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***FORESTS OF THE LOWER MEKONG
ANNUAL REPORT
10/01/2006 - 09/30/2007***

for

World Wildlife Fund

October 1, 2007
Submitted by:
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ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIT	Asian Institute of Technology
BCI	Biodiversity Corridors Initiative of the Asian Development Bank
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CET	Commune Extension Team
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CPA	Community Protected Area
CR	Community Representative
CRES	Center for Research and Environmental Studies
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (Vietnam)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EVN	Electricity of Viet Nam
FA	Forestry Administration (MAFF, Cambodia)
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FiA	Fisheries Administration
FPD	Forest Protection Department
GMP	Greater Mekong Programme of the World Wildlife Fund
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion Programme of the Asian Development Bank
HUAF	Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IPC	International Policy Committee
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
LMDFE	Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (Vietnam, Cambodia)
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOE	Ministry of Environment, Cambodia
MoE	Ministry of the Environment, Vietnam
MOM	Management Orientation Monitoring System
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Vietnam)
MOSAIC	Management of Strategic Areas for Integrated Conservation
MPF	Mondulkiri Protected Forest
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Study and Action Plan
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
PA	Protected Area
PCPU	Provincial Conservation Planning Unit
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PLUP	Participatory Land Use Planning
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
PPWS	Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
PRDC	Provincial Rural Development Committee
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forest Training Center for Asia
SEA	Socio-economic Assessment
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization

SWAP	Srepok Wilderness Area Project
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
TFF	Trust Fund for Forests
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VFTN	Vietnam Forest and Trade Network
VTV	Vietnam Television
WB	World Bank
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WEMB	Wildlife Ecotourism Management Board
WGE	Working Group on Environment
WTO	World Trade Organization

