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NEPAL

A landscape painting in a textured, expressive style. A river flows through a lush green valley, surrounded by dense vegetation. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a light, overcast sky. The overall color palette is dominated by greens, blues, and greys.

**30 YEARS
IN 30 PAGES**



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A Tiger in Bardia National Park

© Emmanuel Rondeau- WWF-US

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STARTING SMALL AND MAKING BIGGER IMPACTS

WWF Nepal first made its presence in Nepal in 1967 with a Rhino conservation program.

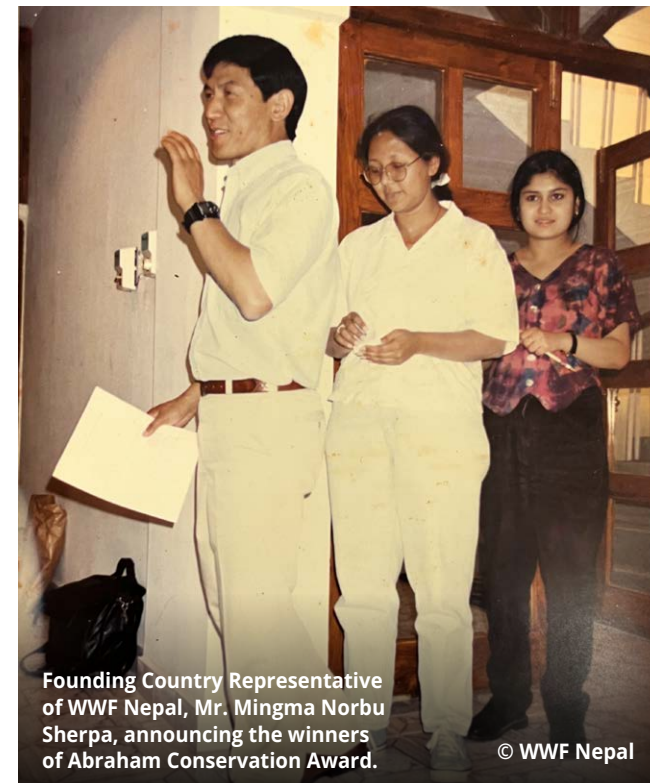
While Nepal has always been a pivotal country for WWF Nepal, the country office was officially established years later in 1993. The organization had a humble start- a staff of four people, a project of \$100,000 and a room at the Vajra Hotel as the first ever office space. Since then, WWF Nepal has grown in personnel, projects and progress. Despite facing various

challenges such as the 10- year civil unrest starting in 1996 affecting key working areas, loss of conservation leaders in the 2006 helicopter crash, political fluidity, the 2015 earthquake and the pandemic, WWF Nepal has remained resilient thanks to the supporters, contributors and partners. With immense gratitude, we look back and reflect on the journey of the past 30+ years as a reminder of what has been achieved and a motivator for the longer journey ahead.



Dr. Bruce Bunting, Former Managing Director and Vice President of WWF US discussing conservation issues with Sir Edmund Hillary and Dr. Hemanta Raj Mishra, the Founding Member Secretary of National Trust for Nature Conservation in Vajra Hotel.

© Vajra Hotel/ WWF Nepal



Founding Country Representative of WWF Nepal, Mr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa, announcing the winners of Abraham Conservation Award.

© WWF Nepal



WWF staff celebrate Teej in 2022, carrying the spirit of Courage, Integrity, Respect and Collaboration

© WWF Nepal



WWF Nepal All Staff in the early 2000s

© WWF Nepal

THE ORGANIZATION HAD A HUMBLE START- A STAFF OF FOUR PEOPLE, A PROJECT OF \$100,000 AND A ROOM AT THE VAJRA HOTEL AS THE FIRST EVER OFFICE SPACE.

TIGER EXCELLENCE

In 2010, the governments of the world's 13 tiger range countries committed to TX2— the global goal to double the number of wild tigers by 2022, at the St Petersburg 'Tiger Summit'. WWF Nepal played a pivotal role in the TX2 goal, working together with governments, businesses, development partners, local communities, and many others to ensure tiger conservation is given the priority and investment it requires. During the TX2 journey, many interventions like partnership with communities, coexistence between people and tigers, compensation schemes, support to reduce community's reliance on forest resources etc. have been implemented across the country to double the

tiger population. Nepal achieved its TX2 target by nearly tripling its tiger population from 121 individuals in 2009 to 355 individuals in 2022 which was unveiled by the Prime Minister of Nepal.

A big part of Nepal's success in tiger conservation can be attributed to the landscape level conservation and the protection of not only wildlife habitats but also corridors. Nepal is home to the Khata Corridor, a 13 km stretch of land that links Bardia National Park in Nepal with the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in India. This corridor is the recipient of the 2021 Conservation Excellence Award which recognizes sites that have made significant contributions to tiger conservation.



Tiger captured on camera trap in Bardia National Park © DNPWC- WWF Nepal



Tiger captured on camera trap in Parsa National Park © DNPWC- WWF Nepal



A camera trap being fitted in Chitwan National Park © Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal

NEPAL ACHIEVED ITS TX2 TARGET BY NEARLY TRIPLING ITS TIGER POPULATION FROM 121 INDIVIDUALS IN 2009 TO 355 INDIVIDUALS IN 2022 WHICH WAS UNVEILED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL.

INTRODUCTION OF THE LANDSCAPE LEVEL CONSERVATION

In 1999, WWF Nepal identified 7 landscapes globally for tiger conservation and later initiated the landscape approaches through community-based conservation and corridor restoration. Since then, Terai Arc Landscape (2004), Sacred Himalayan Landscape (2006), Chitwan Annapurna Landscape (2015), Kailash Sacred Landscape (2015), and Kangchenjunga Landscape (2015) have been declared as conservation landscapes by the Government of Nepal. In the landscape approach, conservation is extended beyond the boundaries of protected areas and across jurisdictional and topical boundaries. Initially, a ten-year strategic plan was approved for Terai Arc Landscape (2004-2014) and for Sacred Himalayan Landscape (2006-

2016). Following the completion of the first strategy, another ten-years strategy and action plan for Terai Arc Landscape (2015-2025) was developed. Landscape approach has adopted government leadership, community stewardship and civil society support engaging multi-stakeholders. Since its implementation, the landscape approach to conservation has led to numerous achievements. In 2022, Nepal's Rhino population was recorded to be 752, an over 73% increase since the 2008 population of 435. The tiger population has seen a historic growth to 235 individuals in 2018 and 355 individuals in 2022, in reference to its lowest population at 121 individuals in 2009. In 2024, Terai Arc Landscape has been recognized as the 'World Restoration Flagship' by the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

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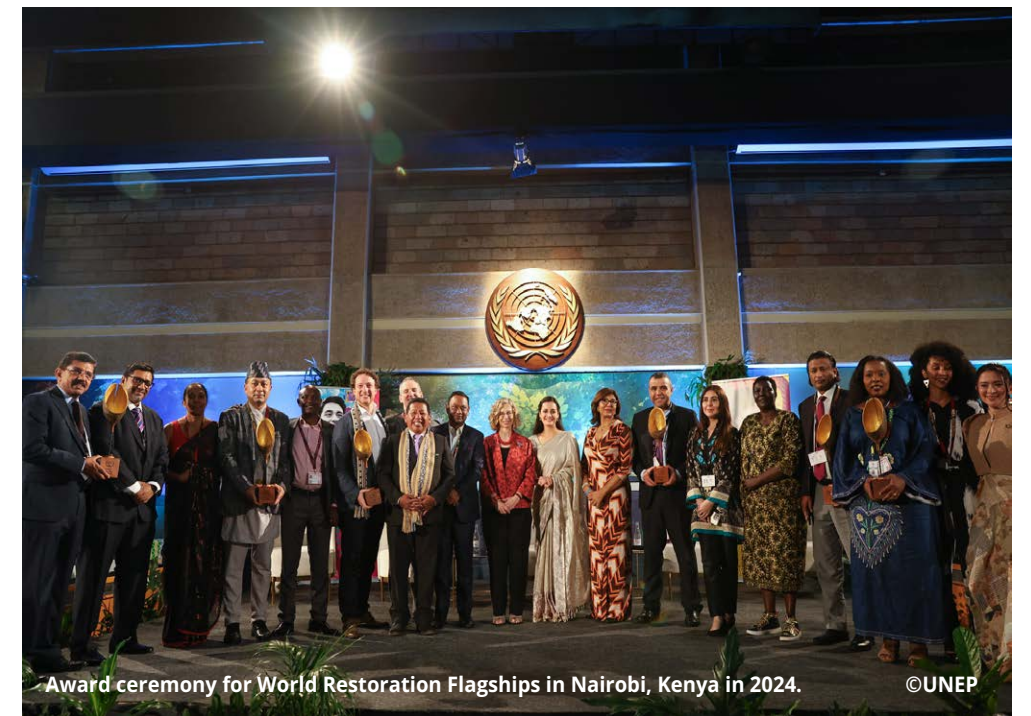
Bardia National Park which falls in the Terai Arc Landscape.

© Emmanuel Rondeau-WWF-US



Nepal's Former Minister of Forests and Environment, Honourable Dr. Birendra Mahato and WWF Nepal's COO, Mr. Ravi Pratap Singh receiving the UNEP World Flagship Restoration Award.

© UNEP



Award ceremony for World Restoration Flagships in Nairobi, Kenya in 2024.

© UNEP

RESTORING HERBIVORE ASSEMBLAGE- THE FIRST TRANSLOCATION OF BLACKBUCK

While blackbucks once flourished in Khairapur, Bardia, only nine remained by 1975 in the area as a consequence of mass migration of humans from the Hills to the Terai. To protect the last remaining blackbucks, the Government of Nepal established a guard post at the site to monitor the population. In Shuklaphanta, another historic range of the blackbuck, the situation was even more dire, with none of the species remaining. Blackbucks were just one of many species whose population had been declining steadily during the time. As a result, WWF Nepal strategized a 'Restoring Herbivore Assemblage' through which multiple herbivore species would be protected. The USAID funded Hariyo Ban Program

provided both technical and financial support to the Government of Nepal to reintroduce blackbucks in Hirapur Phanta in Shuklaphanta National Park to establish a new viable population of blackbucks in Nepal.

