

Northern Mountains Conservation Project (NMCP)

HALF-YEARLY TECHNICAL PROGRESS REPORT (JULY 2000-DECEMBER 2000)

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Abbreviations

BSP	Biodiversity Support Program
CC	Conservation Committee
CFUG	Community Forest Users' Group
DHR	Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve
DDC	District Development Committee
DHR	Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve
DNPWC	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
DPP	District Partnership Program
EE	Environmental Education
EFEA	Environment and Forest Enterprise Activities
HH	Household
MFSC	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
mgt.	management
NFE	Non-formal Education
no.	Number
NMCP	Northern Mountains Conservation Project
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Product
NGO	Non-government Organization
PPI	People and Plants Initiative
Qty	Quantity
SG	Sisters' Group
SN	Serial Number
SPNP	Shey Phoksundo National Park
THCC	Traditional Health Care Centre
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
ha	Hectare

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Executive Summary

Shey Phoksundo National Park (SPNP) and Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve (DHR) share similar conservation needs. An increasing pressure on forest and pasture resources from livestock and trade in non-timber forest products, inadequate data for endangered species, unsustainable use of natural resources, and limited park staff continue to pose problems for conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of resources.

The goal of Northern Mountains Conservation Project is to conserve biodiversity in SPNP and DHR, to facilitate local management of natural resources and to improve living conditions while safeguarding the region's unique natural heritage.

The project's field activities started in the spring of 1997. This half-yearly technical report contains the achievements of the project for the period July to December 2000. In DHR, a few follow-up activities were implemented through the direct supervision of the reserve warden. Most of the planned activities in SPNP have been implemented despite the Maoist attack in the district headquarter at Dunai in September 2000.

During this reporting period, a team of experts from the World Heritage Commission visited the field to evaluate HMG/N's proposal to enlist SPNP as a world heritage site. Tourism experts from the DNPWC, SNV and WWF carried out an assessment of the tourism facilities in SPNP and the buffer zone to develop a sustainable tourism plan for the area.

The major achievements of this reporting period are: the formation of all the buffer zone users' committees and a buffer zone council in SPNP; completion of socio-economic and forest status survey of 6 CFUGs; community plantation, implementation of community and school nurseries, 7 community agroforestry sites; cultivation of medicinal Plants; successful completion of 10 literacy classes; increased saving and credit activities of sisters' groups; installation of 55 solar light system and 50 improved iron stoves; social and cultural mobilization by the sisters' groups; environmental activities by the eco clubs during the Shey Festival; construction of community garbage pits; and the operation of the traditional health care center and monitoring of medicinal plants. In DHR, a draft of the reserve regulations has been prepared to enable sustainable resource use by the local people.

1. INTRODUCTION

Shey Phoksundo National Park (SPNP), spread over 3,555 sq. km in remote Dolpa and Mugu districts, is Nepal's largest national park. Diverse animals and plants thrive amid the region's unique trans-Himalayan ecology and stark natural beauty. Growing threats to its wildlife, such as the snow leopard, prompted His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N) to declare the area a national park in 1984. It was closed to tourists until 1989 when its southern portion was opened. The northern section was opened on a restricted basis in 1992. Today, about 3,200 people live inside the park and 10,000 in its buffer zone of 1,349 sq. km declared by HMG/N in October 1998. SPNP has also been proposed as a World Heritage Site for its unique cultural and natural features.

Dhorpatan (DHR) covers 1,325 sq. km area of Baglung, Myagdi and Rukum districts in western Nepal. It is Nepal's only hunting reserve. Declared as a protected area in 1984, Dhorpatan is famous for blue sheep, ghoral, serow, Himalayan thar, barking deer and wild boar. Other famed species include lynx, red panda, musk deer and wolves. In the summer, about 1,300 households use Dhorpatan valley's grasslands to graze their livestock.

The communities in Shey and Dhorpatan combine agriculture, pastoralism and trade for their livelihood and depend heavily on the forests and pasture resources for their energy, fodder and timber needs. An increasing pressure on forest and pasture resources from livestock and trade in non-timber forest products, inadequate data for endangered species, unsustainable use of natural resources, and limited park staff continue to pose problems for conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of resources. Although a growing number of tourists visit these areas, local communities have not benefited from tourism revenues. In light of these factors, USAID and WWF have funded a 5 year integrated conservation and development project (1996-2001) in SPNP and DHR to facilitate local management of natural resources and to improve living conditions while safeguarding the region's unique natural heritage.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Northern Mountains Conservation Project (NMCP) is to conserve biodiversity in SPNP and DHR by (i) strengthening the capabilities of local user groups, NGOs and Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation staff to carry out development and conservation initiatives in the protected areas and buffer zones, and (ii) promoting sustainable economic growth that increases local incomes.

