



Taimen Conservation Fund's Flyfishing for Mongolian Salmon: A Vehicle for Biodiversity Conservation

Project Objective: To ensure the sustainable conservation of a remote watershed in northwestern Mongolia through the realization of economic benefits from the sustainable use of wildlife.

Innovation: There are three critical innovations: (i) New Financing Method: Environmental services payments in the form of concessions; (ii) New Delivery Method: Public private partnership between a Mongolian NGO and local community residents organized in natural resource councils; (iii) Faith-based Conservation Approach: Conservation mandate derived from and supported by traditional Mongolian Buddhist and spiritual beliefs, concepts and ideas which are much more tangible and accessible to local inhabitants than scientific conservation justifications and terminology.

Outputs: The revenues generated by the concessions provide a sustainable source of funding to the local communities to cover costs associated with:

- ▶ Conservation science (e.g., tagging, mapping, monitoring);
- ▶ Natural resource management plan;
- ▶ Community based enforcement system;
- ▶ Concession and Licensing Systems;
- ▶ Collaborative management system (e.g., technical and management capacity building)

Benefits: The EUWA has 5,334 households, of which the project anticipates that it will directly benefit 5-10 % of the population through job creation and training, and indirectly benefit 20-40% of the population through increased social services.



The Partnership: The collaborative management system that will provide the necessary management capacity is based on a Public-Private Partnership model, partnering an NGO (Taimen Conservation Fund) with local natural resource councils, represented by local community leaders and user groups. The private outfitters, who secure concessions on the watershed, are the funding link in the partnership. The structure of the project was developed and agreed over a two year consultation with local communities, that included representatives from a broad cross-section of user groups, and culminated in two stakeholder meetings in the EUWA (June 2001 WWF-facilitated; June 2002 (WWF/IFC facilitated).

Financial Sustainability: The concession and licensing system is the revenue generating mechanism that allows local communities to harness those natural resources that have a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Through the collaborative management system local communities will be empowered to make informed decisions on resource use and revenue allocation.



Project Rationale: The underlying rationale for the Project is to treat natural resources as locally managed concessions, rather than as simple public goods, thereby enabling the local communities to maximize economic returns from sustainable use activities, such as eco-tourism.

Faith-based Conservation. A critical underlying condition that makes this Project possible is that traditional Buddhist beliefs and practices preclude the local peoples from using fish resources for subsistence or commercial consumptive purposes. The local communities are supportive of non-consumptive, sustainable use of aquatic resources that are not invasive or disruptive to the daily patterns of life. The Project places emphasis on maintaining these traditional Buddhist beliefs while promoting the complimentary nature of nomadic ways of life with low-impact forms of tourism, such as catch and release flyfishing.

Conservation and Biodiversity Significance: Though many of Mongolia's wilderness areas are of outstanding beauty, the Eg-Uur Watershed Area (EUWA) is particularly spectacular, largely due to its geographical isolation from major population centers.

- ▶ The area contains geographically distinct biomes, consisting of high mountain taiga, tundra, forest, wetland, and steppe.
- ▶ The national government has targeted the EUWA for protected area status.
- ▶ Because the EUWA provides critical nesting habitat for threatened migratory bird species, it has been designated as a globally important wetland, a priority ecoregion for conservation under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
- ▶ Under WWF's Ecoregion conservation strategy for the ecosystems of Siberia, EUWA has been classified as a priority conservation area at the same status as the Altai Sayan eco-region, Lake Hovsgol park and the Eastern Steppe eco-region, all of which are Global Environment Facility (GEF) supported projects.

Conservation Target and Threats Defined: As a result of sustained economic decline following the collapse of the former Soviet command economy system, which has resulted in increasing levels of poverty and inequality, local residents and non-residents have turned to unsustainable practices of natural resource use. This trend is primarily manifested in the depletion of wildlife due to illegal poaching of terrestrial game

and fish species. Local residents and non-residents are equally responsible for most of the terrestrial poaching, while non-residents bear most of the responsibility for the poaching of fish species. In addition there are other emerging threats such as land and habitat degradation due to deforestation, primarily as a result of forest fires. An additional set of threats that looms on the long-term horizon is the by-products of increased economic activities, such as over-grazing, mining and infrastructure development. The Project has prioritized these threats and their underlying root causes into three categories: Primary Current, Secondary Emerging, and Long Term. They are categorized in a descending order of seriousness and in terms of influence over project performance and biodiversity conservation. The Project takes an early interventionist approach by targeting the most serious and pressing threat, illegal poaching, thus providing requisite infrastructure and technical/management capacity to address the other threats as they emerge in the future.

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