In the first phase of the translocation of Hariyo Ban Program, a total of 22 individuals were taken from Nepalgunj mini zoo to Hirapur Phanta in 2012. This population was supplemented with 6 additional individuals from the Central Zoo in Kathmandu. In the second translocation, 14 individuals were translocated from Krishnasar Conservation Area in 2015. The blackbuck population has since grown steadily; with three generations in Hirapur Phanta by mid-2021 and over 204 individuals in 2022.



Blackbuck being released at Hirapur Phanta - Shuklaphanta National Park © WWF Nepal

TO PROTECT THE LAST REMAINING BLACKBUCKS, THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL ESTABLISHED A GUARD POST AT THE SITE TO MONITOR THE POPULATION.



© Samir Jung Thapa-WWF Nepal

ENHANCING ACCESS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE

Upper Dolpa region is one of the most difficult and remote terrains in Nepal and once lacked electricity among many other basic amenities. Back in 2008, local communities living in the buffer zone of the Shey Phoksundo National Park used "Diyalos". However, kerosene is costly and local communities resorted to using fuel wood that they could easily collect from the buffer zone. This affected wildlife habitats, emitted greenhouse gasses and was costly to the locals as they were expensive energy sources. To bring

the usage of 'Diyalos' to an end, WWF Nepal with support from various partner organizations successfully provided access to electricity in all households of this region through the distribution of solar sets, achieving a 100% solar lighting of households in Dolpa.

While lights in Dolpa lit up with solar energy, in the Terai Arc Landscape, WWF Nepal initiated biogas, a clean cooking fuel generated from a mixture of cattle dung and water as an alternative to fuelwood for

forest dependent local communities. According to the tripartite working arrangement for the installment of biogas, WWF Nepal provided the subsidy (1/3rd of the cost of the biogas plant) on behalf of the government to communities and to Biogas Sector Partnership - Nepal (BSP-Nepal) for construction of biogas plant.

biogas plants. Each biogas unit could reduce 4.06 tons of CO2 equivalent annually being emitted from burning fuelwood and unmanaged cow dung. In the last 30 years, WWF Nepal has installed more than 25,000 biogas units in TAL.

With the change in context and decreasing cost of solar, WWF Nepal is supporting communities and protected areas to install solar plants to improve access to energy for various purposes such as water pumping, lighting etc.

In 2007, WWF Nepal launched the Gold Standard Biogas Voluntary Emission Reduction (VER) project in TAL with the target to install 7,500



WWF Nepal has been contributing to local government efforts to install solar mini-grid power systems, including this one that lights up 36 households, a Gumba and a health post in Kugaon - one of the remotest villages in Dolpa.

© Pema Tsering Gurung- WWF Nepal.



A solar panel being set up

© WWF Nepal



First model biogas in a VDC Mirgakunja Buffer Zone, Chitwan National Park, Nepal

© Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



First model biogas in a VDC Mirgakunja Buffer Zone, Chitwan National Park, Nepal

© Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



Former WWF Staff, Mr. Gautam Paudyal receiving felicitation for the 100% solar electrification of SPNP buffer zone

© WWF Nepal

HANDOVER OF THE KANGCHENJUNGA CONSERVATION AREA TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) – “A Gift to the Earth” was bestowed with the protected area status in 1997. Soon after, WWF Nepal in partnership with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), launched the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Project (KCAP). A Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management Council (KAMC) was formed as per the government regulations to manage and facilitate community based participatory conservation in the protected areas. In 2006, the Government of Nepal handed over the management responsibilities of KCA to KAMC for five years as per the provision of Conservation Area Regulation. During this period, the first five-year management plan of KCA was endorsed and WWF Nepal

continued to support KAMC to fully develop its capacity.

In 2012, upon the successful completion of KAMC’s first five-year tenure, the Government of Nepal handed over the management of KCA to the local communities, for the next tenure. The Government of Nepal endorsed a new ‘Organization and Management’ provision for staff in the regular budget in KCA in 2015. Now the process of handing over KCA to its local communities is complete and WWF Nepal provides grants directly to KAMC to address contemporary challenges and remains closely involved in the advisory and support capacity areas. As of May 2023, zero retaliatory killing of snow leopard has been achieved over the last one and a half decade in Kangchenjunga.

BACK IN 2008, LOCAL COMMUNITIES LIVING IN THE BUFFER ZONE OF THE SHEY PHOKSUNDO NATIONAL PARK USED "DIYALOS"- BURNING BARKS OF TREES AND KEROSENE-LIT LAMPS TO MEET THEIR ELECTRICITY NEEDS.



© Susheel Shrestha - WWF Nepal



Kangchenjunga is a key snow leopard habitat in Nepal © DNPWC



Handover of the the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area to the local community © Neera Pradhan



Handover of the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management by Honourable Gopal Rai, Minister of State for Forest and Soil Conservation © Neera Pradhan

ZERO POACHING OF RHINOS

About 157 rhinos were killed by poachers in Nepal between 1996 and 2006. Since then, Nepal has made massive strides in Rhino conservation and achieved 365 days of zero poaching of Rhinos for the first time in 2011. Until 2023, this feat has been achieved on eight occasions in the country. This success has been achieved through a holistic approach via the six pillars of zero poaching; assessment (regular effective assessments, technology) use best available tools & technologies, capacity (increase field staff's ability to protect wildlife), community (engage with local communities), prosecution (improve approaches for prosecution)

and cooperation (share information regionally & nationally).

This successful achievement was documented and communicated through the 'Towards zero poaching Symposium', hosted by the Government of Nepal with support by WWF Nepal in February 2015 and was attended by representatives from all 13 tiger range countries along with leading experts from around the world. There needs to be a long-term strategy and commitment for implementing zero poaching from the ground to higher political level with ownership of stakeholders -governments, community, and conservation partners at all levels.



Rescue of a wild Rhino in Chitwan

© Narendra Aryal- DNPWC



A greater one-horned rhinoceros wallowing in the Buffer Zone of Chitwan National Park

© Karine Aigner- WWF-US



Community Based Anti Poaching Unit on patrol

© Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



© WWF Nepal



Announcing the first-ever Zero poaching of rhinos in 2011

© WWF Nepal

PROTECTING COMMUNITIES AND SNOW LEOPARDS THROUGH LIVESTOCK INSURANCE

Losses incurred by community from wildlife is among the most significant threats to sustainable conservation. Government of Nepal has made steady strides in conflict management to safeguard communities, including institutionalizing Wildlife Damage Relief Guidelines (WDRG) to provide relief to those in need. Yet remote mountain communities were unable to access this important provision due to various challenges.

Assisting the government's endeavors, WWF Nepal established community-based Livestock Insurance Schemes (LIS) in KCA in 2004, and later in Shey Phoksundo National Park (SPNP). These helped provide some relief and preserve conservation stewardship, prior to creation of WDRG.

However, with WDRG offering greater returns, an opportunity was found to improve relief for conflict-vulnerable



© SPNP/ SLCC



© Saldang SLCC



Former SPNP Chief Conservation Officer Lal B Bhandari teaches local LIS committee members about WDRG.

© Sheren Shrestha- WWF Nepal



© Saldang SLCC



LIS program

© Saldang SLCC

households. In SPNP, an innovation was initiated to integrate WDRG and LIS, to optimize the strengths of the two schemes. LIS was adapted to cover transactional cost for processing WDRG, including supporting households in documenting evidence and filing claims for relief, systematically.

With key roles played by SPNP's leadership and capacitated citizen scientists, this social innovation supported by WWF Nepal has provided dual benefits - improving relief access and enhancing resilience

of remote communities. In the past five years, SPNP has provided over 2 crores NPR worth of relief through WDRG, including to remote communities through LIS integration. Simultaneously, around 1.5 crores (approx. 110,000 USD) NPR is secured in five LIS – mostly as fixed deposits - to enhance the communities' resilience. Even as efforts to strengthen the integration continues, this model promises to be an opportunity to scale out relief access to the remotest communities across Nepal's Himalayas and improve human snow leopard coexistence.

STRIDES IN WILDLIFE TECHNOLOGY



Greater One-horned Rhinoceros being fitted with satellite collars in Chitwan National Park before being translocated to Bardia National Park. © Samir Jung Thapa- WWF Nepal



A snow leopard, Yalung being fitted with a satellite collar in 2017 in KCA.



Training on Unmanned Aerial Vehicle for Nepal Army. © WWF Nepal



F-PODs being deployed for the first time in Nepal to track freshwater dolphins in Karnali River. © Rajesh Sada- WWF Nepal

WILDLIFE TECHNOLOGY HAS ALSO BEEN USED TO TRACK AND MONITOR FRESHWATER SPECIES. IN 2009, FOURTEEN GHARIALS WERE FITTED WITH RADIO TAGS AND RELEASED INTO THE RAPTI RIVER.

As a leading science based organization, WWF Nepal has seen many breakthroughs and progressions in wildlife technologies in 30 years of operations. From counting and tracking populations to protecting communities, wildlife technology has been harnessed in various ways. Camera traps were used for the first time between 1995 and 1996 to create the first baseline of tiger population in

Shuklaphanta National Park, Chitwan National Park and Bardia National Park. The technology has since been used multiple times for national tiger population assessment including in 2008 to create the first National Baseline for Tigers and in 2022 to unveil the latest tiger numbers. In 2011, the same camera trapping technology was used in Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) to track snow leopards for the first time.

Alongside camera traps, GPS collars have also been crucial for monitoring the movements of both of the big cats as well as rhinos. GPS collar was used for the first time to track the first translocated wild tiger (Chitwan NP to Bardia NP) in 2011. The next year, four Rhinos were collared in the Khata Corridor, revealing robust information to guide conservation science and provide evidence of corridor use. In 2013, GPS collar was successfully used

for the first time to track a snow leopard in KCA. By 2017, a total of four snow leopards had been collared, and the data collected have been used to inform the nation's conservation action plan as well as the landscape management plan. Prior to the use of GPS collars, DNA based population monitoring of snow leopards was done in 2012 using scat in KCA which was later expanded into a nation wide scat sampling survey for the first ever estimate snow leopard

population in Nepal. These technologies have evolved and strengthened and in 2023, a systematic camera trap survey was conducted in Shey Phoksundo National Park to reveal an estimate of the elusive snow leopards in the area.

