The Parliament’s session of 21st of April, 2011 issued a resolution on designation of new PAs and upgrading the status of some existing PAs. Hence, 16.8% of country’s territory is now under protection, extending the PA network for 2.6 million of ha. The selection of new areas was based 90% on the Gap analysis findings, the main guiding document for filling the gaps for biodiversity protection in Mongolia. The new amendment on PA law has been submitted to Parliament to be discussed in the coming session.

The mountain range of Zed, Khantai, Buteel and surrounding areas on the territory of Teshig, Khutag-Undur, and Selengesoums of Bulgan province have been designated as Strictly Protected Area (SPA), the highest protection level in the country. Further, the Tengis-Shishged river basin has been taken under protection as National Park (NP) which underlies Tsagaannuur, Renchngkhumbe and Ulaan-Ulsoums of Khuvsgul province, the Mongolian part of Sayan.

Ulaan taiga NP was expanded with additional area in Ulaan-Uul and Bayanzurkhsoums of Khuvsgul province and its protection level has been upgraded to SPA. Likewise, some areas of Chandmani-Undur, Tsagaan-Uur and Khankhsoums of Khuvsgul province were taken under protection as NP, adjacent to the Khuvsgul NP.

Some places of Tsetseg and Must soums of Khovd province are taken under protection as NP, adjacent to Myangan-Ugalzat NP. Moreover, some areas of Uench soum of Khovd province were designated as NP, adjacent to Munkhkhairkhan NP, whilst Bulgan river basin Nature Reserve was expanded with additional area around Ikh Ongog of Bulgansoum, Khovd province with an upgraded status of NP.

Russia – Mongolia Transboundary Uvs – Nuur Nature Reserve established

In June the Agreement on establishing of Uvs-Nuur Transboundary Nature Reserve was signed by the Governments of Russian Federation and Mongolia to cover the area of Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Biosphere Nature Reserve in Russia and Uvs-Nuur Directorate of PA in Mongolia. WWF was an active player in the set of consultations and negotiations on design of transboundary corridors for biodiversity conservation.

The Uvs Nuur Basin - an almost pristine ancient lake bed in the center of Asia - is a United Nations World Heritage Site due to its climatic and hydrological regimes, a rich historical and cultural heritage and relatively untouched ecosystems. Transboundary Reserve will provide for better cooperation to ensure efficient development and protection of the ecosystems. Bilateral plans are planned to be developed in the field of ecotourism development, education and public awareness, long – term environment monitoring and research, publishing, migrating rare and endangered species monitoring, capacity building.
Efficient and practical method to protect the Snow leopard is the conservation of the species habitats and its prey species at the same time. Jargalant and Bumbat Khairkhan Mountains that support main Snow leopard distribution areas are already included in the Protected Area network in the country. Jargalant Khairkhan Mountain is included in the State Protected Area network, when Bumbat Mountain particularly its parts, where the Snow leopard permanently inhabits, were taken as locally protected area in 2007 within the framework of the project “Land of Snow Leopards”, funded by WWF Sweden. As the project comes to its end, we believe that major achievements will be further maintained and strengthened.

Big thanks to WWF Sweden for their continuous support in Snow Leopard conservation

As a result of this effort, the stakeholders have reached a conclusion that hunting of the species is not mandatory for the species genetic research as a wide range of consultations can be organized with respective research institutions addressed at the Snow leopard conservation.

Getting to explore more

- Automatic photo cameras have been installed in Jargalant and Bumbat mountains, where mating usually takes place at the time when the air temperature reaches -40°C. Thanks to this activity, we were able to collect some data, photos and video on behavior patterns and physiological characteristics of this charismatic species. The video can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw26nRaLyk8

This helped us to identify how many individuals there are and what specific behaviors they have. As carefully studied and analyzed the individuals recorded on the photos & video records, we identified that there were 8 individuals. However, it will be oversight if the individuals distributed on these mountains is counted with these few apparatus e.g. photo & video cameras.

Creating ownership by local communities

- Due to decrease in availabilities of Snow Leopards prey species e.g. marmot, ibex, argali, and snow cock within the areas, the attacks by Snow leopard at herds of livestock are increased and consequently retaliation killing cases still exist. A compensation scheme, so called “Buy goat for Snow leopard” has started to be piloted as an option for solution.

