



**Promoting Trans-boundary Water Cooperation
in Russia and Mongolia's Selenga River
Workshop: "Lessons in Regional Watershed Management"**

*August 7-17th, 2004
Lake Tahoe, California and Nevada, USA*

Primary Sponsors

Open World Leadership Center; Russian Ministry of Natural Resources, Committee for the Protection of Lake Baikal; Desert Research Institute; Tahoe-Baikal Institute; and the U.S. Forest Service Office of International Affairs

Partners

ISAR, Trust for Mutual Understanding, University of Nevada, Reno

SUMMARY

In August 2004, the U.S. Forest Service, with the Tahoe-Baikal Institute (TBI), hosted 15 government and academic representatives from Russia and Mongolia to discuss problems at Baikal, and what solutions were needed to address them. In addition to the international delegation, 18 international experts also took part in a targeted workshop to assist in identifying areas of cooperation. Numerous concepts and ideas were suggested under topics of: Forestry, rangeland and agriculture; watershed management and planning; economic development; and science and monitoring.

Three key issues areas were identified at a three-day workshop. First, there is no coordinated science and monitoring effort to assess regional environmental trends. More surprisingly, Mongolian and Russian colleagues have very different standards for collecting scientific data, despite both being within the Soviet Union for over 50 years, making it difficult to merge data on trans-boundary waters. Second, there is minimal capacity within the Baikal watershed for addressing *regional* concerns and issues. Both countries' Federal agencies have limited staff, budgets, and in-house knowledge to monitor, analyze, and enforce existing laws. In result, there is no cohesive regional plan despite pockets of rapid development in ecologically sensitive zones. Finally, there is a growing interest and demand by regulators to apply market incentives, instead of heavy "command and control" techniques, to ensure environmental compliance. However, there is limited experience in applying these market incentives to local conditions.

BACKGROUND

The headwaters of the Selenga river begin in Mongolia's Khangai Mountains and travel 1000 kilometers before emptying into the world's largest, deepest, and oldest freshwater lake, Russia's Lake Baikal. The Selenga's water catchment area, or watershed, is roughly the size of France and

is split in half between Russia and Mongolia. Living alongside the over 4 million people in the watershed (which includes Mongolia's capital Ulaan Baator) are high numbers of plant and animal biodiversity including such species as the "river shark" salmon (hucho taimen), the wild bactrian camel, and many others. Recognizing the unique natural biodiversity in the area, both Russia and Mongolia have developed a network of over 48 protected areas in the watershed including a Ramsar wetland protection site (2002, Savenkova) in Russia's Selenga Delta.

Now, economic growth in the region is slowly on the rise after a long period of decline driven by mining (gold, uranium, molybdenum), agriculture, tourism, and general development. Coinciding with this growth are increasing levels of air and water pollution causing increased pressure on water quality, human health, and regional biodiversity.

Since Mongolia became an independent country, bilateral cooperation with Russia on trans-boundary environmental agreements has been minimal. Cooperation on basic environmental science, and monitoring has also practically stopped, although efforts within each country have continued independently. There is a clear need for capacity building and exchange of experience and information between Russia and Mongolia on issues such as regulatory, scientific, methodological, and other aspects of integrated management of the Selenga watershed. Both countries signed a joint-agreement in 2002 (based on a 1994 trans-boundary water partnership agreement), to develop a work plan by 2010, with a special committee developed for the Selenga River.

Minimal resources have been allocated to Ministry departments responsible for developing this plan, and it is expected other higher priority country water agreements with Kazakhstan, China, and Newly Independent State countries will be used, instead of focusing on regional priorities.

The Tahoe-Baikal Institute (TBI) is working with a host of Russian and Mongolian national and international government, business, and non-profit organizations to assist in developing regional action plans and projects for the Selenga that will preserve its unique natural and cultural resources for future generations. The proposed "Regional Planning workshop" was the first effort of its kind to bring Russian and Mongolian scientists and policy-makers together to share resource management experiences for the Selenga, and learn about new and innovative tools, efforts, and techniques that will help in their difficult task.