Wildlife technology has also been used to track and monitor freshwater species. In 2009, fourteen gharials

were fitted with radio tags and released into the Rapti river. The study helped to diagnose causes of the population decline as well as provide a better understanding of the gharial's habitat usage. In 2022, freshwater dolphins of the Karnali River were tracked without tags for the first-time using F-PODs which are Passive Acoustics Monitoring

(PAM) technology.

In addition to tracking and monitoring wildlife, technology has also been used for their protection. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) was piloted in Chitwan NP and Bardia NP in 2012, boosting Nepal's antipoaching efforts. In 2012, WWF Nepal supported the government in launching real time SMART

patrolling which gives real time data of wildlife sightings, timber harvesting and illegal human activities through android mobiles in Nepal's national parks and conservation areas. In 2017, Real time CCTV cameras were installed in Protected Areas (PAs) of TAL to further boost Nepal's anti poaching efforts.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY

Sustainable finance considers the well-being of the environment, society and governance in investment decisions. WWF Nepal adopted and has been practicing sustainable financing since 2000/2001 with the aim to generate sufficient, stable and long-term financial resources for biodiversity conservation to benefit local communities within the working landscapes. Through the Community-based Biodiversity Conservation Fund

Model, WWF Nepal has managed various capital such as the Relief Fund, Endowment Fund, Biogas Revolving Fund, Scholarship Fund, Repair Maintenance Fund, CBAPU Mobilization Fund, Human-Wildlife Victim Relief Endowment Fund, Income Generation Fund etc. As of 2023, the total financial support of approximately NRS. 23,700,000 (approx. USD 177,500) has been provided in all working landscapes.

AS OF 2023, THE TOTAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF APPROXIMATELY NRS. 250,000,000 HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN ALL WORKING LANDSCAPES.



A community based cooperative based in Thakurbaba in Bardia, Nepal.

© Sneha Tamrakar- WWF Nepal



A dairy established through a community forest user group with support from TAL.

© Gayatri Pradhan- WWF Nepal

LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH GREEN ENTERPRISES

The Bardia Integrated Conservation Program (1995) and the Northern Mountain Conservation Program (1996) were WWF Nepal's initial livelihood initiatives to successfully benefit targeted communities and reduce pressure on natural resources. Gradually, Green Enterprises such as broom-making, bel juice, grass and fibre-based handicrafts, bamboo/cane/rattan furniture, leaf plate making, ecotourism/homestays, apple processing, essential oil processing, agroforestry nurseries, etc. were supported in landscape areas. During the Hariyo Ban project, over 100 eco-friendly enterprises were established

- coffee, bel, broom, citrus, cardamom, honey, etc. and 3691 households benefitted from these income-generation activities. Similarly, WWF Nepal has been providing green skills to create livelihood opportunities such as sawmill workers, solar panel repairers, nature guides, trekking guides, wood carvers, and citizen scientists. Furthermore, WWF Nepal has been supporting eco-tourism across its working areas to endorse nature conservation and local community development –as of now, 32 community homestays in TAL, 7 in CHAL, 1 in Upper Dolpa and 1 in Tinjure Milke Jaljale (TMJ) have been supported.



A man works at the coffee plantation supported by WWF Nepal in Adhikari Danda, Pokhara © Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



A man practices sewing with support of WWF Nepal in Surya Patuwa, Bardia © Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



Prince Harry visits Dalla Homestay in Bardia, Nepal in 2016. © WWF Nepal



A woman makes brooms in Tanahu © Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



A homestay in Dalla community of Bardia, Nepal. © Sneha Tamrakar- WWF Nepal

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATION

Children and youth are not just the shapers of the future, they are the actors to the present. WWF Nepal encourages, empowers, and engages children and youth to participate in environmental conservation to make a difference in their communities, country and the globe whilst creating an enabling environment to enable the change. Since 1994, WWF Nepal, in coordination with conservation partners have initiated the formation of eco-clubs, for student engagement and empowerment. An eco-club is an independent group of students working collectively to support the conservation of natural and cultural

environment in their respective schools and communities. WWF Nepal has directly supported the formation and operation of over 1000 eco clubs across its priority landscapes.

To build a skilled and empowered generation, various youth initiatives were introduced by WWF Nepal. One initiative being the Generation Green, a five-year campaign to engage 500,000 youth in conservation related activities to spark a collective movement for the environment and sustainable development in Nepal. Community Based Anti-Poaching Unit is another initiative where youth



The mentees of The Generation Green campaign with their mentor

© Shisha Gurung- WWF Nepal

on a voluntary basis have come together to help protect their forests from illegal logging, poaching and wildlife crimes. Similarly, local youth are trained as citizen scientists and are involved in scientific activities such as the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of data on forests, wildlife, water, or climate for biodiversity conservation. Various other initiatives in collaboration with

like-minded organizations such as Save the Children and National Youth council have also been implemented for the empowerment and engagement of youth in conservation. These engagements have built the spirit of ownership and leadership among youth and local communities in helping protect the natural heritage of Nepal.



Eco club students and teachers from all over Nepal come together for the Eco Club Summit in 2023. © Sneha Tamrakar- WWF Nepal



Youth volunteers for the Climate for Life Campaign Coming together © Shikha Gurung- WWF Nepal



Forestry Students undergoing Forest Carbon Inventory Training © WWF Nepal



Students of the Generation Green Campaign © WWF Nepal

WWF NEPAL HAS DIRECTLY SUPPORTED THE FORMATION AND OPERATION OF OVER 1000 ECO CLUBS ACROSS ITS PRIORITY LANDSCAPES.

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATION LEADERS



The success of long-term conservation depends on committed and skilled individuals and institutions to address the threats to our natural world. WWF Nepal believes that it is important to develop and enhance competencies, skills, and knowledge for conservation efforts to be more effective and sustainable. Over its 30 years, it has provided numerous scholarships and grants to young potential conservationists to hone and enhance their knowledge and skills and work towards conserving our planet. Over 276 scholarships in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area, Sagarmatha National Park, Shey Phoksundo National Park, and Terai Arc Landscape, 131 WWF Nepal Memorial Scholarships, and 299 study grants have been awarded so far. Through these scholarships and grants, youth are empowered to better manage biodiversity, benefit from the ecosystem services, and take responsibility as global citizens.

To further enable them to take action, youth are trained as behavior change champions, conservation champions, and youth champions who independently develop and carry out solutions in order to guarantee that conservation initiatives are owned and led locally.



MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES THROUGH COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

Community based natural resource management dates back to the late 1970s, with the initiation of Panchayat Forest and later Community Forestry Program in Nepal. In 1986, the Annapurna Conservation Area (ACAP) was established as a participatory model of conservation adopting Integrated Conservation and Development Program (ICDP)

approach. Later in 1992, with the amendment of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, the concept of buffer zone was introduced and implemented. As part of the community based natural resource management, the handover of Kangchenjunga Conservation Area management to the local communities by the Government of Nepal and the formation of

Kangchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) management Council with local communities were significant milestones in protected areas management of Nepal. Community forestry, on the other hand, became one of the priority programs of the Nepal through which over 22

thousand forest user groups are managing about 35% of the country's forests. WWF Nepal has been strengthening capacity of natural resource management institutions and local communities for community based natural resource management.



Community members planting broom grass

© Amit Pradhan- WWF Nepal

COMMUNITY FORESTRY, ON THE OTHER HAND, BECAME ONE OF THE PRIORITY PROGRAMS OF THE NEPAL THROUGH WHICH OVER 22 THOUSAND FOREST USER GROUPS ARE MANAGING ABOUT 35% OF THE COUNTRY'S FORESTS.



Community Forest Coordination members discover a net poaching snare in the Khata Corridor within the Terai Arc region of Nepal.

© Gary Van Wyk -The Ginkgo Agency - Whiskas WWF-UK-1



Women go to work in Mahila Jagaran Community Forest, a community forest run solely by women, Karnali corridor, Nepal.

© James Morgan - WWF US. 2



Community plantation of broom grass in Syangja. Broom grass plantation not only increases the greenery but also supports the retention and stabilization of soil. It also has livelihood benefits as the flowers can be used to make brooms while the leaves can be used as fodder.

© Amit Pradhan- WWF Nepal

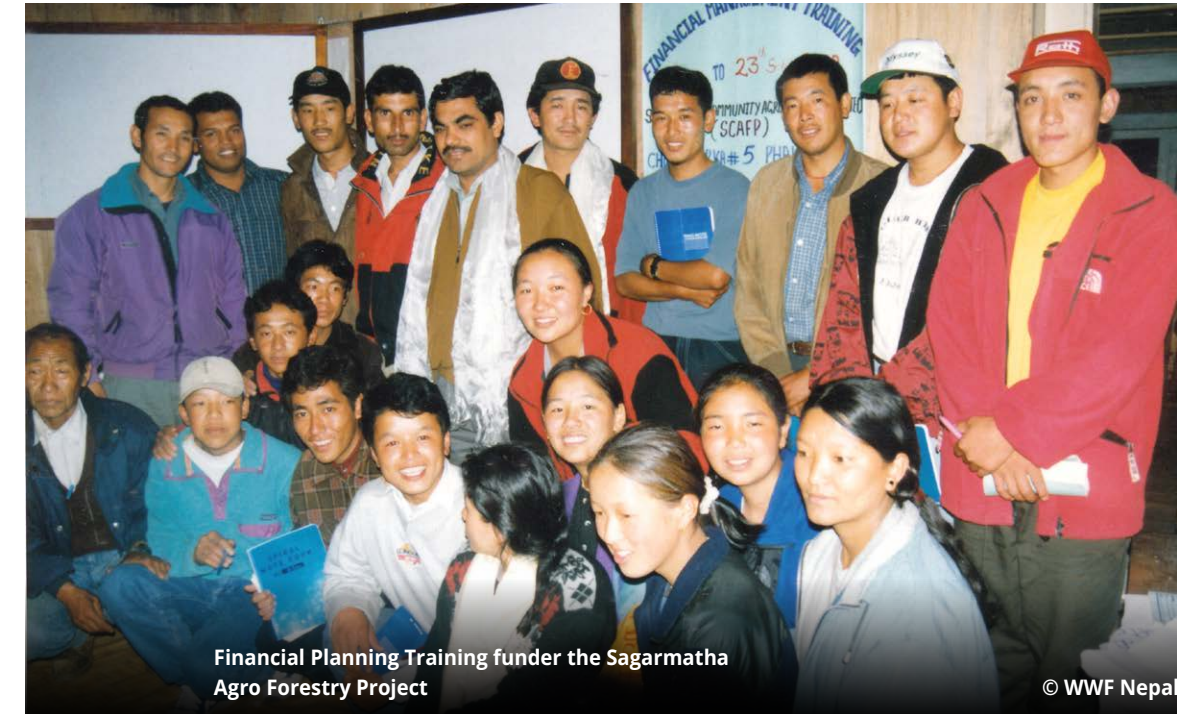
MANAGING DEFORESTATION AND POLLUTION IN SAGARMATHA

Solid waste management issues in the Sagarmatha region were a major cause of concern in the late 1980s. As a result, in 1993, the people of Khumbu, with support from WWF Nepal, established the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC), a local environmental organization, to address solid waste and pollution in Pharak and Sagarmatha National Park.