Strengthened law enforcement

- No incidents of hunting of Snow leopard have been recorded during last years. Yet, it does not imply the illegal trade of Snow leopard parts & products has totally ceased and eliminated. The concern of illegal trade of wildlife products always stands in the center of attention of mobile anti-poaching units “IRVES” that have had considerable achievements & progresses in discovery of illegal hunting of Snow leopard and trade of its parts and products, prevention from illegal hunting, and delivery of public awareness activities on the species conservation to local communities.

Enhanced cooperation

- Significant progress has been made in creating common understanding and enhancing cooperation with respective stakeholders at different levels. One of examples is that decision by the Government of Mongolia on hunting of four individuals of Snow leopard for research purpose in 2011 was cancelled.
The threat to snow leopards of being caught in poachers’ snares was almost totally eliminated in the southern area of Sayano – Shushenskyi Nature Reserve by regular raids of “Irbis” antipoaching group supported by WWF.

“Irbis”, the joined anti-poaching brigade of five nearby protected areas in Western Sayan, was established on WWF initiative in Altai-Sayan in March 2002. For the last half a year «Irbis» group has been actively working in one of main areas for snow leopard conservation in Tuva and Krasnoyarskyi krai.

For the period of February – June 21 rangers of three Protected Areas united efforts to patrol more than 80,000 hectares of the reserved land by horses, cars and boats, snow mobiles. Five protocols were issued on Sayano – Shushenskyi Nature Reserve and eighteen in Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Nature Reserve, about 500 dangerous for a snow leopard snares were removed, the poachers camp was found and destroyed.

Raid in Sayano – Shushenskyi in May became a life-saving event. One day waiting in ambush for the poachers to come check the snares the inspectors heard musk deers crying and decided to help captured animals that were alive. They released four female musk deers (right before the fawning) and found four dead animals. All poacher snares were removed and destroyed.

Only with the help of experienced Irbis brigade the horrific results of snare poaching on protected areas can be stopped for the sake of a snow leopard. For the future the inspectors consider to patrol the area monthly.
Pastureland Users’ Association of Tsagaan River Valley in Khar Us Lake NP had its regular meeting, on which the Association presented its annual performance and the aimag Pastureland Management Association has agreed to provide the Association with overall management and methodology in the future.

Managing Council members reported that local herd- ers residing Tsagaan River valley spent the last winter without any loss of livestock as they appropriately used the pastureland on rotational basis. Having inspired with this achievement, 132 herder families residing the valley have decided to be organized within their Baghs (Bagh - the smallest administrative unit) for their cooperative efforts.

As a result of rotational use of pastureland by herd- ers of Tsagaan River valley, the birds’ nesting & breeding sites have been appropriately protected and preserved. For instance, last year 27 individuals of Dalmatian pelican spent their summer in the valley for breeding. As of beginning of June, totally 13 individuals already arrived in the area.

Antipoaching Inter-Agency Brigade of Tuva under the guidance of Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Nature Reserve helps to combat poaching for subsistence, commercial trade of wildlife in snow leopard and Altai argali habitats. WWF proactively assists the brigade by providing rangers’ teams with rations and fuel.

In April-June, 2011 the total results of patrolling the natural habitats of a snow leopard and argali in Tuva made up for 37 reports (5 of them delivered to the Police to proceed with criminal charges), 5 units of firearm withdrawn, 1 trap, 500 meters of nets, 90 kilograms of elk meat, 1 marmot confiscated.

Wardens propose to set a permanent check-point at the road to the main habitat of a snow leopard in Tuva to help inspecting the cars for illegal transporting of wildlife objects and have a stationary centre for patrol groups during “hot seasons” (such as spring season of intense marmot hunting).

The rangers will also apply every effort to monitoring the “herders – snow leopard” conflict and keep on encouraging the herders to protect the corrals with metal mesh to prevent snow leopards’ attacks. Compensation scheme for the cattle loss is also considered. Besides it is planned to strengthen Public Inspection and involve young herd ers into patrolling.