The main purpose of this project is to facilitate local management of natural resources and to improve living conditions while safeguarding the region's unique natural heritage. The specific objectives of the project are:

2.1 Community Natural Resource Management:

- * to train local groups in controlling and managing natural resources
- * to increase production of fodder, fuelwood, timber and grass
- * to increase women's participation in development
- * to educate the people about nature conservation
- * to help the people manage their natural resources better

2.2 Micro-enterprise Development:

- * to develop nature-based small businesses to raise rural incomes
- * to increase earnings through value-added processing of forest and livestock products
- * to promote quality tourism that helps local economy

2.3 Protected Area Planning And Management:

- * to manage protected areas and buffer zones effectively through local people's participation
- * to train government personnel in buffer zone management
- * to provide necessary equipment to park/reserve for effective management
- * to gather relevant information on plants, animals and the socio-economic condition of the local communities
- * to help implement the government's buffer zone regulations

3. PROGRESS

In DHR, following an assessment of the situation and the local people's views and interests, a one year follow-up program to continue, consolidate and strengthen the programs carried out by the project between February 1997-October 1998 was implemented through the direct supervision of the reserve warden. Project equipment was handed over to the warden by the former project field officer and a two-roomed office has been set up in the premises of the reserve headquarters and a solar light system installed. A bank account has also been opened for the project in Baglung. In order to assess the existing condition of the community-based organizations established by the project, all the 4 VDCs in the project area were visited and a baseline survey conducted by the DHR staff.

In SPNP, despite the Maoist attack in Dunai in September 2000, the planned activities are going on smoothly. The major achievements of the project during this reporting period are as follows:

3.1 Community Natural Resource Management

3.1.1. Formation of Buffer Zone Users' Committees:

During this reporting period, buffer zone users' committees have been formed in Dolphu and Kimri VDCs of Mugu district with the cooperation of Rara National Park. The project is trying to have a working relation with these committees through Rara National Park. There are now a total of 17 BZUCs in SPNP, 15 in 9 VDCs of Dolpa and 2 in 2 VDCs of Mugu. The following table illustrates the profile of the BZUCs formed in Mugu district.

Table 1: Buffer zone users' committees formed in Mugu district

SN	BZUC	VDC	Wards	# HHs	M	F	Total	Animals
1	Chhanyanath	Dolphu	1 to 9	122	332	306	629	1175
2	Rimbuche Gumba	Kimri	1 to 9	142	418	452	870	2013

3.1.2 Community Forest Users' Groups Formation and Support:

Detailed socio-economic and forest inventory surveys have been completed to prepare the forest operational plans of 6 CFUGs in SPNP. Data is being analyzed and the results are being compiled. The new operational plans will follow the model developed by BSP/New ERA for EFEA project areas. Once these plans are submitted to the park and approved, CFUGs will be legalized and handed over to respective users through the local BZUC. The following table contains detailed information of the 6 CFUGs in SPNP.

Table 2: Community forest users' groups in SPNP

SN	CFUG Name and Address	Area (ha.)	# HHs	F	M	Total population
1	Bikram Shahi Maharaj, Tripurakot VDC 1, 2 & 9	226.8	132	309	335	644
2	Dudhkundali, Rimi VDC, Majhgaon	1326	134	283	264	547
3	Samling, Rimi VDC, Chaunrikot	925	28	90	100	190
4	Sunoulo Rani Mahila, Kaigaon VDC, Kaigaon	54	48	135	135	270
5	Maluwa Himal, Kaigaon VDC, Thapagaon	465.2	55	177	160	337
6	Himali, Kaigaon VDC, Hurikot	573.2	44	111	125	236

Conflicts among villages regarding boundry, use rights, ownership and the selection of executive members took months to be resolved. Such problems are not immediately apparent to outsiders but tend to arise when the actual work begins. The District Development Council (DDC) of Dolpo and local political and community leaders actively contributed to resolving these conflicts. With the completion of the social and technical aspects, the documents will be finalized and submitted to the concerned authorities.