The introduction of a policy to ban beer and soft drink bottles within the park was one of the significant initiatives of the committee. The Sagarmatha Community Agro-Forestry

Project (SCAFP), a community-based conservation project was initiated in 1996 to address the issue of deforestation and promote sustainable livelihoods and alternative energy technologies in the Sagarmatha region of eastern Nepal.

Similarly, vegetable farming and horticulture were encouraged, and over 16 kgs of vegetable seeds and over 10,000 fruit tree saplings were distributed to farmers and 64 greenhouses constructed in Pharak for forest conservation and sustainable livelihood. In total, SCAFP established 9 community nurseries in Pharak



Financial Planning Training under the Sagarmatha Agro Forestry Project

© WWF Nepal

and Sagarmatha National Park and supported 5 private forest nurseries within Pharak. Over 871,322 seedlings were planted in the community and private forests.

To minimize fuelwood use, 156 backboiler water heating systems were supported, and 38 Improved Stoves were installed. Moreover, 70 KW Ghatte Micro hydro power was supported to generate hydro electricity from Ghatte Khola benefiting 100 households. On 1 January 2002, the Government of

Nepal declared a Buffer Zone in and around Sagarmatha National Park. Various support were provided to strengthen the capacity building of BZ institutions for BZ management plan development and implementation. Four Women Awareness Group (WAGs) were supported and registered in Sagarmatha National Park as functional groups under the BZ institutions which helped to direct the BZ resources for enhancing the capacity of local women in different fields of conservation and awareness generation.



Inauguration of the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Project Office in 1993

© WWF Nepal



Vegetables being farmed in green house under the Sagarmatha Agro Forestry Program

© WWF Nepal



Clean up campaign organized by Women's Awareness Group in 2003

© WWF Nepal

**MORE THAN
704,160
SEEDLINGS
WERE
PRODUCED IN
THE NURSERY
AND OVER
207,720
SEEDLINGS
WERE PLANTED
IN THE
COMMUNITY
AND PRIVATE
FORESTS.**

EMBEDDING CONSERVATION INTO DEVELOPMENT

Nepal is one of countries with the fastest infrastructure growth in South Asia. Recognizing that integration of biodiversity safeguards and wildlife into the linear infrastructures of Nepal was crucial for the wellbeing of the people as well as for safeguarding nature, an Environment Economic Analysis and Infrastructure Policy Forum was jointly hosted by WWF Nepal and Conservation Strategy Fund to discuss policy tools in the context of Nepal in 2014. Later, WWF Nepal successfully advocated for the realignment of Simara – Tamsariya part of Mechi-Mahakali Railway which would have otherwise cut into the prime wildlife habitat of Chitwan National Park. Soon after, WWF Nepal in partnership with Department of Roads, drafted a “Guideline for Construction of Eco-Friendly Linear Infrastructure” in 2017. Later, the Guidelines were renamed as Wildlife-friendly Infrastructure Construction Directives and processed for approval from the Ministry of Forests and Environment in 2019.

The House of Representatives; Agriculture, Cooperative and Natural Resources Committee discussed the issue of integrating natural resources safeguards into linear infrastructure development with concerned government agencies and experts in 2022. Based on the discussions, the Parliament

Committee directed the government towards early approval of the Wildlife-friendly Infrastructure Construction Guidelines, 2022.

This led to the endorsement of Wildlife-friendly Infrastructure Construction Directives by the Government of Nepal in March 2022 to focus on planning and designing wildlife friendly infrastructures considering small, medium, and large sized animals based on their behavior, habitat, and mobility patterns. WWF Nepal has provided technical and financial contributions, including trainings, national and international learning visits to policy stakeholders, preparing study reports, and organizing meetings and workshops for the preparation of the Directives.



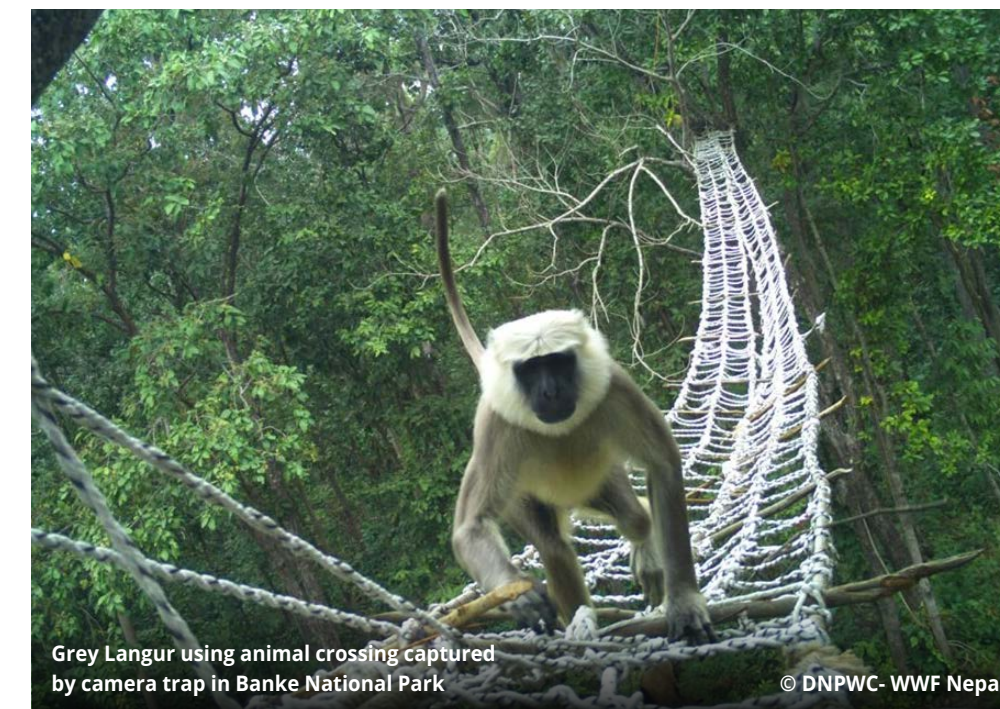
Tiger crossing the overpass at Babai irrigation canal in Bardia

© DoFSC- WWF Nepal



Tiger walking on the road in Bardia National Park

© Pramod Neupane- WWF Nepal



Grey Langur using animal crossing captured by camera trap in Banke National Park

© DNPWC- WWF Nepal



Leopard crossing the overpass at Babai irrigation canal in Bardia

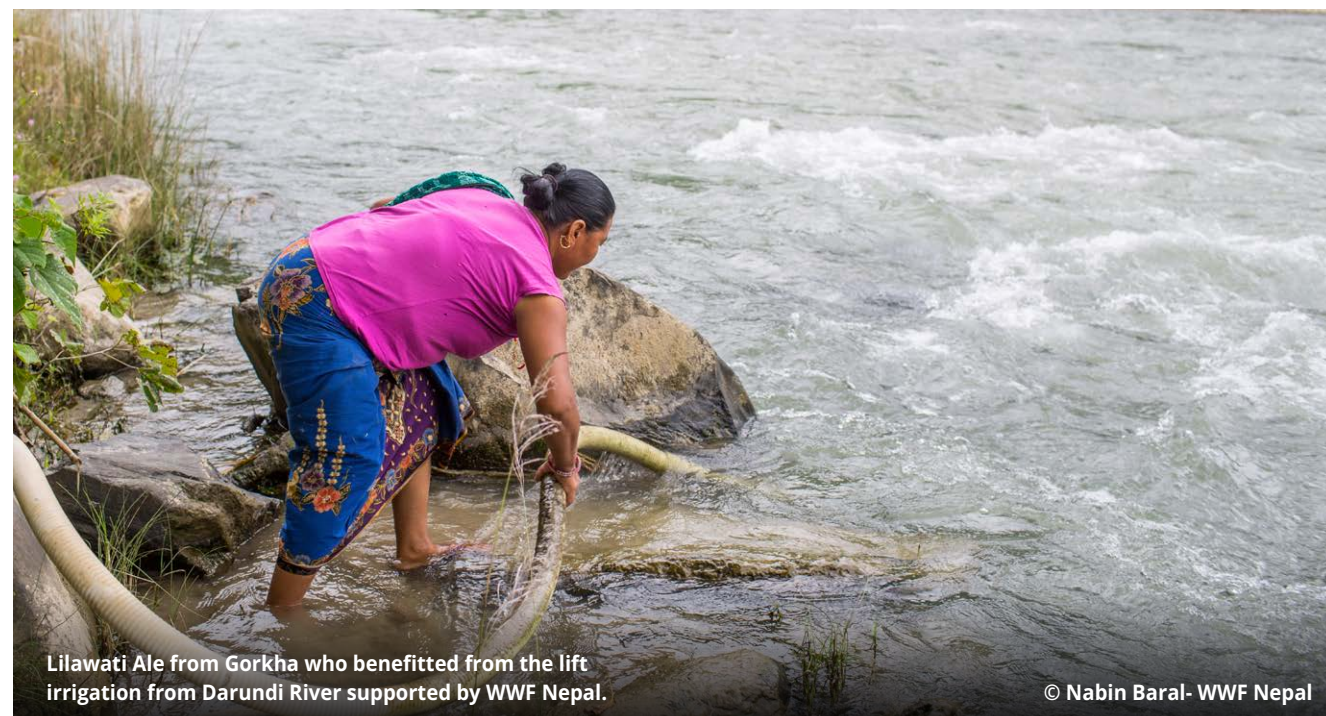
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HARIYO BAN

For over a decade, WWF Nepal's Hariyo Ban Program funded by USAID (2011-2021) was devoted to enhancing ecosystems and building community resilience through participatory and inclusive natural resource management in Nepal. Despite facing challenges such as earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic, the program successfully contributed to conserving biodiversity, facilitating climate change adaptation, and improving the lives of forest-dependent people. The program emphasized the importance of operating across multiple decision-making levels, catalyzing new approaches, and scaling up successful strategies to ensure their long-term sustainability. This makes Hariyo Ban Program stand out as one of the prime examples of a sustainable conservation and resilient development initiative.