Being responsible for conservation of their native land will help to transfer the traditional ideology of tuvinian people based on worshiping nature and animals from the elders and herd ers to the young generation.
The Saiga Conservation Project second phase begins with intensive discussions on pasture issues

During the first phase of Saiga conservation project (2007-2010), a considerable success has been attained thanks to high engagement of stakeholders and solutions-focused approaches that we have applied. We highly appreciate MAVA foundation for approving the project second phase for 3 more years. In this phase, we will focus on sustainable pasture management issues, law enforcement and public awareness.

In recent times of increased pressure from pasture land degradation, the Law on Pastureland and its approval is inevitably necessary. Recognizing the importance of herders’ voice to be reflected on draft law, the Government of Mongolia has decided to collect herders’ opinions at national scale. The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry has appointed WWF Mongolia to bring together those opinions in Gobi-Altai and Khovd aimags where the draft law was presented for comments whether the law should be immediately adopted and enforced in the country. Totally 1671 herders of the aimags took place in the survey. According to the survey findings, the majority or 71% of respondents regarded that the pastureland state has been already degraded; 64% considers that it is necessary to adopt the law regulating the pastureland relations. However, 61% of individuals regard that certain parts of pastureland should be possessed and the heads of livestock should be regulated against the pastureland carrying capacities. It can be concluded that herders have high expectation from the Law on Pastureland considering that pastureland carrying capacities should be maintained through charging taxes against the heads of livestock. The draft Law on Pastureland is already in agenda for the Parliament’s next session and under its discussion and not only herders but also the environmentalists keep their ears pricked.

WWF claims new Protected Areas are demanded at the boundaries of Sayano – Shushenskyi Nature Reserve

Sayano – Shushenskyi Nature Reserve remains the last refuge of the stable population of snow leopard in Krasnoyarskyi Region. Camera- traps survey helped the scientists identified almost every individual in the Reserve and get to know them by face. However the buffer zone of the Reserve and the adjacent area of Tuva remained unexplored but not of the least importance for snow leopard conservation.

This Spring with WWF support the experts explored the buffer zone of Sayano – Shushenskyi Nature Reserve at the border with Tuva.

The researches registered the presence of several snow leopards in the buffer zone. The tracks of 5 individuals were found but they obviously belonged to the snow leopards inhabiting the Reserve area who come over here from time to time.

Unfortunately not a single track of snow leopard was found in the area adjacent to the Reserve’s boundaries at the border with Tuva. The experts conclude that the area is suitable for the snow leopard but not populated by this species now. Very low number of wild ungulates and high anthropogenic pressure leave no chance for this cat to survive there.

The experts of Sayano – Shushenskyi Nature Reserve and WWF call the authorities upon establishing protected areas in Tuva and Krasnoyarskyi region in the area adjacent to the boundaries of the Sayano-Shushensky Nature Reserve.
In May a court in Republic of Altai acquitted three high-ranking officials whose hunting of endangered Altai argali led to a deadly helicopter crash two years ago. The defendants did not deny poaching but blamed the act on those who died, including the Kremlin’s envoy to the Duma, Alexander Kosopkin. The judge sided with the defense, ruling that prosecutors failed to present proof that the three defendants actually shot the animals. Prosecutors promised to appeal the verdict.

The WWF said the ruling de-facto authorizes poaching by top officials. “We want an official recognition from the courts that there’s been a deliberate violation of the law by high-ranking officials,” Aleksey Vaisman, CITES/TRAFFIC Programme coordinator of WWF-Russia. There is no point in them pointing fingers at each other, they are equally guilty, regardless of who was shooting and who was not — that’s what the law states.”

Illegal helicopter-hunting favored by some wealthy hunters remains the threat for endangered argali in Altai. WWF Altai — Sayan Programme intends to work on it from both sides. This summer the public inspection’s rangers of Kosh – Agach are planned to disseminate specific note-books published by WWF to the local communities with all relevant contacts to inform on illegal helicopter hunting case. Local communities are willing to be involved in reporting on such violations as argali is a totem animals of altai indigenous people. Moreover the leaflets for the helicopter fighters are published to inform on the legal consequences of illegal helicopter hunting.

