitral Gol.

The objective of Abdul Haleem's study was to collect baseline data on snow leopard depredation, to collect information about village attitudes towards snow leopards, to identify areas for the conservation of snow leopard and to identify possible solutions for decreasing livestock depredation.

Although Abdul Haleem did not see any snow leopards himself, shepherds and park rangers reported seven sightings of the ghostly cat. The presence of snow leopards was confirmed when Abdul Haleem found snow leopard sign, scrapes and footprints. Additional sightings outside of the park numbered nine.

There are about 12 villages on the periphery of the national park with a little more than 9,000 residents. The rough terrain and lack of roads makes transportation tough and the residents of Barmogh, Ozghor and Goleen

Chashma remain isolated from the rest of Pakistan. As with most peoples who share the mountains with the snow leopard, the villagers in Chitral Gol are

almost totally dependent on their herds for their livelihood. As they graze their flocks higher and higher in the mountains in search of new pastures, the incidences of snow leopards attacking livestock increase. Abdul Haleem says, 'Over-grazing by livestock in high alpine pastures may be one of the most significant factors involved in the reduction of this wild cat:

In 1999, the villagers estimated that snow leopards killed around 20 sheep and goats. Understanding that the snow leopard is protected in Pakistan and believing that this may be partly the reason their flocks are killed, the villagers asked for compensation for their lost animals. However, they also expressed a willingness to acquire better techniques for corralling and grazing their livestock-an indication that the villagers are open to living with the snow leopard-if they can protect their flocks.