Bhim Maya Gurung from Chitwan makes thread out of wool as part of WWF supported income generation program. © Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



Lilawati Ale from Gorkha who benefitted from the lift irrigation from Darundi River supported by WWF Nepal.

© Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



Man works on the water harvest pond for coffee plantation in Adhikari Danda, Kaski

© Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal

The program leaves a legacy of effective policy changes, highlighting the impact of robust and enduring partnerships among consortium partners and close coordination with the government. By adopting a comprehensive approach that prioritized gender equality and social inclusion in conservation efforts, Hariyo Ban set the standard for building biodiversity resilience and climate adaptation strategies at the community, provincial, and national levels.



A local woman from Chetana CFUG, Kailali gives food to a pig she received as a part of the livelihood interventions of the Hariyo Ban Program

© Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



Solar water pump for Rhino Habitat Restoration in Bardia National Park. © Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



WWF Nepal's Former CR Anil Manandhar speaking at the launch of the Hariyo Ban Program in 2011.

© WWF Nepal

PROTECTING THE FORESTS OF NEPAL

Nepal's forests coverage roughly 45% of the country's landmass. In 1957, the government nationalized all forests of Nepal, considering them as property of the state. Protection of national forests was regulated after the formulation of the Forest Act in 1962. Forest restoration initiatives in Nepal were started in the late 1970s to rehabilitate degraded mid-hills of the country through plantation. As the forest management paradigm shifted to community management approach in the 1970s, local communities protected these plantations and thus the plantation forests have successfully been established. Community forestry is believed to be an instrumental to restore forests and natural ecosystems.

WWF Nepal works with the Government and local communities to improve management of forests and forest resources by promoting community-based forest management and sustainable forest management. After adopting landscape approach, critical corridors have been identified and initiatives are implemented to restore forests and maintain ecosystem functionality. Later, these critical corridors have been designated as Protected Forests (currently, it is named as Forest Conservation Area).

Forest area has been increased from 1.28 million ha in 2001 to 1.35 million ha in 2016 with a net forest gain of 66,800 ha in the Terai Arc Landscape. This gain was mainly due to forest protection through community-based forest management and forest restoration. During this period, 0.32 million ha (27%) of forest has been handed over to local communities as community forest. WWF Nepal contributed to bring over 0.17 million ha of forest under community management through more than 1,306 CFUGs. In order to restore forest, over 3.47 million seedlings were produced and planted in various degraded patches of community forests, private lands and public lands mainly in the corridors.

Furthermore, as an outcome of a decade's efforts, Government of Nepal signed Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) with the World Bank in 2021 for a result-based payment of US\$ 45 million through REDD+ , sequestering 9 million tons of CO₂ equivalent in six years (2018 to 2024) in the Terai Arc Landscape. WWF Nepal has been working with the Ministry of Forests and Environment from the very beginning of REDD+ initiatives. WWF Nepal led Emission Reduction Program Development (ERPD) development process working closely with the Government of Nepal and the World Bank.



Broom Grass Plantation in Jhirubas Palpa

© WWF Nepal



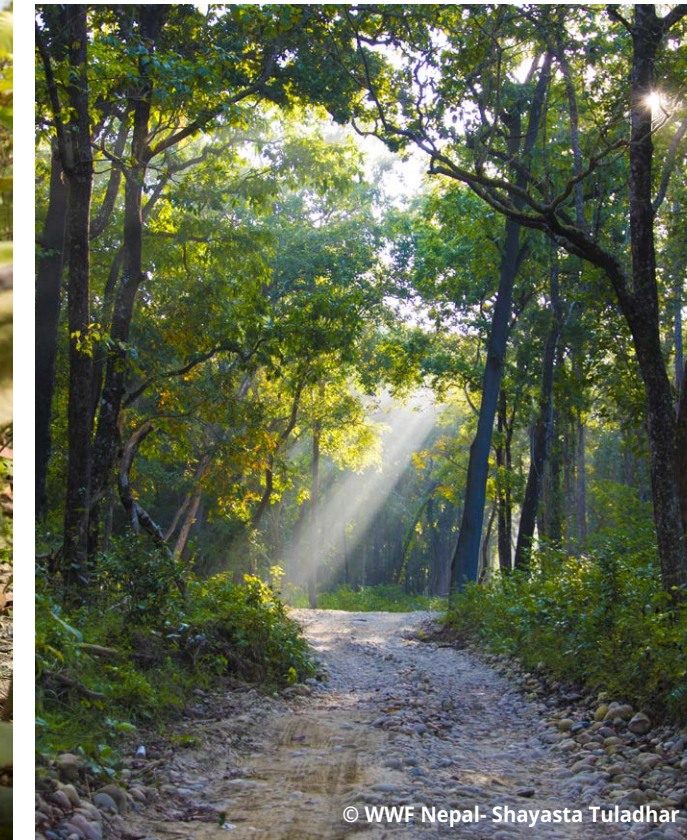
Forest Fire safety training

© WWF Nepal



Regeneration of Sal forest in progress in Dumurwana, Bara

© Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



© WWF Nepal- Shayasta Tuladhar

IN ORDER TO RESTORE FOREST, 3.47 MILLION SEEDLINGS WERE PRODUCED AND PLANTED IN VARIOUS DEGRADED PATCHES OF COMMUNITY FORESTS, PRIVATE LANDS AND PUBLIC LANDS MAINLY IN THE CORRIDORS.

RAISING THE VOICES OF PEOPLE ON CLIMATE JUSTICE

“Climate for Life”, a global climate change communications campaign was initiated in 2009 to raise awareness on the impacts of climate change in the Himalayas among national as well as the global audience.

To formally launch this campaign, WWF Nepal supported Mr. Apa Sherpa, a world record holding mountaineer on his 19th ascent of Mount Everest, the world’s highest peak, on 21st May 2009. On the peak, Mr. Apa Sherpa shared a powerful message to “Stop Climate Change. Let the Himalayas Live” reminding individuals globally of their responsibility towards preserving this global heritage. Following the summiting of Everest, Apa Sherpa and Dawa Steven Sherpa also trekked through 10 European cities ending in Copenhagen at the UN Climate Summit, raising awareness about the impacts of climate change in the Himalayas. As part of the campaign, a petition signed by over 200,000 Nepali youth against climate injustice



Former Rt. Hon. President of Nepal Dr. Ram Baran Yadav congratulates Apa Sherpa.

© WWF Nepal



Apa Sherpa displays WWF's message on climate change on his 19th Everest summit.

© WWF Nepal



Over 200,000 Nepali youth signed a petition against climate injustice to Prime Minister of Nepal, Madhav Nepal to hand over to UN General Secretary Ban Ki Moon

© WWF Nepal

was handed over to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon by then Rt. Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal, Madhav Kumar Nepal. Furthermore, the Prime minister also handed over a piece of rock from Everest to the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama and the Prime Minister of United Kingdom, Gordon Brown.

The campaign continued the year after, when WWF Nepal also supported Mr. Sherpa on his 20th ascent on 22nd May 2010. The second time, the message was, “You heard our voice, now raise yours- we can stop climate change in the Himalayas.”



Apa Sherpa handing a piece of Everest to the President of Austria.

© WWF Nepal

PILOTING NEPAL'S FIRST NATIONAL WATER PLAN AND INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

Protecting water is protecting life. But, with water under massive threats from pollution, urbanization, haphazard road construction, river aggregates mining and climate change, a strong and collaborative strategy is key to its protection. In 2002, the Government of Nepal prepared Water Resources Strategy, and to operationalize the strategy the National Water Plan (NWP) was developed in 2005, which strongly stressed on the need for Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM).

In June 2007, WWF Nepal Signed an MoU with Water and Energy

Commission Secretariat (WECS) to pilot NWP in Koshi River Basin. The program started with a stakeholder engagement process, reaching from local communities to the highest level of government to sustainably manage Koshi River Basin water resources to benefit local people and maintain ecological balance. A Scope of Cooperation was also signed between WECS and WWF Nepal in December 2008 to contribute significantly in river basin management, resulting in the inauguration of Dudh Koshi Sub-basin Project Office in January 2009 and formal launch of Koshi River Basin Management Program in February 2009.



Inauguration of the Indrawati Sub Basin project in 2010 following the launch of the Koshi River Basin Management Program in 2009. Indrawati River is one of the seven sub basins of Koshi.



Upstream of Koshi River

© WWF Nepal

Following the success of Dudh Koshi Sub-basin Project, it was scaled up in Indrawati Sub-basin, resulting in the launch of Indrawati Sub-basin Project Office in March 2010. Altogether, eleven Integrated Resources Management Committees (IRMCs) comprising of representatives of water users' groups, community forest users' groups, farmers groups and women groups in Indrawati and Dudhkoshi Sub-basin of Koshi basin were formed. All the IRMCs implemented river basin management activities for environmental sustainability,

social equity and economic efficiency in eleven catchments. Because of this, 11,530 households uniquely benefitted from different interventions and 3,360 households increased their average annual income. Furthermore, 300 hectares of forests were protected, restored and managed. The decreasing use of chemical fertilizer and pesticide has ultimately reduced pollution in rivers. Currently, the river basin plans of all the basins of Nepal are in the process of finalization under the leadership of WECS.



Former Minister of Energy Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat launching the Indrawati sub basin project by planting a sapling.

© WWF Nepal

IN JUNE 2007, WWF SIGNED AN MOU WITH WATER AND ENERGY COMMISSION SECRETARIAT (WECS) TO PILOT NWP IN KOSHI RIVER BASIN.

INCLUSIVE CONSERVATION

Indigenous people are at the heart of conservation. They have the closest relationship with nature in their regions and they live the realities of conservation every day. Hence, their involvement from the very start of any conservation project is important to ensure their wellbeing as well as conservation successes. An MOU was signed between WWF Nepal and National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN), to work together to uplift indigenous

community voices, by promoting rights based approach efficiently for biodiversity conservation by adapting Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) guidelines.