The Mongolian grayling (Thymallus brevirostris) faces threat

Khar Us Lake is regarded as the wetland with international importance. Thus, it is listed as the Ramsar Convention site in order to reduce and prevent from potential deterioration in the habitats and stopover points of migratory bird species. On other hand, Khar Us Lake is part of the PA network. However, in recent years an ecological imbalance has become a concern with increasing threats from HPPs. A press trip has been organized to raise pressing issues of Durgun HPPs where the fish passage brings a threat to the Mongolian grayling. It is said the facility was built according to its approved design. However, high pressure water through a narrow opening does not allow any species of fish to go through. Distributions and movements of fish species in the interrelated lakes Khar Us, Durgun, Khar, Airag, and Khyargas have fragmented into “west” and “east”. In fact, the fish passage facility has become “spawning site” for the grayling from Khar and Durgun Lakes. In the first year after the station was constructed, the species reached the facility, but could not go through because of high pressure water and spawned there. However, the situation has worsened this year. According to the research conducted by Mendsaikhan, Ichthyologist, the Mongolian grayling was about to spawn at the beginning of April. However, the station operators did not timely remove the ice and open the cover of passage. They opened it in 10 days later, but almost no any fish was left there. As the station guard informed, one or two individuals were seen there. When caught & released fish, there were no any fish individuals with spawns. This situation has created unclear state where the grayling of Durgun and Khar Lakes has spawned this year. If the species spawned somewhere around, it is doubtful how many of them have survived and increased the population size. For the grayling that is used to fresh cold water environment in summer time, no one provides for the adaptation of the species to the lake water that is above + 20°C.
MoU signed with the General Authority for Border Protection

In an effort to protect migratory species such as argali and gazelle and prevention of illegal wildlife trade, the General Authority for Border Protection and WWF Mongolia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed to protect and strengthen border officers in conservation.

The MoU established procedures to “monitor and assess of wildlife in border area and reduce illegal wildlife trade”.

Within this framework, the signatory parties have started to update the monitoring software “SARAN” which was developed by WWF Mongolia in 2007 and been tested in two border areas in Mongolian Part of Altai-Sayan Eco-region. The monitoring programme is expected to be disseminated in nationwide.

The first ever camera-trap study of snow leopards in the Argut River watershed in Republic of Altai gave disappointing but clear results

The six-month long camera-traps survey in northern part of Argut River Basin supported by WWF, UNDP/GEF, Panthera Foundation, Altai Assistance Program и Altai Project demonstrated lack of Snow Leopard in this area. Camera traps registered 8-10 lynx but no one snow leopard in the study area (about 250 sq. km). Obviously it is the only big cat inhabiting the area. Before 2010 it was believed by several experts that the middle part of Argut watershed is populated by 10-20 snow leopards. Now is clear that there are no snow leopards in the northern part of the watershed despite optimal habitats and high density of Siberian ibex – main prey species for the leopard. Explored area was highly pressed by snaring poaching in 1970-1990-ties leaving no chance for snow leopard to survive. The experts witness that every mountain crest carries the signs of old snare poaching. These cable wires are tied on trees in such a position that they trap the animal around the neck. Large wild ungulates easily jump over the barrier or knock it down and wires catch musk deer, snow leopard, lynx or wolf. In 2003-2010 the middle part of Argut area was clear from snares but snow leopard has not populated this territory again. Camera-trap survey is a crucial in such habitats as the Argut watershed area with harsh weather and landscapes condition. Traditional monitoring methods do not provide reliable information for elusive cat conservation. Camera-traps will help to identify last shelters of snow leopard in Argut in 2011-2012.
Protected Areas

Rangers of Uvs Nuur Basin Protected Area Administration obtain higher education

Six rangers of Uvs Nuur Basin SPA have completed their bachelor’s degree training majored in ecology and nature conservation. Mr. Kh. Dashdavaa, a ranger of Turgen Mountain SPA successfully completed his diploma work on the theme entitled “Current conservation status, distribution, and population trends of Ibex (Capra Sibirica) of Turgen Mountain SPA”.

The examination commission members highly appreciated the diploma works completed by the rangers, who collected considerable data on wildlife species within their respective protected areas on the long term.