Forests of the Lower Mekong

Project Overview

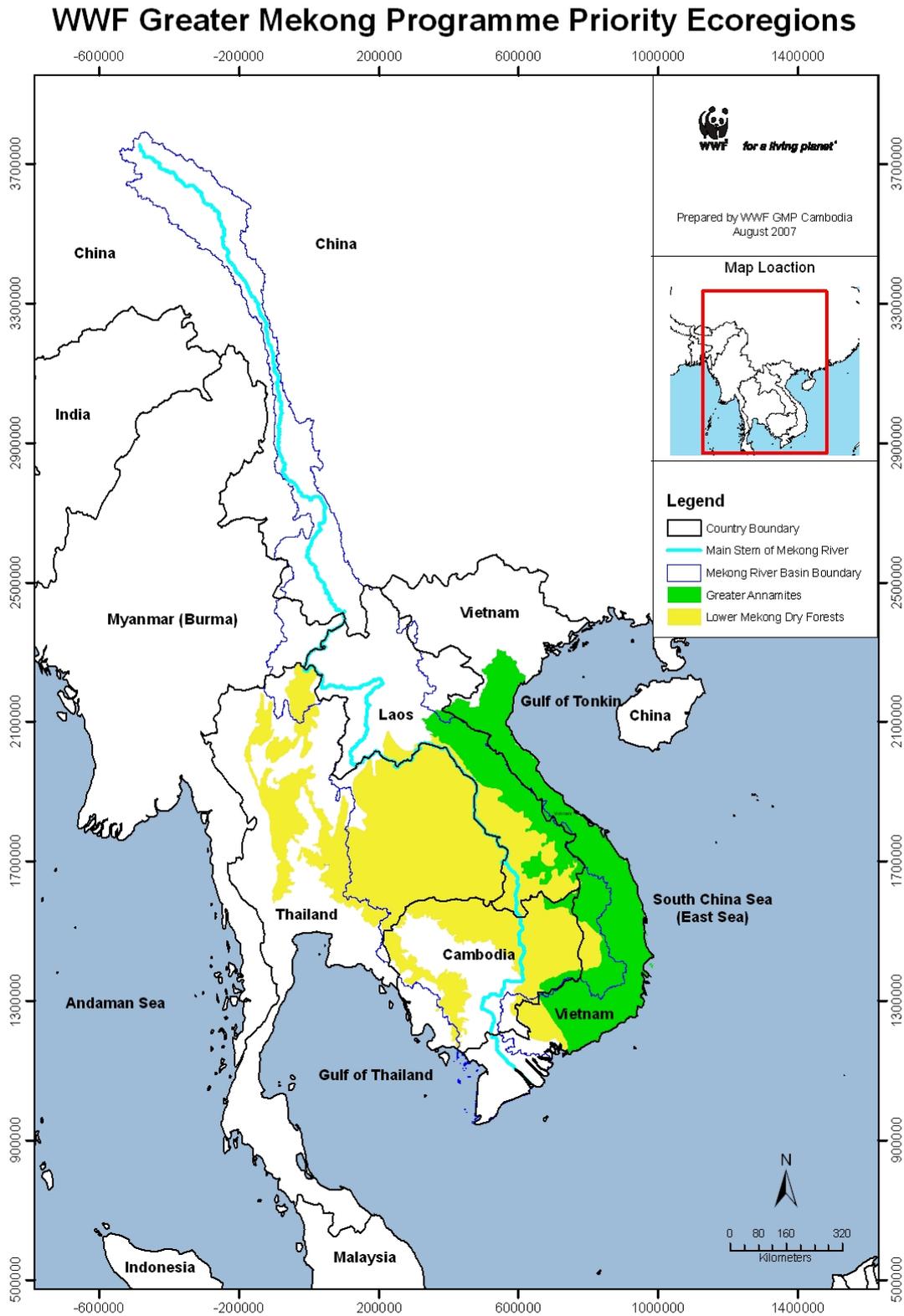
Description of Site

The Forests of the Lower Mekong refers to an ecoregion complex consisting of the Greater Annamites, the Central Lower Mekong Dry Forests, the Lower Mekong Floodlands and the Cardamom Mountains. All four of these are Global 200 ecoregions comprising an incredibly high diversity of habitats including deciduous dipterocarp forests, moist evergreen forests, karst limestone forests, open grasslands and savannas, upland plateaus, wetlands, and pristine riparian environments. WWF Greater Mekong Programme¹ focuses on two of these forest ecoregions as key priorities, the Greater Annamites and the Central Lower Mekong Dry Forests, both of which support diverse, abundant, and rare wildlife. A remarkable indication of the unique status of these ecoregions is the fact that six new mammal species—the saola, large-antlered muntjac, Roosevelt’s muntjac, Annamite muntjac, and the Annamite striped rabbit—have been described in the Greater Annamites ecoregion alone within the last ten years.

These ecoregions are home to other mammal species of global conservation significance. These include the kouprey, Javan rhinoceros, tiger, Asian elephant, and douc and Francois’ langurs. The region also contains important bird species, such as Edward’s pheasant, sarus crane, giant ibis, and white-shouldered ibis, as well as myriad species of reptiles (such as the Siamese crocodile—the rarest crocodile in the world), amphibians, fish, invertebrates, and plants. The aquatic biodiversity of the region is outstanding, with over 1300 species of fish catalogued so far, and recognized as the second most diverse river system in the world. The forests and associated ecosystems also have significant watershed value with westward drainages flowing into the lower Mekong basin, and eastern drainages flowing through Vietnam into the South China Sea.

The Forests of the Lower Mekong are home to hundreds of thousands of upland and lowland human communities who have cultivated the lands, utilized the water resources, and subsisted off the forest products for hundreds of years. In both Cambodia and Vietnam, minority peoples—many of whom practice shifting cultivation—live mainly in the upland areas. The majority of ethnic groups in each country are traditionally lowland wet rice cultivators, though migration into the less densely populated uplands is occurring in some areas, most notably the central highlands of Vietnam.

¹ WWF Greater Mekong Programme came together last year with the merging of the WWF Indochina Program Office and WWF Thailand Country Office. The headquarters is based in Hanoi with country offices in each of the lower Mekong countries - Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam - and staff based in Yunnan Province, China.



Threats

- Commercial and unregulated logging is reducing primary and secondary forest cover.
- Hunting for local consumption—food, medicine and curio appeal—and for the wildlife trade is seriously impacting a wide range of species, and is exacerbated by increased human activities and shrinking habitat.
- Illegal trade in wildlife products, timber, and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) is increasing because of market demand, widening income disparities between rural and urban areas, and inefficient law enforcement.
- Habitat loss and fragmentation, primarily through land conversion for agriculture and logging, is creating increased pressure on many forest species.
- Commercialization of agriculture and a transition away from subsistence farming is decreasing the sustainability of land use practices and leading to agricultural expansion.
- Infrastructure development, such as proposed hydroelectric schemes and irrigation projects (which have the potential to flood habitat, change drainage patterns, and alter fisheries) and road construction, are opening access to natural resources in remote areas.
- Gold mining is responsible for direct destruction of natural habitat, while the associated processing of ore causes water and soil pollution that kills wildlife, degrades or destroys aquatic habitat, and poisons local people. These extractive industries also encourage in-migration that alters economic and social relationships, usually to the detriment of sustainable customary resource management systems.