Women groups in Dolpa are being revived and strengthened. Women's groups are now working with the National Park in conservation efforts. Capacity building efforts in financial literacy, waste management and leadership have been conducted.



WWF Nepal signs MoU with National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities. © Bivishika Bhandari- WWF Nepal



National Level workshop on FPIC © Biswash Praja- WWF Nepal



FPIC being conducted at WWF Nepal project site © WWF Nepal



FPIC being conducted at WWF Nepal project site © WWF Nepal

WOMEN GROUPS IN DOLPA ARE BEING REVIVED AND STRENGTHENED, TO WORK WITH NATIONAL PARK FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND WELLBEING OF COMMUNITIES.

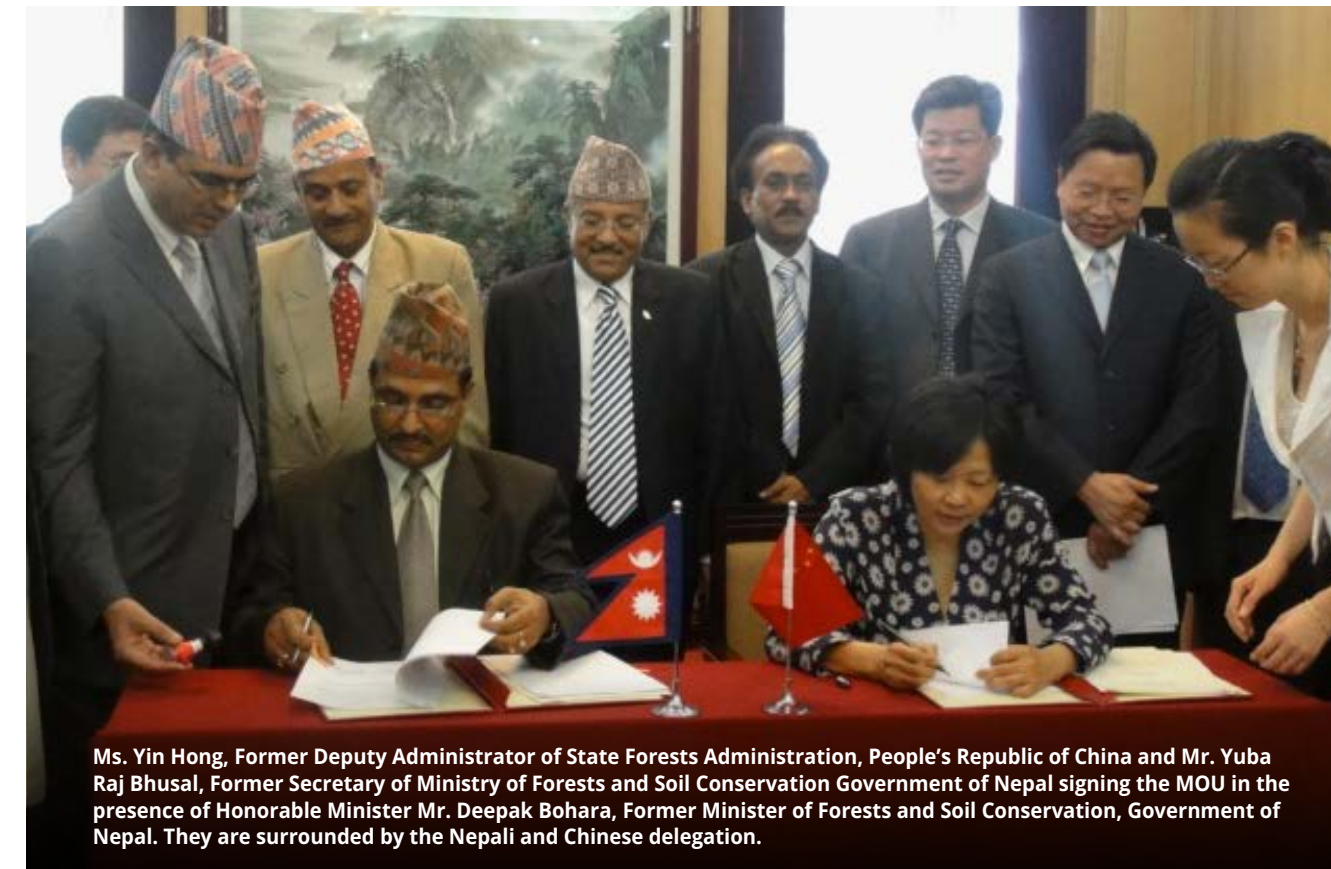
TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES FOR CONSERVATION

Nature transcends human boundaries and hence, transboundary cooperation is crucial to address threats to nature and biodiversity. The increasing threat to biodiversity caused by various factors led to the initiation of transboundary consultative meetings at a national and local level between India and Nepal (1997, 1999, 2000). The government authorities and representatives of India and Nepal realized the urgency for an effective strategy to address

biodiversity issues and ecological security and signed a Resolution in 2010. Similarly, an MOU was signed between the Government of Nepal and Peoples Republic of China in 2010 for the protection of biodiversity. Several initiatives like transborder meetings between government counterparts at national and local levels and meeting of communities have helped to control forest and wildlife crimes and improve local level initiatives by learning and sharing.



Mr. Gopal Prasad Upadhyay, Former Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal and Mr. S P Yadav, Former DIG and Joint Director, National Tiger Conservation Authority, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India signing the resolution.



Ms. Yin Hong, Former Deputy Administrator of State Forests Administration, People's Republic of China and Mr. Yuba Raj Bhusal, Former Secretary of Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation Government of Nepal signing the MOU in the presence of Honorable Minister Mr. Deepak Bohara, Former Minister of Forests and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal. They are surrounded by the Nepali and Chinese delegation.



Third WCCB workshop being conducted in Bardia, Nepal in 2023.

© Gayatri Pradhan- WWF Nepal

AN MOU WAS SIGNED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL AND PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN 2010 FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CONSERVATION COMMUNITY

In June 2010, the National Tiger Conservation Committee (NTCC), a high-level committee was formed under the chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister to guide policy and ensure multi-stakeholders' cooperation and proactive

engagement for conservation of tiger and to curb wildlife crime in the country. The committee is comprised of several concerned government ministries, national tiger experts and representatives from conservation organizations, including WWF



Glimpse of NTCC meeting held in July prior to National Global tiger day 2022

© Bed Kumar Dhakal DNPWC



Meeting of the National Wildlife Crime Control Coordination Committee (NWCCCC)

Nepal. Other committees formed particularly to coordinate wildlife crime are National Wildlife Crime Control Coordination Committee (NWCCCC) chaired by the Hon. Minister, Ministry of Forest and Environment, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) Central coordinated by the Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), Provincial Wildlife Crime

Control Bureau coordinated by Secretary of the Province and 34 WCCB District in critical districts coordinated by respective Chief Warden of a National Park or Divisional Forest Officer. All of these committees include all law enforcement agencies, and their primary role is to strengthen coordination to curb wildlife crime.



Meeting of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.

THE COMMITTEE IS COMPRISED OF SEVERAL CONCERNED GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, NATIONAL TIGER EXPERTS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING WWF NEPAL.

MANAGING AND MITIGATING DISASTER RISKS

Recognizing the interconnectivity between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment, WWF Nepal has been working to ensure protection of people and wildlife from different disasters. In 2015, to assess the immediate impacts of the earthquake on biodiversity and the natural environment, WWF Nepal carried out Rapid Environmental Assessment (REA) to identify the major environmental issues and developed a strategy for building back better, safer, cleaner, greener, and a more resilient Nepal.

In 2017, climate change induced flash flooding swept away ten rhinos from Chitwan National Park (CNP) across the border to India. This incident was an alarming call to safeguard wild animals from impacts of climate change. With this, WWF Nepal started to implement wildlife specific conservation measures and supported Protected Area staff to mainstream

climate change in their management plan. In 2018, through the Wildlife Adaptation Innovation Fund, WWF Nepal constructed a mud mound in the buffer region of CNP to serve as a refuge for rhinos and other wildlife during heavy rainfall. The mud mound proved to be effective as no rhinos have been reported to be impacted due to flooding.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, WWF Nepal supported front line staff by safeguarding against Covid-19 infection in all the protected areas and division forest offices in Nepal and further supported in the formulation of Wildlife Health Strategy and Mitigation Plan.

In 2021, WWF Nepal supported a comprehensive assessment that examined current policies and institutional arrangements that laid a foundation for further interventions and initiatives to strengthen wildlife resilience in Nepal.



© Samir Jung Thapa- WWF Nepal



© Samir Jung Thapa/ WWF US

A mud mound that served as a refuge for rhinos and other wildlife during heavy rainfall.



Stone gabion wall built under the Integrated Climate Change Adaptation Plan to change the flow of Rani Khola in its original flow to save the Dahakhani Village

© Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal

PUTTING WOMEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF CONSERVATION

Women have an integral role in safeguarding natural resources. They manage natural resources on a daily basis in various roles and have unique and critical knowledge. Yet, they have fewer opportunities to participate in decision-making and access to resources and benefits with low representation in conservation programs.

Since the 1990's, WWF Nepal has been working in empowering women particularly from marginalized communities to strengthen their stewardship in biodiversity conservation. Throughout WWF Nepal's conservation journey, promoting equitable access, benefits and participatory decision making in sustainable management of natural resources has been a major priority. WWF Nepal has been supporting in creation of women's groups to actively participate in conservation and improve their



Capacity Strengthening for Women's Groups in Dolpa

© WWF Nepal

livelihoods from skill-based trainings. In 1997, the first ever Didi Bahini Samuha was formed in Dolpa followed by a Mother's Group in Kangchenjunga and Women's Environment Group in Bardia in 1998. Such initiatives have helped women to enhance their capacities and gain better access to participate in community decisions about resources.

One recent example of WWF Nepal's work to increase women's stewardship in conservation is in Dolpa where, 42 women's groups created within SPNP are being revived and strengthened to work for wildlife conservation and community well-being. 192 women were capacitated through ten capacity building sessions. These women's groups have sent over 8000 kgs of waste from cleanup campaigns in Snow Leopard Habitat to Kathmandu for recycling and to bring attention to the issues of waste, climate change and its impacts on their livelihoods. A new 35 member women's group in Saldang has been recently formed.



A clean up campaign by Women's Group in Dolpo that removed over 6000 kgs of waste from the region.