In DHR, the warden conducted a series of meetings and discussions with the District Forest Office (DFO) of Baglung and Myagdi districts for the formation of CFUGs and preparation of operational plans. The project has requested the DFOs of Baglung and Myagdi to form 2 CFUGs with operational plans in Burtibang and Takam. The concerned range posts will submit the necessary documents for this process to the project in the next month.

3.1.3 Community Nursery and Plantation:

A new agreement for nursery operation has been signed with Trimuli Sisters' Group of Kaigaon VDC Ward # 8 and 9. The group has fenced the nursery area and prepared the land for the seeds to be sown in nursery beds this summer.

Out of the 230 seedlings of *Salix* planted in May 2000 by the Trimuli Sisters' Group of Thapagaon, Kaigaon VDC, 198 have survived and are growing very well. With this success, the group is planning to plant more seedlings in other areas.

The community plantation started in 1998 by the Ralli Sisters' Group has 80 percent of the seedlings in good condition. Similarly, the plantation started in 1997 in Ruma is also growing well with 60 percent survival of the seedlings.

Community plantations were carried out at two sites in Saldang VDC in upper Dolpo in May 2000. During a supervision visit in September, project staff found 70 *Salix* stumps surviving at the Namdo plantation out of the 100 planted, and 40 *Salix* surviving at the Kirathang plantation out of the 50 planted. Both the plantation sites in Namdo and Kirathang have stone wall fence.

In the nurseries managed by the CFUGs, most of the seedlings are ready to be planted in the coming rainy season. Communities would select plantation sites and bio fence them during this winter. Table 3 has details of the community nurseries.

Table 3: Community nurseries

SN	CFUG / Place	# Seedlings	Types of seedlings
1	Himali CFUG, Ralli, Tripurakot -3	7,500	Salla, Khote salla, Bakaino, Dalechuk, Ipil-Ipil
2	Bandevi CFUG, Ruma, Tripurakot -5, 6	3,365	Salla, Khote salla, Bakaino, Dalechuk, Ipil-Ipil, Thingre salla
3	Manathan Nursery Magmt. Com. Pahada -1, 2	5,254	Salla, Bakaino, Dalechuk, Ipil-Ipil, molases grass, Stylo
4	Buddh Nursery, Rassi, Tripurakot-7, 8	376	Salla, Khote salla, Bakaino, Ipil-Ipil
	Total seedlings	16,495	

Eco clubs are also managing small nurseries in their school compound. The objective is to promote a 'green' campaign among students and provide them with hands on skills in plantation and nursery management. Table 4 has the details on the eco clubs managed by schools.

Table 4: Eco club nurseries:

SN	Eco club / Place	# Seedlings	Types of seedlings
1	Jyiti Primary School, Ruma, Tripurakot- 5, 6	215	Salla, Khote salla, Bakaino
2	Saraswoti High Schiil, Dunai	60	Salla
3	Dunai Boarding School, Dunai	109	Ipil-Ipil
	Total seedlings	924	

A nursery at the Crystal Mountain School in Dho at an altitude of 4,200 metres in the trans-Himalayan vegetation zone has been attempted. Seeds of high altitude pines did not germinate. If the trial plantation of *Salix spp.* of the last summer is successful, more seedlings will be planted in that area.

The trial on bio fencing carried out last summer with **ketuki** (agave) plants in the Patihalna community plantation has become a success. The project and the community have found such fencing to be less expensive, long lasting and environmentally suitable. Such fencing will be replicated in other plantation sites.

The community nursery managed by Ban Devi CFUG in Ruma is growing 1200 seedlings of **dalechuk** (*Hippophae rhamnoides*), 1500 of **gobre salla** (*Tsuga dumosa*), 1000 of wild olive (*Olea ferruginea*), and 800 of **dhupi salla** (*Cupressus torulosa*).

The three community plantation sites have become successful demonstration plots Dolpa. In a plantation site just below Ruma village, the survival rate is more than 80 percent and nearby in Rasi village, it is 70 percent, and in Patihalna plot, it is 50 percent.

3.1.4. Cultivation of Medicinal Plants:

Selected medicinal plants have been planted in the pastureland of Ruma, park post in Toizam and above Pugmo village. Table 5 has the details of the plots in these sites. **Bhutle** (*Nardostachys grandiflora*), **atis** (*Delphinium himalayi*) **katuko** (*Picrorhiza scrophulariiflora*), **nirbisi** (*Parnassia nubicola*), **hathijara** (*Dactylorhiza hatagirea*) and **samayo** (*Valeriana wallichii*) have been cultivated. Comparisons between naturally growing and cultivated plants on growth, viability and yield are ongoing. A community monitoring system has been designed to record growth and death for each plant species, as well as general conditions such as bearing of fruits and flowers, and yield after harvesting. Monitoring is ongoing and takes place twice a month.