Workshop Objectives

The overall objective for this workshop was to strengthen regional capacity for improved lake and watershed basin management within Russia and Mongolia, and for the Selenga watershed in particular.

There were three specific objectives of the overall workshop and study tour. First, was to provide a venue for participants to present current resource management challenges faced in their region; to meet and discuss similar resource management issues with U.S. experts and agencies; and to learn new tools and techniques in regional planning. Second, was to participate in a 2-day planning workshop that will aggregate issues addressed from the first stage of the workshop, prioritize areas of cooperation, and work with participants to identify scenarios, potential solutions, and how foreign partners can assist in future efforts. Finally, the workshop worked towards including western partners who can assist participants in developing concrete resource management plans and projects.

Final results include a final report that outline problems and suggestions from existing participants, and future cooperation opportunities planned from the workshop and study tour.

The Program

The 10-day workshop began August 7th and concluded August 17th in San Francisco, California. The final program is attached in Appendix I. The schedule brought participants through California and Nevada for the first 5 days to meet with government, business, and non-profit leaders and academic experts to discuss science, policy, and economic developments related with watershed management issues, with an emphasis on Lake Tahoe. Specific topics included, but were not limited to: regional planning, fire management, tourism development, mining, international transboundary water agreements, GIS and cartography, science and monitoring, legislative planning, etc.

Following the study-tour, participants took part in a 2-day workshop at Lake Tahoe in Nevada that outlined current national and trans-boundary issues, threats and opportunities. A public presentation and reception with partners and participating agencies was held August 16th. The program for this workshop follows a similar one TBI held for the World Bank and 21 environmental ministers and protected area specialists from 6 Eastern Europe and Central Asian delegates. More information can be found in Appendix II.

Venue

The study tour traveled across northern California and Nevada to San Francisco, Sacramento, Lake Tahoe, Reno, and Carson City. Participants stayed in hotels in San Francisco and Sacramento. The 2-day workshop was held in Incline Village, Nevada.

Workshop/Study Tour Facilitators

- The Open World Leadership Center was designed to bring emerging federal and local Russian political leaders to the United States to meet their American counterparts and gain firsthand knowledge of how American civil society works. Program participants experience American political life and see democracy in action, from the workings of the U.S. Congress to debates in local city councils. Open World has given more than 8,000 current and future Russian decision makers an in-depth introduction to American political and civic life. The program is the first and only exchange program administered by the legislative branch of the U.S. Government. See www.openworld.gov for more information.
- The Russian Ministry of Natural Resources, Committee for the Protection of Lake Baikal is the regional planning arm of the Russian Federal Government responsible for protecting Lake Baikal. “Baikalpriroda” is responsible for implementing, monitoring, and enforcing the “Baikal Law” with regional governments, and is the lead federal agency responsible for completing the trans-boundary water agreement with Mongolia.
- The Tahoe-Baikal Institute (TBI) focuses on achieving excellence in resource management towards the preservation of mountain lake watersheds around the world through the creation and support of innovative, multi-disciplinary watershed-based education, leadership and partnership development, international exchange, and science-based research. Since 1990, TBI has successfully developed and implemented numerous programs for young adults and professionals from all over the world. Partners have included, government, NGO, business,

and academic organizations such as the World Bank, GEF, U.S. Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and others. See www.tahoebaikal.org for more information.

- The Desert Research Institute (DRI) is a nonprofit research campus in Nevada that has approximately 440 research faculty and support staff which conduct more than \$27 million in environmental research each year, improving people's lives throughout the world. DRI's mission is grounded in fundamental research providing sponsors and clients innovative solutions to pressing environmental problems while balancing the need to develop resources while protecting and sustaining the environment. See www.dri.edu for more information.
- The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) leads the cooperative effort to preserve, restore, and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe Region. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is dedicated to preserving the beauty of the Tahoe Basin. See www.trpa.org for more information.