©DNPWC



Women discussing about the location of medicinal plants in Chitwan

© Amit Pradhan- WWF Nepal



Members of Chetana Women Community Forest User Group discussing bio-engineering methods

© Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal

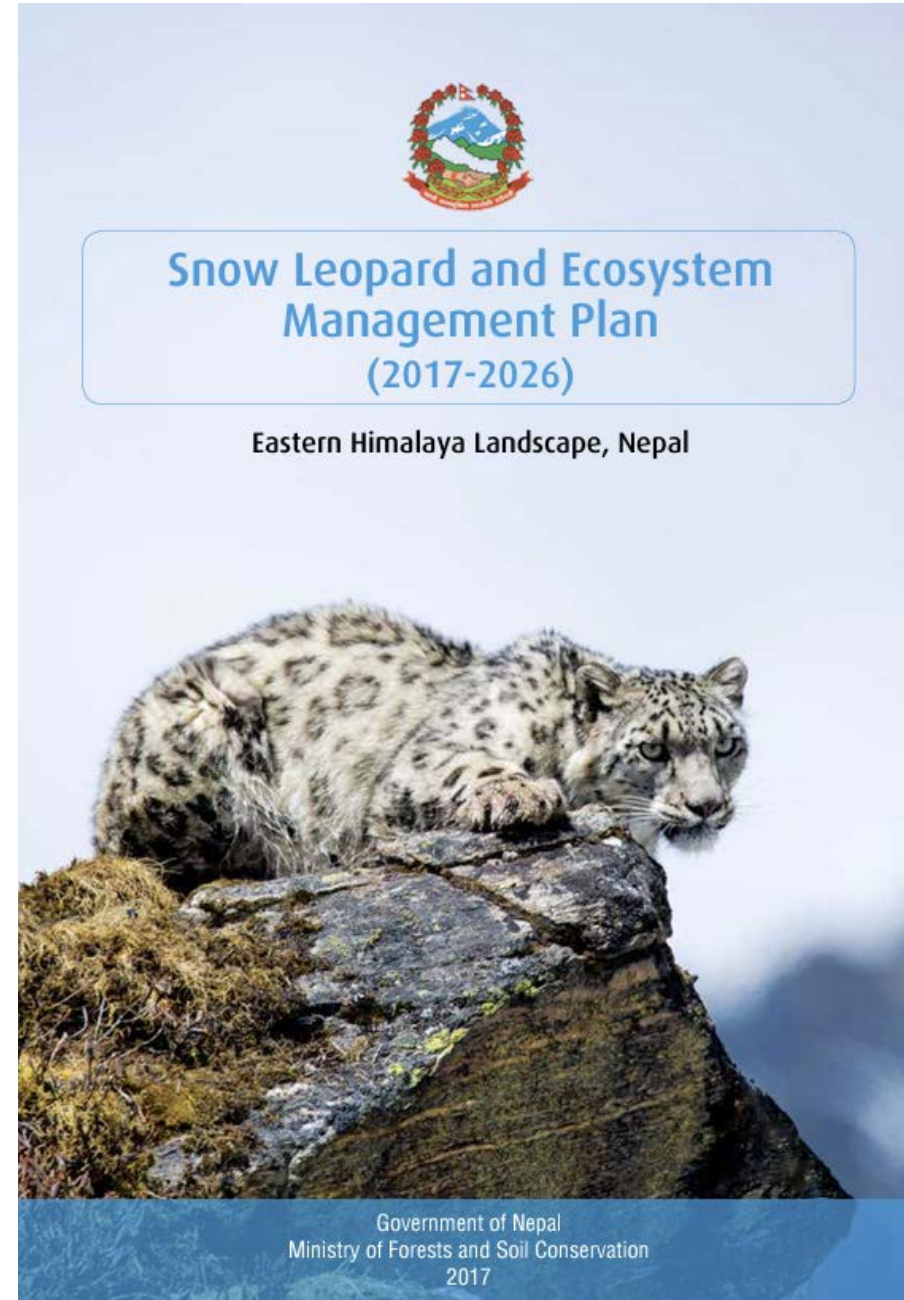
CLIMATE SMART PLANNING FOR SPECIES CONSERVATION

Nepal government has acknowledged and led integration of climate resilience in species conservation. Several species conservation plans have incorporated climate elements, and a few have been created on the basis of climate projections. WWF Nepal has supported the government in preparing conservation action plans for many rare and endangered wildlife species such as Blackbuck, Tiger, Gharial, Rhino etc. These plans have considered climate change as one of the key threats to the conservation of the target species and have identified strategies to address it.

In 2017, the Government of Nepal became the first country to prepare a landscape-wide climate-smart

snow leopard conservation plan, termed as the Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Management Plan for the Eastern Himalayan Landscape (SLEMP-EHL). This was based on the government's adoption of the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) recommendation for climate smart planning for snow leopard conservation in all the 23 priority snow leopard landscapes.

The climate-smart SLEMP-EHL holistically reviews climate predictions and potential impacts on snow leopards and human communities living alongside snow leopards and guides adaptive measures to ensure a sustainable future for both wildlife and people. For this, it identifies seven strategies to improve land use planning and



In August 2017, Nepal made conservation history by becoming the first country to launch its climate-smart snow leopard landscape management leading the way in safeguarding the species and its habitat.

habitat management- mitigating conflicts, improving livelihoods, strengthening local community institutions, strengthening law enforcement, climate adaptation, enhancing knowledge on snow leopards, and international cooperation. This plan identified 11 critical conservation sites, which are areas with high conservation significance for snow leopards but also for people living within, for focused management actions. It also identifies over 14 corridors that assure movement and dispersal of these wide-ranging species. A similar plan is being prepared for the Western Snow Leopard Conservation Landscape that

additionally identifies climate refugia – areas that would provide snow leopards a refuge even in worst climate prediction scenario.

WWF Nepal has also supported in preparing climate smart protected area management plans for Chitwan National Park, Banke National Park, Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, Parsa National Park, Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, and the Blackbuck Conservation Area. Based on the updated management plans, WWF Nepal is supporting the government to implement species focused climate adaptation interventions.



© Rocky Prajapati- WWF Nepal

IN 2017, THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL BECAME THE FIRST COUNTRY TO PREPARE A LANDSCAPE-WIDE CLIMATE-SMART SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVATION PLAN, TERMED AS THE SNOW LEOPARD AND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE EASTERN HIMALAYAN LANDSCAPE (SLEMP-EHL).

MANAGING AND RESTORING RAMSAR SITES AND WETLANDS

Wetlands are critical habitats for many species and humankind. They provide clean water supply, prevent and regulate floods, act as sediment and nutrient retention, serve as a carbon sink and also are excellent sites for tourism. A Ramsar site is a wetland designated as internationally important under the “Ramsar Convention”, an international treaty signed in 1971 in Ramsar city, Iran. Nepal comprises of 10 Ramsar sites covering around 0.02 percentage (60,561 ha) of the global Ramsar sites area. WWF Nepal has supported the Government of Nepal on inventory, designation, conservation, management and restoration of eight out of ten Ramsar sites in Nepal including four High Altitude Wetlands - Gokyo and Associated Lakes, Phoksundo Lake, Rara Lake, and Gosaikunda and Associated Lakes as Ramsar sites in September 2007. WWF Nepal has also supported the Government in preparing National Ramsar Strategy and Action Plan (2018-2024) and Guideline for Designation and Management of Ramsar Sites in Nepal.

Likewise for the first time in Nepal, a national level high conservation value rivers and river stretches assessment has been conducted under the support of USAID PANI program. The result of the assessment serves as a baseline for river conservation status in Nepal and guide for future river conservation initiatives.

WWF Nepal has been supporting the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and the Department of Forests and Soil Conservation in coordination with local communities and community-based organizations on wetland protection, restoration and management. The activities include demarcation of wetlands, removal of deposited sediments, removal of invasive species, construction and maintenance of inlets, outlets and dykes, improving wetland governance, capacity building of wetland conservation committees and providing livelihood options to wetland dependent people to reduce their dependency on wetlands resources.



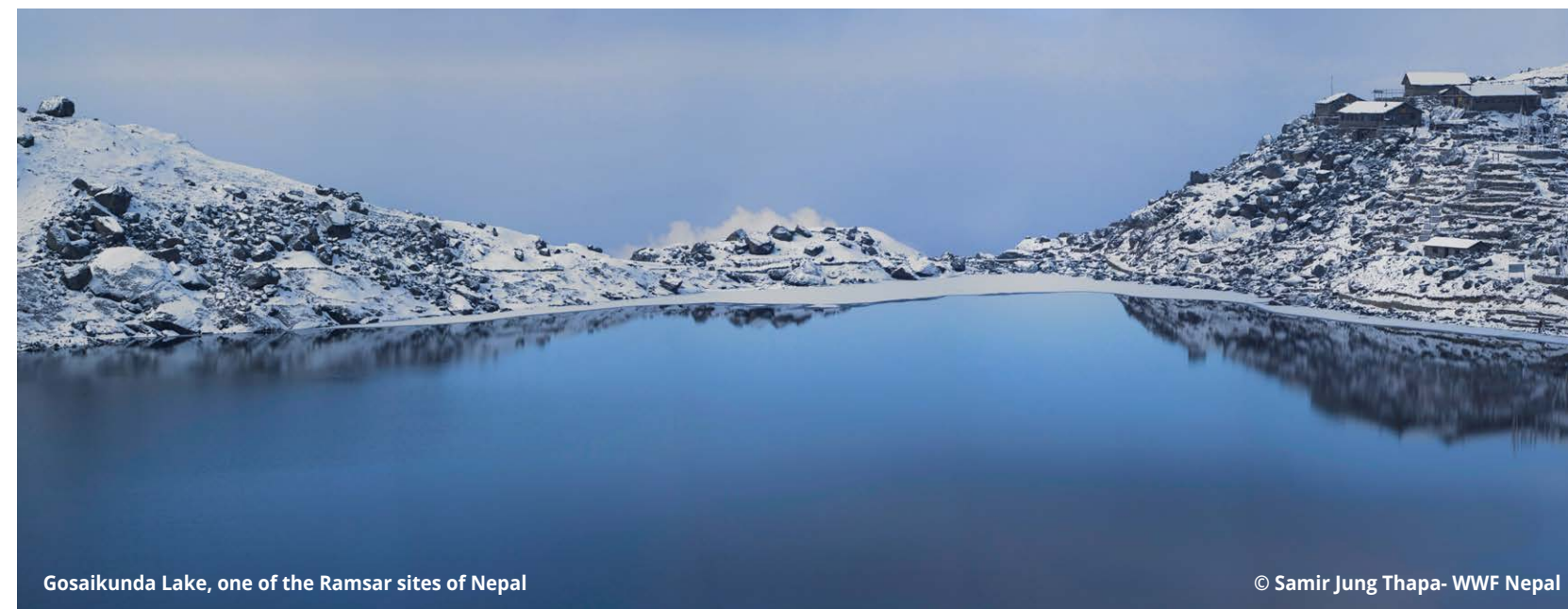
Beeshazari Tal © Pramod Neupane - WWF Nepal