Cultivation of medicinal plants by the amchis (traditional doctors) in the compound of the traditional health care centre (THCC) has not been successful. The amchis will be provided assistance for further attempts to cultivate selected species.

Table 5: Medicinal plants cultivation sites in Ruma, Toizam and Pungmo

Plant Name	No. of plot in Ruma	No. of living plant	Remarks
1. Bhutle	15	6,430	Planted in July '98
2. Hathijara	9	881	„ „
3. Nirbisi	3	700	„ „
4. Samayo	6	834	„ „
5. Katuki	2	215	„ „
Plant Name	No. of plot in Toizam	No. of living plant	Remarks
1. Bhutle	5	350	Planted in July '99
2. Hathijara	2	230	„ „
3. Nirbisi	2	200	„ „
4. Samayo	3	375	„ „
5. Katuki	2	150	„ „
Plant Name	No. of plot in Pungmo	No. of living plant	Remarks
1. Bhutle	15	550	Planted in July '99

3.2. Increasing Women's Participation

3.2.1. Literacy Classes:

In close coordination with the District Education Office and the Non-Formal Education Centre of the Ministry of Education, 10 basic literacy classes have been successfully completed. The books required for these literacy classes were provided free of cost by the Non-Formal Education Centre. The project staff and facilitators conducted the final test in which out of 182 candidates enrolled, 140 passed the test. (See Table 6.) Among the successful candidates, about 60 percent could easily read and write while 40 percent are weak in writing and mathematics.

The villages where the literacy classes were held are in the remotest areas where almost all the women are illiterate and do not understand Nepali. Since the text-books are in Nepali and most facilitators cannot always fully explain the subject matter in the local dialect, the women face problems in understanding the lessons.

Table 6: Details of literacy classes:

SN		Name of facilitator	Total enroll	Exam attend	Total passed
1	Saldang VDC – 3 Karang	Mr. Lakpa Gurung	20	17	16
2	Saldang VDC - 5 & 6	Mr. Gore B. Gurung	20	18	17
3	Saldang VDC - & 7 Namdo	Mr. Sunla Rokaya	17	15	12
4	Saldang VDC – 8 Rapa	Ms. T. K. Rokaya	15	13	11
5	Vijer VDC – Vijer	Mr. Kyalsa Baiji	11	11	7
6	Dho VDC – Dho	Mr. Rudra Gurung	28	22	21
7	Dho VDC – Sipcho	Mr. Min B.K.	16	13	13
8	Dho VDC – Takyu	Mr. Palzang Gurung	30	23	23
9	Phoksundo VDC- 5	Mr. Suka Gurung	13	9	9
10	Raa VDC- Raktang	Ms. Devi Karki	12	11	11
	Total		182	152	140

3.2.2. Stipend to Girl Students:

In Dunai Boarding School, 4 girl students from the poorest families of Phoksundo VDC and 1 girl student from a poor blacksmith's family of Tripurakot VDC are receiving stipends. The girl from Tripurakot who initially was not willing to stay at the school has now done very well in her examination. However, the girls from Phoksundo did not appear for their final examination because after the Maoist attack in Dunai in September 2000, they feared a second attack and returned home without consulting the school. After talks with their parents and the school authority, the girls will be given a chance to appear in a re-examination when the school reopens in April 2001.

Crystal Mountain Boarding School and Shelri Himal Boarding School are provided with grants to cover the cost of school uniform and books of all the students of grade V and I. These two schools do not charge the students any fees. Upon discussions with communities and school authorities regarding stipends, it was decided that since all the students are poor and cannot afford the additional costs of attending school, they would be provided uniform and books to encourage them to attend school regularly (See Table 7).

Table 7: Students receiving stipends

SN	Name of School	Boy	Girl	Total	Remarks
1	Tapiriza Boarding School, Phoksundo	-	5	5	Standard II
2	Dunai Boarding School, Dunai	-	5	5	Standard V
3	Crystal Mountain Boarding School, Dho	6	1	7	Standard V
4	Shelri Himal Boarding School, Saldang	12	13	25	Standard I
	Total	17	24	42	

In DHR, 10 girls from Classes 3-10 received scholarships from the project during this reporting period. The scholarship included school fees and books and other educational materials. The recipients were girls from poor families and backward castes. In order to make the process of selecting candidates a fair and transparent one, a scholarship guideline has been developed and submitted to the WWF Nepal Program Office.