About 90% of rangers working in Uvs Nuur Basin Protected Area have earned their university degrees in the environmental field and improved their qualifications and skills, which we believe will improve deliveries of conservation results.

PA administration promotes eco-tourism

A tour group departed to naturally beautiful unique Khovsgul Lake that unilaterally supports 68.9% of surface fresh water resource in Mongolia to see the current natural and conservation status of the lake, to enjoy the nature as proud, and to promote it throughout the country for public awareness raising. This eco-tour is being organized by Khovsgul NP administration with the purpose to promote PA and raise public awareness on importance of water, nature and ecology for next generations, prevention from potential threats and disasters, protection and preservation of the lake in its natural condition, mobilization of youths in conservation. The tour has been sponsored by some major business entities and assisted by the WWF Mongolia Programme Office in organizational matters of the tour.

IN BRIEF

Interregional Conference for Regional Protected Areas Experts was supported by MAVA Foundation within the WWF Programme “Protected Areas – For a Living Planet!” in Altai – Sayan Ecoregion. The directors, educators and administrators of Protected Areas of regional subordinate gathered to share the experience and ideas how to survive and stay efficient for nature conservation. Finance, legal frameworks, capacity building were the top issues to discuss. The workbook (guidelines) for newly established Directorates of Protected Areas was prepared by the experts of the Directorate of protected Areas of Krasnoyarsk Region and published by WWF.
Khakasskyi Nature Reserve can be made a management example for the PAs of ASER. Five-year Management Plan and Action Plan for 2011 – 2015 developed with WWF “PA4LP” Programme support. Both documents were approved by the Nature Reserve’s staff and the Ministry of Nature Resources of Russian Federation. The proposal for obtaining the status of UNESCO World Nature heritage Object is prepared.

The perspectives for further sustainable management of Altaiskyi Nature Reserve are secured through development of 5-year Optimization Plan within “PA4LP” Programme of WWF. Programme of alternative energy sources included into the Plan will contribute to the efficient saving of energy expenses.

The analysis of existing Protected Areas System is completed for Republic of Altai by “PA4LP” WWF Programme. Proposal for Development Plan up to 2020 are offered by the experts. Provided that the proposed PAs are all established the total area covered by PAs will make up for 31.3 % of Republic and the number of PAs will grow up to 96.

10-year Concept of Management and Development of the Regional Protected Areas System of Tuva is prepared with WWF “PA4LP” Programme support. Five year Action Plan for Regional Protected areas Development and Management prepared and submitted to the Government of Tuva.

Altai – Sayan.com is a website of the Association of Protected Areas of Altai – Sayan Ecoregion and an effective communication tool of news and information sharing. WWF Programme “PA4LP” helped to update and redesign the website’s content for better navigation and interface.

WWF and Oxfam Project in Tuva is aimed to raise awareness of local communities on conservation. For instance Shuiskyi Nature Park planned to be established in biodiversity rich area and a snow leopard habitat will definitely meet difficulties with local dwellers due to the low awareness level of what opportunities the Nature Park can provide for the local people to raise their livelihood level and help them conserve the wildlife.

In Spring five 9 one-day long meetings with more than 60 local villagers were organized by the experts of the Directorate of Protected Areas of Tuva. The specific education program (with multi-media and maps) was prepared. Besides the first potential candidates were identified to be the members of volunteer patrol groups of the future Nature Park. The necessary uniform and equipment are in place.
Public Awareness

Mobile campaigning on International Day for Biological Diversity

As UN announced 2011 as an International Year of Forests, the biodiversity day has been celebrated under the theme “Forest biodiversity-Earth’s Living Treasure”.

With this slogan, a mobile campaigning has been organized in Ulaanbaatar on 22nd of May, 2011. Seven teams of students with tree costumes journeyed along main streets and crowded places offering people with a simple quiz on forest and biodiversity issues. The “walking trees” advocated values and benefits of forest resources and protected areas along with disseminating information on pressing problems faced at local and global scale. Those who gave right answers on quiz, offered small gifts such as stickers, environmental booklets and notebooks.