Participants

NAME	AFFILIATION	COUNTRY
1. Mr. Erdenbat Eldevochir	Executive Director of the NGO "Taimen Conservation Fund"	Mongolia
2. Mrs. Ravchig Samiya	Vice President, Mongolia National University	Mongolia
3. Mr. Bolad (or Damdin)	Deputy Minister of Natural Resources – responsible for implementing international trans-boundary water agreements	Mongolia
4. Ms. Ouyndar	Director, Div. of Int. Cooperation, Ministry of Natural Resources, (leads trans-boundary agreements)	Mongolia
5. Mr. Baldandorzh	Head of Water Issues, Inst. for Geo-Ecology, Head of Selenga River Watershed working group	Mongolia
6. Valery S. Molotov	Director, Ministry of Natural Resources, Committee for the Protection of Baikal	Russia, Buryatia
7. Mr. Olga Koloomets	Deputy Director, Ministry of Natural Resources, Committee for the Protection of Baikal	Russia, Buryatia
8. Mr. Anatoly Malevsky	Director, Irkutsk State Environment Committee	Russia, Irkutsk
9. Mrs. Lubov Sergeevna Katkova	Director of Baikal Biodiversity Conservation Center, Irkutsk.	Russia, Irkutsk
10. Mr. Leonid Voita	Director, Chita State Environment Committee	Russia, Chita

**APPENDIX 1
SCHEDULE**

August 6 Friday San Francisco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Airport Arrival – Mongolians - 1:10 PM ▪ Airport Arrival – Russians – 7:10 PM
August 7 Saturday San Francisco	<p>Morning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductions ▪ Orientation of Program (Brunello, Molotov) ▪ Q&A <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tour of City ▪ Golden Gate Bridg <p>Dinner – Fishermans Wharf</p>
August 8, Sunday San Francisco, Sacramento	<p>Morning (Agency Coordination)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal Resource Mgmt – Peter? ▪ State Resource Mgmt - Chrisman ▪ Lake Tahoe Mgmt - ▪ Q&A <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meetings with SF folks – Goldman Fund, Asia Foundation, Pacific Environment, USGS, USFS, Stanford, EPA ▪ Drive to Sacramento <p>Evening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BBQ at Jared's
August 9, Monday Sacramento	<p>Morning (Resources Agency overview)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overview or CA resource mgmt (Scarborough, Chrisman) ▪ Fire Management (Bill) ▪ Regional Planning ▪ State assembly <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lunch at Resources ▪ Assembly person resource committee meeting ▪ Governors office ▪ Business meeting with ▪ U.C. Davis and agriculture Charles Goldman lecture
August 10, Tuesday Sacramento, Lake Tahoe	<p>Morning (business)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agriculture – U.C. Davis and Jared Ficker ▪ Ducks Unlimited ▪ Development <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drive to Lake Tahoe (stop at Coloma and wineries) <p>Evening</p>
August 11, Wednesday Lake Tahoe	<p>Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Day</p> <p>Morning (business)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overview P2007 ▪ Thresholds ▪ Scenic ▪ Water Quality <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site visits <p>Evening</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dinner Events (HOMESTAYS)
August 12, Thursday Lake Tahoe	<p>Roundtable discussion/roleplay Federal – Jeffrey Keeler State – Dennis Machida or Ray, or Laurie Kemper Local – Lisa O’Daley</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site visits, trash, IVGID, STPUD, Heavenly Tram ▪ Non-profit meeting <p>Evening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dinner Events (HOMESTAYS)
August 13, Friday Carson City, Virginia City, Reno	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business/Science Day <p>Morning – NTRA – talk to Teshera</p> <p>Afternoon – Drive to Reno and Nevada City</p>
August 14, Saturday Incline Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Free day with activities ▪ Evening dinner and reception – Overview of workshop
August 15, Sunday Lake Tahoe, Incline Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work Shop – Review day and discussions
August 16, Monday Lake Tahoe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work Shop – Issues and Solutions ▪ Evening Reception in Incline Village
August 17, Tuesday San Francisco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leave to SF ▪ Free day in SF, shopping in Sacramento
August 18, Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Departure – Russians 9:00 PM ▪ Departure – Mongolians 2:25 PM