3.2.3. Saving and Credit Activities:

The sisters' groups are regularly collecting fixed cash contributions from each member. The main source of saving is their regular contribution and a one-time matching fund from the project. Other sources are fines collected from local people who break social norms, donations received from outsiders, cultural shows, picnics, etc. Twenty sisters' groups are involved in saving and credit schemes (See Table 8). Besides, they are involved in income generation, primary health care, hotel management, campsite management, water mill (**ghatta**) for grinding, community plantation, nursery and agroforestry management and promoting social welfare.

Table 8: Details of saving and credit activities

	Name of the group	Address	Cash in Bank	Loan	Total	Remarks
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1	Rigmo	Phoksundo VDC-1 to 4	75,000	10,000	85,000	
2	Pugmo	Phoksundo VDC -6 to 9	65,000	2,200	67,200	
3	Ryanchi	Phoksundo VDC - 5	0	2,100	2,100	No match fund
4	Tripura Mahila	Tripurakot – 1, 2	47,550	-	47,550	
5	Radha	Tripurakot-2	1,200		1,200	New group
6	Sundariganga	Tripurakot-3	41,623	-	41,623	
7	Himali	Tripurakot-4	17,707	31,000	48,707	
8	Tripura	Tripurakot -5 & 6,	41,375	4,450	45,825	
9	Dalit	Tripurakot- 6 LoharTole	15,000	24,000	39,000	
10	Buddha	Tripurakot – 7 & 8	6,426	52,000*	6,426	Invested Ghatta
11	Mukuteshwor	Tripurakot-9	13,464	25,000*	13,464	Invested Ghatta
12	Bhagawati	Rimi –1 & 2	35,669	10,786	46,455	
13	Kasturi Danfe	Rimi –7 & 8	27,000	7,823	34,832	
14	Suwakoti	Rimi VDC -9	35,000	10,908	45,908	
15	Dhaulapura	Rimi VDC-9 Lohar Tole	17,900	604	18,504	
16	Anigulmo	Kaigaon – 1 & 4	31,000	11,922	42,922	
17	Bhagawati	Kaigaon – 5 & 7	29,000	12,900	41,900	
18	Trimuli	Kaigaon - 8 & 9	35,000	12,257	47,257	
19	Chhala	Pahada – 1, 2	-	38,000	38,000	
20	Laligunras	Pahada -9	7,500	4,850	12,350	No match fund
		Total	534,914	183,800	718,714	

* Non-refundable investment made in improved water-mill for grinding.

DHR staff monitored the 8 mothers' groups previously formed by the project in Bobang, Addhikarichour, Lulang and Gurjakhani VDCs. Some of these groups are actively carrying out their activities.

3.2.4. Tripura Herbal Processing Company:

Tripura, Himali and Sundariganga Sisters' Group Tripurakot VDC have bought shares in the BSP supported Tripura Herbal Processing Company amounting to Rs. 21, 000, Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 10,000 respectively. The company will provide 100 percent matching fund for shares purchased by these groups. Once shares are sold to over 25 groups and NGOs, a general meeting will be held to form a board of executives among shareholders.

The company was started in 1998 but operation was delayed due to technical and other management reasons. The construction of the factory building has not been completed yet. The machines have been installed for processing locally available medicinal and aromatic plant resources.

3.3. Environmental Awareness Program

3.3.1. Study Tour:

A 14-day study tour was organized by the project for the members of eco clubs in December 2000. The objective was to expose them to various environmental activities carried out elsewhere in Nepal and to encourage them to adapt these in their own areas. Of the 20 members participating in the tour, there were 18 eco club members from seven eco clubs, including 5 girls, a teacher and a gamescout from SPNP. The group has observed various activities of eco clubs and other CBOs of the Royal Bardia and Chitwan National Park, Kathmandu and Pokhara. They have acquired knowledge on various aspects of activities, exchanged ideas with members of groups and local people. The group has also participated in a cultural program in the Tharu Cultural Center, Chitwan. The group performed a traditional Dolpo cultural program for the audience. The participants are very excited and motivated to initiate more effective activities in a sustainable way.