The campaigning was organized by WWF Mongolia and “Khumuunleg” eco-club and involved at least 3500 people.

Snow Leopard Land International Eco-Festival to draw attention to elusive and highly endangered snow leopards was held in Altai and Tuva

One day event of 2010 in Kosh – Agach Village of Mountain Altai this year overwhelmed the Ecoregion. The number of festival’s participants has grown dramatically - from 70 participants of one district in Republic of Altai in 2010 to 760 participants in 2011. Pupils of different age learned about endangered snow leopards and participated in dance, essays and drawings contests. Drama, poems and songs performed for the spectators were filled with love and care for the future of a gracious but vulnerable “snow cat”.

Colorful event in Altai was held under the guidance of the Centre of Extra-Curriculum Education supported by WWF and FSDA. Republic of Tuva joined “cat’s days” for the first time on initiative of WWF and Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Nature Reserve.

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WWF is especially grateful to Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC) for providing support for this year festival. Darla Hillard, SLC Education Director and Dr. Rodney Jackson, SLC Director: “When we visited Kosh-Agach in 2010 we saw how passionate the teachers and students were, to honor the Snow Leopard as a crucial part of the Altai’s environmental and spiritual heritage. We saw the hard work that the community had done, under the guidance of WWF-Russia and the Foundation for Sustainable Development of Altai. We were happy to support the expanded 2011 Snow Leopard Day activities, and to provide educational materials and information specifically about snow leopards. It is vital that children and adults throughout the region understand that human activities are a severe threat to these big cats in the beautiful Altai mountains”.

The awareness assessment conducted prior and after the event revealed that the awareness level and positive attitude towards a rare predator of participants has risen approximately in 4 to 13%. Link to the video: http://www.youtube.com/user/wwfrussia#p/u/14/hH0NvQi2mHQ
Community Development

The “Yamaat” community group rehabilitates an abandoned area, where gold was extracted

In June 2011, members of “Yamaat” community group of Bukhmurun Soum of Uvs Aimag in support of other local residents rehabilitated an abandoned area, where gold was extracted. The rehabilitated area is called as “Tsagaan Salaa” situated in a territory of Bukhmurun Soum and been used by “Khemchig Gold” LLC since 2008 and then later by artisanal miners for gold extraction. Since the area used by either mechanical or artisanal mining options, it was seriously damaged with numerous holes, ditches, and cavities. Local communities did technical rehabilitation within 1.5 ha filled in the holes and ditches with rocks and dirt and flattened/shaped.

Additionally, the CBO members managed to get small funds to organize a workshop addressed at legal aspects of environmental conservation, mining, and environmental degradation concerns in cooperation with provincial Nature & Environment department.

WWF and CITI Foundation Small Business Programme for Altai Biodiversity Program

Poaching has become the number one threat to endangered species in Altai Republic. Local residents who share the landscape with these endangered animals live on tiny incomes derived from cattle farming or use of natural resources. So people are engaged in poaching as one of the main sources of income. At the same time, Republic of Altai is facing tremendous growth and pressure from tourism thanks to its beautiful remote landscape and interesting flora and fauna.

Over the past year, Altai-Sayan Programme of WWF and CITI Foundation implemented “Small Business for Altai Biodiversity Program” along with the local organization Assistance Foundation of Micro – Credits operating in the settlements located on and nearby Protected Areas and habitats of endangered species.

Considering low level of business skills the experts’ group organized a number of workshop for the local communities to teach them evaluate their ability and risks. 580 local people living in the habitats of endangered species are trained in sustainable livelihood development and basics of small business as the results of a numerous workshops and meetings.

First round of grants applications are discussed by the local Grant Commission consisting of respected, professional and intelligent local residents. Reasonable and perspective applications chosen by the Commission members are given to the experts’ team. 130 grant applications from local community were received and 32 grant applications were approved.

Developing small enterprises in the field of ecotourism program, souvenirs, crafts, food catering and local products processing will engage the local community in sustainable economic development and help diminish hunting, fishing and plants gathering for subsistence and sale.
A cooperative “Nomads’ Growth Palace”

It has been spent several years since herders of Western Mongolia engaged in the efforts to increase their household incomes while protecting the environment. Compared to their start-up actions, the community based organizations (CBOs) operations have been matured and sustained. For now, they pay attentions to more advanced cooperative efforts in order to upgrade their performances into a new phase.