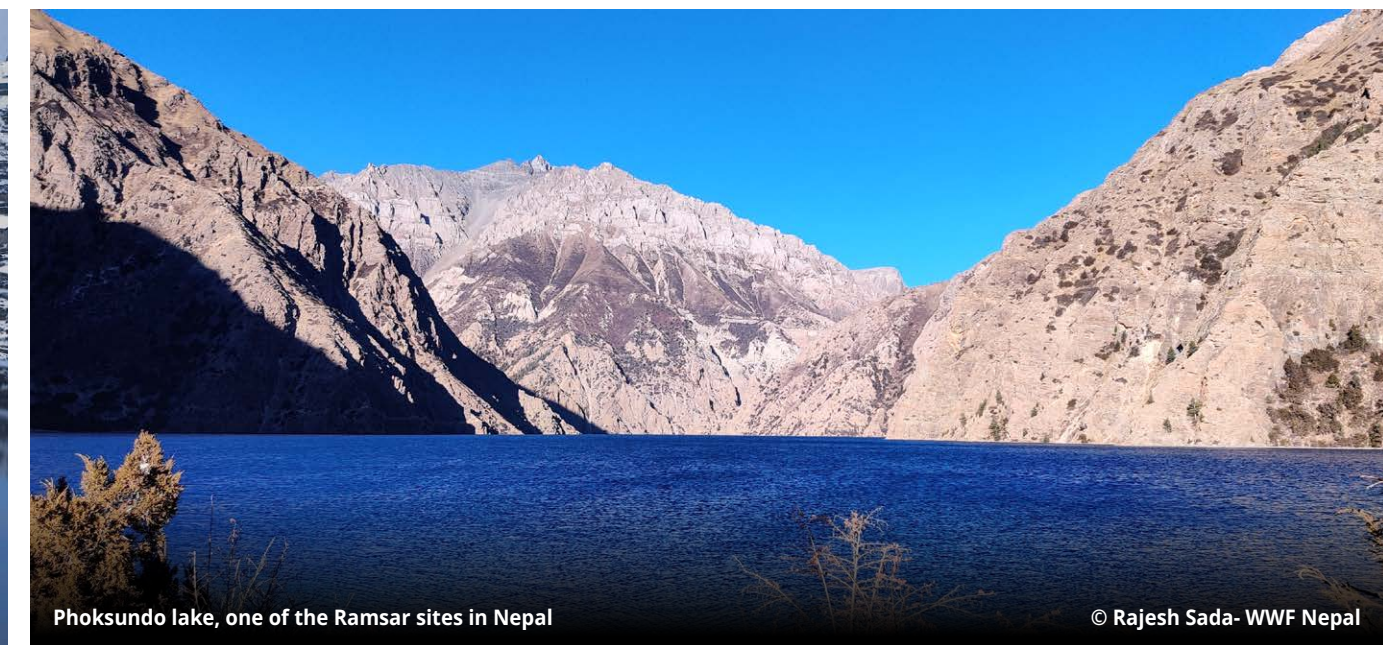
Gokyo Lake, one of the Ramsar Sites in Nepal © Richard Mclellan- WWF



Phoksundo Khola, Dolpa © Rajesh Sada- WWF Nepal



Gosaikunda Lake, one of the Ramsar sites of Nepal © Samir Jung Thapa- WWF Nepal



Phoksundo lake, one of the Ramsar sites in Nepal © Rajesh Sada- WWF Nepal

PARTNERSHIPS FOR CONSERVATION IMPACT

Since the very beginning of the journey, WWF Nepal has worked under the leadership of the government. Most significantly, WWF Nepal works with the Ministry of Forests and Environment (particularly the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Department of Forests and Soil Conservation), Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management Council, the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat, Ministry of Land Reform and Management, Ministry of Agricultural Development, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment. WWF Nepal also works closely with other government agencies such as the Social Welfare Council, the National Youth Council, Judges Society Nepal, Nepal Army, Nepal Police and the Central Bureau of Investigation.



In addition to government agencies and conservation partners on local, national, and international levels, WWF Nepal has partnered with universities and educational institutions such as Kathmandu University, Lumbini Buddhist University, Tribhuvan University, Institute of Forestry to cultivate conservationists and Institute of Engineering to embed environmental protection in the engineering curriculums. WWF Nepal also works with community-based organizations such as Buffer Zone User Committees, Community Forests Coordination Committees, and faith-based organizations such as Nepal Buddhist Federation and Sowa Rigpa Association Nepal to integrate conservation with community.

To ensure a human centered approach to conservation, WWF Nepal partners with agencies such as National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities and the National Human Rights Commission. With the support of such organizations, WWF Nepal is able to work closely with the local communities without whose unwavering support and stewardship are the key to all conservation successes.



WWF NEPAL WORKS WITH THE MINISTRY OF FORESTS AND ENVIRONMENT- PARTICULARLY THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS AND SOIL CONSERVATION.

30 YEARS OF INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

For over 30 years, WWF Nepal has been prospering and contributing towards achieving Nepal's conservation and sustainable development under the guidance, motivation and inspiration of indigenous leadership.



Mr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa

Mr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa, from the Sherpa community, who started his journey in WWF Nepal in 1990 has been one of

the designers and the founding director of the first community-based Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) - the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) in mid-1980's. In 1993, he became the founding Country Representative of WWF Nepal while also simultaneously managing the WWF Nepal Bhutan Office. He was one of the pioneers of the people centric approach to conservation as he believed in "conservation with a human face". It was during his tenure that WWF Nepal's community focused conservation projects in Dolpa, Kangchenjunga, Bardia and Sagarmatha were initiated including the establishment of the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee.

Dr. Chandra Prasad Gurung, from the Sikles village in Kaski was alongside Mr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa as one of the designers of the ACAP project. He led WWF Nepal as the Country Representative from 1998 onwards, with a strong focus on landscape level conservation.



Dr. Chandra Prasad Gurung

Under his leadership, WWF Nepal supported the government of Nepal in declaring the Terai Arc Landscape in 2001 and the Sacred Himalayan Landscape in 2006. The climax of Dr. Chandra P. Gurung's tenure was the handover of the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area to the local community, making it the first ever community managed conservation area in Nepal.



Mr. Anil Manandhar

Mr. Anil Manandhar, a Newar from Kathmandu, led WWF Nepal as the Country Representative from 2006 onwards. Under his leadership, WWF Nepal supported the government in declaring the Chitwan Annapurna Landscape. The organization specialized in trans-boundary landscape level conservation, with facilitation of formal agreements with India and China. It was during his tenure that Nepal achieved the first ever 365 days of zero poaching of

Rhinos in 2011- a phenomena that has been observed seven more times since then. WWF Nepal also scaled up its livelihood programs through integrated and collaborative community-based natural resource management and development which includes the initiation of the first ever WWF Nepal supported homestay.



Dr. Ghana Shyam Gurung

Dr. Ghana Shyam Gurung, hailing from Dhee village in Upper Mustang has led WWF Nepal since 2018. Under his

guidance, WWF Nepal has continued to scale greater heights with achievements such as the accomplishment of Nepal's TX2 commitment to double tiger numbers between 2011-2022 and continued 365 days of zero poaching of rhinos. Under his vision of community as the stewards of conservation, WWF Nepal partnered with the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities to launch the National Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) guideline. It is under Dr. Gurung's tenure that WWF Nepal supported the Government to gazette the Wildlife Friendly Infrastructure Construction Directives.

WWF Nepal has successfully initiated, implemented and completed numerous projects and initiatives under the exceptionally dedicated and motivated indigenous leaders during its 30 years journey in Nepal. As we move towards the future, current and upcoming leaders will continue to sustain the achievements of the past while facing newer challenges such as climate change, freshwater degradation, rapid infrastructure growth and the management of human wildlife coexistence.

GRATITUDE AND TOWARDS THE FUTURE

30 years of consecutive and dedicated conservation efforts of WWF Nepal has contributed to putting Nepal on the global conservation map with the recovery of endangered species, landscape level conservation recognition, increased forest covers and community stewardship and prosperity. These achievements were possible under the leadership of the government and partnership of development partners, donors, local and indigenous communities, youth, and likeminded institutions.

WWF Nepal will continue focusing on corridor connectivity, ecosystem restoration, freshwater conservation, wildlife friendly infrastructure development, and work towards meeting Nepal's global commitment of 30% space conservation by 2030scho. It will work closely with local communities to seek the best possible local solutions, and other

effective, curative and mitigative approaches to improve human wildlife coexistence and control wildlife crimes. Furthermore, WWF Nepal will make concerted efforts to protect watersheds, wetlands, water bodies, and promote sustainable use of water with heightened focus in controlling river pollution. WWF Nepal will continue its regional initiatives through transboundary cooperation with India and China and work to reverse the loss of species and their habitats. At the same time, WWF Nepal will scale up its efforts against the threats of the triple planetary crisis- pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss.

In the years to come, WWF Nepal is fully committed to continue supporting the government and communities to fill gaps in policies, plans, actions, practices, and to address conservation challenges through prioritizing resilient, inclusive and sustainable mode of actions by using global knowledge, expertise and nature-based solutions.



© Sanjog Rai- WWF Nepal



WWF Nepal will continue to work for the protection of Nepal's Freshwater biodiversity.

© Nabin Baral- WWF Nepal



With Nepal's increasing infrastructure growth, WWF Nepal will work to mitigate biodiversity loss.

© Pramod Neupane- WWF Nepal



WWF Nepal will continue working towards human- wildlife coexistence.

© Karun Dewan- WWF Nepal