Study tours have become an effective means for motivating participants to initiate new activities and raising their confidence that these activities can be implemented with motivation and commitment. Participants are also able to get some technical as well as procedural ideas to carry out activities.

The warden monitored the eco clubs in 4 schools previously formed by the project in DHR. A general guideline for the eco clubs has been developed and a lesson plan is being developed to promote environmental education in the schools.

3.3.2. Environmental Activities in Shey:

In collaboration with Crystal Mountain and Dunai Boarding School, the project organized a 5-day environmental awareness program during the Shey Festival in August 2000. People from all over Dolpo as well as from Mustang, Mugu, Jumla, Kathmandu and even Tibet gathered for the festival held once every 12 years.

Forty-five students from eco clubs, 9 teachers and an NMCP staff demonstrated garbage management techniques, environmental and cultural songs, traditional dances, dramas and display of arts. The main messages were “Save Nature, Save Culture” and “No Green, No Life.” The people were very impressed with the students’ effort to transmit environmental messages using the local language, traditional dance and music. The festival was a good opportunity to hold environmental activities for such a large target gathering. The management committee of the festival had taken the students’ program as part of their activities and provided them the opportunity to perform during the main program of the festival. The eco club members approached high lamas during the “wang” (blessing ceremony) and offered them green cloth strips with environmental messages written in Tibetan, English and Nepali instead of the traditional “khada” (ceremonical scarfs) and urged them to work for natural and cultural conservation.

3.3.3 Rubbish pit construction:

Three rubbish pits were constructed for the community monasteries of Saldang VDC. Villagers gather at these monasteries during common festivals that last 3 to 15 days. Since the monastery premises become very dirty without garbage disposal facilities, upon the request of the respective lamas of Jhowa and Lungtok Dhargyeling monasteries, a rubbish pit was constructed for each monastery.

3.3.4 Toilet Construction:

The project provided support for the construction of a pit latrine in Loharbada Primary School of Rimi VDC so as to improve the hygiene at the school and to motivate the villagers to do the same.

3.4 Eco-tourism Development

3.4.1 Alternative Energy:

NMCP has supplied 55 PV home solar light systems in Phoksundo and Saldang VDC. In Phoksundo VDC, more than 63 households, shops and hotels have received 1 to 4 solar lights. Most families have got a solar set with 3 lights in a sharing basis for two families. In Saldang VDC Ward No. 5, village of Thinley Lhundup Lama, the main actor of the film “Caravan,” 25 families have received solar light systems with funds received from WWF-France.

Due to the recent rise in the price of kerosene oil, there has been increased pressure upon NMCP to supply solar light systems in the area. A litre of kerosene oil costs Rs.120 at Dunai and is easily not available. The solar lights have become popular because they are easy to maintain, smoke free and economically beneficial. With the promotion of solar light systems in the area, the project aims to reduce the cutting of green trees for lighting.

A total of 50 improved stoves have been provided to households in Ringmo and Pungmo villages of Phoksundo VDC as a means to reduce fuelwood consumption and improve health status through the reduction of smoke in the houses.

3.4.2 Agroforestry:

Out of the 7 agroforestry nurseries, 5 are managed by sisters’s groups and 2 by individuals. NMCP has provided seeds and technical support to the sisters’s groups who have managed community land for nurseries and vegetable farming. The nurseries have supplied seedlings of various vegetables for collective as well as private vegetable farming. Income from the sale of the collective farming will be saved in the regular collective savings fund. Table 9 illustrates the number of seedlings planted and the income generated from the sale of vegetables.

Table 9: Nurseries managed by the sisters’ groups

SN	Place	# seedlings	Types of seedlings	Vegetable sold
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1	Sundariganga Womens Nursery, Ralli, Tripurakot- 3	12,280	11 varieties of vegetables growing with 450 chest-nut	Rs.1,285
2	Mukuteshwar Womens Nursery, Karelikandha, Tripurakot- 9	3,800	11 varieties of vegetables growing	Rs.835
3	Laligurans Womens Nursery, Khaliban, Pahada – 9	5,600	11 varieties of vegetables, salla, thingre salla, bakaino, ipil	Rs.545
4	Majhgaon Womens Nursery	3,400	11 varieties of vegetables salla, bakaino, ipil	
5	Jhankot Nursery, Jhyankot, Pahada-7	6,700	11 varieties of vegetables growing with 450 chest-nut	
6	Manamal Budha , Private	476	8 varieties of vegetables growing	Rs.900
7	Sarad Lama, Private	2,600	8 varieties of vegetables growing	
	Total	34,856		Rs.3,565

In DHR, the project has coordinated with the District Agriculture Office and purchased 1000 seedlings of apple for distribution among the local communities at a subsidized rate.