To increase incomes through serving their members and meet the socio-cultural and intellectual needs through the environmental conservation, the CBOs members joined a cooperative “Nomads’ Growth Palace” on April 16, 2011. As opened the cooperative, the CBOs are seeking for more optimal ways to promptly supply their products at markets with real values and management options in the fields e.g. tourism and pastureland use that require specific regulations based on their internal resources available at local level. For instance, the cooperative addresses at timely information and comprehensive awareness on sustainable and rotational use of pastureland and running livestock husbandry in consistency with pastureland carrying capacity to herders through the herder communities and associations. In order to support the indirect use of natural resources, the cooperative aims to create additional income generation sources e.g. tourism engagement for local herders, who reside the regions that are ideal for tourism development, to train them in this type of service, and connect them to the tourism market.

J. Tsetsegkhand, a member of Tsagaan River Pastureland Users’ Association and herder, became the first member of the cooperative donating MNT 100,000 to the “Nomads’ Growth Palace”. She was rewarded to sell female horse milk (airag), milk, and other dairy products at the cooperative shop. At present totally 41 have joined the cooperative and the interest of herders to be its members is getting increased from time to time.

WWF and Oxfam Foundation project completed extension service on development of agricultural products for local people

To integrate community development with biodiversity conservation is the main target of WWF and Oxfam Project in Tuva.

Assisting unemployed people in biodiversity rich area of Tuva to raise their livelihood is one of the ways to reduce the level of poaching and wild plants picking for subsistence. To help developing small business enterprises and improve business skills for sustainable agriculture of local farmers Tyvinian State University experts conducted special trainings of 97 local people in 6 settlements of Bai-Taiga and Mongun-Taiga districts in the heart of snow leopard land.

Consultation on business planning and proposals submission to credit organization to get loans for their business development were highly appreciated by the locals administration and the local communities of this remote land.

Theoretical course and practical master-classes were given on felt and leather processing, development of meat and milk products, corning of meat and mushrooms, cultivation of vegetables and fruits, greenhouses for tourists. 8 business plans were developed during consultation and providing extension services.
The prognosis of climate change impact on pastureland is the most important outcome for an agricultural republic. However, there is not an obvious threat due to CC. The degradation of pastureland due to livestock pressure from one hand and unsustainable use of pastures as the consequence of losing traditional pasture rotation, from another hand, are much stronger factors to influence pastureland practice in Tuva.

To improve pasture management, Uvs-Nuur Centre of Biosphere Research propose to rationalize pasture practice by using the deserted grazing lands, restore the annual rotation of pasturelands, increase use of water channel and pounds systems and critically expend forage harvest. The findings of the report are planned to be submitted to Tyvinian Government after editing and publication of the report.

Assessment of renewable energy sources (RES) reveal new perspectives for rural areas of Tuva

The reports of “AEnergy” Consulting Company with WWF and Oxfam Project. Assessment of current and potential needs in electric energy was done for Tuva Republic to estimate possibility and market demand for renewable energy sources.

Solar energy was identified as the most appropriate source, which meets the demands for stability and efficiency all year round. Biomass, water and wind energy are limited due to season. Solar panels show minimal accumulated cost of exploitation, lowest technological risks and limitations of use.

At the moment local communities are subsidized by the government for relatively expensive energy which does not motivate for the use of costly RES. However, RES have good chances for remote areas with no transmission and distribution lines. It will provide for sustainable development of the remote areas who might be able to use electricity for their everyday necessities and processing of agricultural products such as meat, milk, skins and wool.

Community Conservation Association was established in Khovd Aimag

To create the Community Conservation Association of Khovd aimag, over 70 members of 41 CBOs of 11 Soums gathered and had a meeting, on which they established “Altai Nomads” Community Conservation Association, discussed and approved the Association organizational issues, charter and regulations.

Joined the Association, the CBOs are giving a priority to the capability to independently run their operations without being dependent on any projects and programmes and sustainability of CBOs’ operations through optimal supervision and management. They have also decided to have a management plan for “Altai Nomads” Association. For now, 20 CBOs has requested to join the Association.
New designs of felt products

As ordered by Nill Karlson, Business Advisor of Ramboll Natura (Sweden), training on making felt slippers & shoes was organized with support of Takhi Conservation Union of France and Mercy Corps office in Khovd aimag. It was attended by members of “Jargalant Orgil” CBOs and totally 73 pairs of products were made during training. They also produced a new design of product that is decorated by spots of Snow leopard. At a market price, the products were valued to MNT 772,000. Now, trainees focus on improved quality products to be exported to France. Meantime, herdiers of Khom steppe have learned how to make felt products in shapes of Takhi and its foal as per the techniques and standards taught by trainers.

Business projects of local people secure mutual benefit for PA and local communities

WWF and Oxfam supported a number of business initiatives of local people to relate them to PAs needs.

A small wool processing manufacture in Bai-Taiga was equipped with heating system to provide all-year round employment for local residents in biodiversity rich area to distract people form intensive nature use.

Recently established “Shuiskiy” Nature Park was presented with a traditional tuvinian yurt to become a visit – centre. The yurt by the local masters is set in a popular tourist place, near “Bell” mineral spring (“arjaan”). Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Biosphere Nature Reserve was granted to purchase a traditional yurt to serve as a visit centre. The yurt rented by local café owner will also serve as a visit – centre. The yurt installed at the only roar that connects remote Mongun – Taiga ko-zhuun (district) with the capital city of Tuva. So the local dwellers and the tourists will have to drop in to have a rest and get the information about the Nature Reserve.
True stories related to snow leopard collected by children of Tuva from their grandfathers and grandmothers for Snow Leopard Land International Festival

How my Grandfather Brought a Snow Leopard Cub.

*_Aigul Khorchun, 4 grade, secondary school of Narin Village_

This story was told by my grandfather Noorzun Bagendar. It happened when he was in his first form at school. His father Noorzun San – Khoo was a great hunter. He had a lot of children so he had to hunt.

In taiga my great grandfather often met geologists. They asked him to harvest musk deer glands, deer horns or dried deer blood and he kindly helped them. My grandma told me once he was prepared mummy to give it to the geologists.

Once in the middle of 50th my great grandfather brought a little snow leopard cub. He was put into a wooden box made by my great grandfather. We fed him with meat and cow milk.

Our neighbors came to look at an unwitnessed animal. It was scary and exciting. They all wanted to pat it because it looked like a big cat but the adults did not let it.

Several days passed and a bearded Russian man came. He took a snow leopard cub and gave us tasty cakes, toys and food.

When I heard the story I wanted to know more about a snow leopard. On a picture I saw a beautiful animal with a long tale and black dots. I think he is very strong but he is listed in Red Book. It is pity that he is endangered I hope one day I can meet him in the wild.

Legend about Snow Leopard.

*_Sevek Aizimaa, 6 grade, secondary school of Mogen – Buren Village_

My grandfather – hunter and a good pathfinder – Valentil Chambal told this story. He heard it from his father Khertek Chambal.

Having drunk its blood he climbed up the mountains to have a rest. Five big wolves hanging around came across the left prey. They ate it all at one go and starting walking along the ridge one by one in chain. A snow leopard followed the wolves searching for the suitable place to meet with them.

Wolves had to come through a narrow gorge. A snow leopard made his way round the gorge to meet the wolves at the exit. When the first wolf appeared the snow leopard killed him with his big paw and threw from the ridge. He did it all to all five wolves.

Later on the local hunter read this by the tracks. Tracks are a book to read for good hunters. The gorge was named after the legend “Besh Boru” – “Five Wolves’ Gorge” located near Toolailyg Village of Mongun – Taiginskyi Kozhuun in Tuva. Lots of elders can prove the story is true.

Nowadays people whose cattle graze on snow leopard land suffer from a predator’s attacks but they are guilty themselves. Each snow leopard has its own habitat he marks and people who live on his land are strangers. Hunters harvest wild ungulates and a snow leopard had to hunt the domestic cattle. Snow leopard is heavily endangered.