3.5. Applied Research (People and Plant Initiative Activities)

3.5.1 Traditional Health Care Center (THCC):

The THCC inaugurated in June 2000 aims to provide health care services to the local people and promote the sustainable use of medicinal plants. The income received by the amchis in the form of donations and fees from patients is illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10: Income generated by the THCC from June-December

SN	Source of income	Amount	% of income	Remarks
1	Medicine sold	Rs. 9,730	49.20	Total patients 245
2	Donations	Rs. 10,046	50.80	
	Total	Rs. 19,776	100.00	Deposited in the bank

In the past six months, 245 patients have been treated at the THCC. This number could grow in the coming years once the THCC is more established and the amount of medicines available is increased. Donations could be a viable source of income generation for the THCC once its visitor centre and herbarium are developed. Donation books have been provided to the THCC staff so that the contributions are properly accounted for and made use of.

3.5.2 Monitoring the Populations of Selected Medicinal Plants:

Jatamansi (*Nardostachys grandiflora*) and **kutki** (*Picrorhiza scrophulariiflora*) were selected for monitoring their populations, harvesting and regeneration patterns. These species were selected for the research due to their overharvesting for trade and also due to their importance in local healthcare. The local people and park staff are being trained in ethnobotanical field methods as an effort toward building the capacity of people involved in the management of plant resources.

3.5.3 Continuation of the Applied Research Component

The applied research component of the project under the People and Plants Initiative will be continued until December 2000 based on an evaluation carried out in September 2000.

3.6 Protected Area Planning

3.6.1 Formation of Snow Leopard Conservation Committees:

Five snow leopard conservation committees have been formed in prime habitat areas of Saldang and Vijer VDCs. They are in Vijer, Karang, Saldang, Namdo and Komang. Each committee records the number of animals killed by

snow leopard in their areas. The project has provided a format to record the details of the losses so that the number of animals killed each year, the prime areas for prey, and the time and season can be monitored to minimize damage.

This committee also educates the communities on the importance of the snow leopard in the high mountain ecosystem and tries to stop retaliatory killings. In November 2000, a committee member prevented the retaliatory killing of a snow leopard and her cubs. In situations where high losses are involved, the committee members are finding it difficult to stop the retaliatory killings. To mitigate such losses, the committee members feel that a fund should be set up to provide relief to the owners.

3.6.2 Preparation of a Draft of the DHR Regulations

DHR is the only hunting reserve in Nepal. It aims to conserve biodiversity through sport hunting without discouraging sustainable resource use by local people. However, DHR does not have a separate regulation other than the one used by the mountain national parks. The project has conducted a buffer zone boundary survey and prepared a draft regulation after consultations with the local people and concerned authorities.

3.7 Other Activities:

3.7.1 Field Observation of Project Progress:

A team of high level officials from the USAID, DNPWC and WWF Nepal Program visited Dolpa from August 22-September 3, 2000. The team was briefed on the progress of the project and observed activities such as the water mill, camp sites, saving and credit schemes, alternative energy activities (solar and improved stove), hotel management, forest management etc. The team also visited villages and monasteries and interacted with lamas, village heads, and members of sisters's groups and eco clubs. At the Shey festival, the team had the opportunity to observe environmental activities organized by the project through the eco clubs and interact with high lamas, local leaders, women and youth on various aspects of the project.

3.7.2 Sustainable Tourism Plan

In August, a team of tourism experts from the DNPWC, SNV and WWF Nepal Program visited the field to assess ecotourism development opportunities in SPNP and its buffer zone and tourist access routes. The team met with DDC and VDC representatives and other stakeholders (hotel owners, lamas, amchis) to draft a sustainable tourism plan for the area.

3.7.3 Field Visit of World Heritage Team:

In September, a team of experts from the World Heritage Commission visited Shey Phoksundo National Park in relation to HMG/N's proposal to enlist the Shey Phoksundo National Park as world heritage. The team was comprised of natural and cultural experts from IUCN, ICOMOS, representatives from the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, DNPWC, USAID, SPNP and NMCP. The team observed various natural and cultural sites and interacted with the local people, including lamas and others. They also observed and inquired about the ethnobotanical (PPI) activities, especially medicinal plants and the traditional Tibetan amchi system of medicine practiced in the area.

3.7.4 KARUNA Management Workshop:

The Project Manager of NMCP participated in the third workshop on management held from August 7-9, 2000 in Kathmandu. This workshop was built on learning from previous workshops and new commitments were put forward by the groups as breakthrough projects.

4. PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Increasing Maoist Activities

After their successful attack in Dunai, district headquarters, the Maoist activities in the VDCs of lower Dolpa have increased. The governmental security forces are concentrated at Dunai while the rest of the villages in the vicinity are under Maoist influence. Maoists frequently come to the village where the NMCP field office is located and meet our

staff in the field. Although the project has not had any problems with them, caution needs to be exercised in the future should their stance vis-à-vis the project should change. Once our ongoing activities are completed, we will be working through the CBOs in these VDCs and focusing more on upper Dolpo where we feel we have not been able to carry out many activities due to limited staff.

So far, the project has not received any threats from the Maoists. Yet we are cautious not to confront them and launch activities that are transparent and fully supported by the communities. According to the villagers, NMCP is viewed positively by the Maoists. However, field visits have been minimized in some villages until the situation improves.

4.2. Banking

The only bank in Dunai closed after the Maoist attack in September 2000 and reopened only in December 2000. It took weeks to restore and update lost documents. The project had to transfer cash from Kathmandu to carry out the activities in the field. The bank is now in operation although a lack of cash balance often delays the withdrawal of cash and thereby the implementation of programs.

5. CONCLUSION

During this reporting period, the formation of BZUCs in SPNP has been completed with two BZUCs being formed in Mugu district. The buffer zone management council for SPNP has also been formed. Buffer zone development funds can be disbursed to users' committees after the approval of the operational plan of the buffer zone council. The community and school forest nurseries and the agroforestry nurseries are running smoothly. Ten literacy classes have been completed. Saving and credit schemes are continuing and community plantations are growing well. The applied research component of the project working on medicinal plants conservation and management will be continued for another four years to achieve concrete results from the ongoing activities. The environmental awareness program at the Shey Festival was successful in terms of demonstration for the large group of diverse people present. Project activities were viewed with encouragement by the high level authorities from the DNPWC, USAID and WWF. With the nomination for a World Heritage Site in process and with the ongoing work on preparing a sustainable tourism plan for SPNP, there is much potential for continuing the project beyond the current phase.

ANNEX 1: NMCP progress up to December 2000 as per USAID/N's Strategic Objectives Indicator Framework

<i>Strategic Objective 1: Increased Sustainable Production and Sale of Forest and High-Value Agricultural Products</i>	Unit	Source	DHR	SPNP	Remarks
Result Name : Increased Sustainable Production and Sale of Forest and Agricultural Products					
Indicator :					
1.4 Application rate of organic fertilizer	MT/Ha	Baseline	8.2	7.6	Compost
1.5 Plantations	ha.	Field report		3	
Result Name: 1.1 Expanded Market Participation					
Indicator:1.1.1 Farmers producing high value agricultural products	household	field report	100	200	fruit tree farming
1.1.2 New business started --off farm enterprises, tourist business, FBMEs	person	field report	79	400	
Result Name: 1. 2 Sustainable Management of the Productive Resource Base					
Indicator:					
1.2.1 Community forest users' groups formed with management plans	no.	field report	4	6	
1.2.3 Forest land handed to community	ha.	field report	376	380	
1.2.5 Buffer zone management users' committees formation	No	field report	-	17	
1.2.6 Rangeland management committee	no.	field report		3	
Strategic Objective 3: Increased Women's Empowerment					
Result Name: 3.1 Increased Women's Literacy					
Indicator:					
3.1.1 Women completing basic literacy	person	field report	240	276	
3.1.3 Stipend to girl student	person	field report	26	42	
Result Name: 3.2. Improved Legal Environment for Women					
Indicator: 3.2.1 Active women's saving and credit groups	groups	field report	5	20	
Result Name: 3.3 Strengthened Women's Economic Participation					
Indicator:					
3.3.1 Active loans to women	rupees	field report	144200	130000	
3.3.2 Women saving and credit groups members	person	field report	255	500	
3.2.4 Income generation from micro-ent.	rupees	field report	NA	350000	70 women