These threats are all exacerbated by increasing population pressure, the resource demands of industrializing societies, uncoordinated policies and regulations, and more recently, an economic downturn that has drained government coffers and decreased family livelihood options.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Increasing cooperation within the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), the regional economic plan designed by the Asian Development Bank, continues to drive national development strategies, the impact of which is increasingly more evident in the significant growth in regional investment in the agriculture, minerals, energy, and infrastructure sectors. The GMS is promoting economic activity and associated investments in infrastructure development, to be concentrated along three “economic corridors” that crisscross the subregion (from Mawlamyine, Myanmar to Da Nang, Vietnam; from Kunming, China to Bangkok, Thailand; and from Bangkok, Thailand to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam). Recognizing the potential negative impacts of economic corridor development on biodiversity and natural resources, the GMS has also established a Working Group on Environment (WGE), comprised principally of senior government officials from environment and natural resource ministries. WWF is also a participant in the WGE.

In FY07, WWF Greater Mekong Programme responded to the emergence of regional threats and opportunities posed by GMS, by developing strategies for responses at the same regional scale, addressing mainly the issues of Infrastructure, Agriculture, Timber Trade and Wildlife Trade. In addition, we have added strategies to address Climate Change and Mining – key drivers of biodiversity loss in the region. The overall goal of WWF’s Greater Mekong Program (GMP) remains unchanged: *to conserve and sustainably manage biodiversity and natural resources of the Mekong region in order to ensure ecological integrity, to protect the natural assets base for the poor, and as a basis for poverty alleviation.* WWF GMP pursues a twofold strategy: site level

interventions address threats that are specific to the two countries (Vietnam and Cambodia) and interventions that address threats comprehensively at a regional scale. At the site level, threats are primarily driven by poverty and lack of enforcement. At the regional level, the threats are primarily driven by unsustainable and environmentally damaging economic development plans or market forces, exacerbated by conflict and lack of coordination among various institutions.

The key objective of the GMP at the regional level is to transform the region's most dominant forces threatening biodiversity in the Mekong, towards more sustainable and healthier trends. This will be achieved through international cooperation on illegal wildlife trade, regional coordination on infrastructure and hydropower planning, regional promotion of payment for environment services, and capacity building for environmental leadership. Initiatives include:

- Economic valuation of environmental services as a tool to influence resource use decision-making;
- Regional agreements and collaboration on international timber trade and wildlife trade;
- EIA adherence (coordination in dam planning and implementation, preventing migration);
- Coordination in GMS planning and construction of roads and dams.

At the site level, GMP pursues the following objectives:

- Community based forest and freshwater management;
- Integrated river basin management;
- Reforestation;
- Anti-poaching and prevention of wildlife trade;
- Community development and empowerment;
- Improved enforcement and governance.

The main sites are Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue Provinces of Central Vietnam (Greater Annamites Ecoregion) and Mondulhiri Province in Cambodia (Dry Forests Ecoregion).

Greater Annamites

Collaborators/Partners

Government of Vietnam

- Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)
- Electricity of Vietnam (EVN)
- Provincial People's Committees (PPCs) of Quang Nam, Hue, Quang Tri and Lam Dong
- Forest Protection Departments at the province level (FPDs)

Business

- The Coca Cola Company
- MARS
- CARGIL
- OLAM
- Hai's Café

Educational Institutions

- Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)
- Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAF)
- Vietnam National University

International Organizations

- World Bank (WB)
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- SNV Netherlands Development Organization

International NGOs

- International Policy Committee (IPC)
- Winrock International
- International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)
- Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- WildAid
- BirdLife
- CORRIN
- TRAFFIC
- Center for Research and Environmental Studies (CRES)

SUMMARY: Period 10/01/06-09/30/07*Greater Annamites Highlights*

- Provincial Governments agreed to two new protected areas (Saola Nature Reserve in Thua Thien Hue Province and Saola landscape in Quang Nam Province) and a 13,500-hectare extension to Bach Ma National Park, which directly contribute to saola conservation. As part of the process, communities had been consulted and they agreed to the extension of Bach Ma National Park.
- A team of scientists from WWF and Conservation International discovered the world's largest known population of grey-shanked doucs in the Greater Annamites Ecoregion, increasing the chances that the endangered monkey can be saved from extinction. The grey-shanked douc (*Pygathrix cinerea*) is one of the world's 25 most endangered primates; its presence has been recorded only in five central Vietnamese provinces. The Quang Nam People's Committee has agreed to the gazettelement of this region as a new protected area (see also above).
- Working with ethnic groups, WWF established the first community based cocoa agro-forestry plot in the Southern Annamites. This was undertaken in partnership with ACDI/VOCA - a US based NGO with expertise in cocoa production, FSSIV and Touton.
- WWF established two field offices in the Southern Annamites: 1) The Bien Hoa office will focus on a WWF project on the reservoir and Dong Nai River flowing through the Dong Nai District; 2) The office in Bi Doup Nui Ba National Park will focus on working with communities in the buffer zone of the protected area.
- Law enforcement to deter wildlife trade was strengthened, including development of improved capacities in Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue Provinces, in addition to a provincial action plan for wildlife trade in Thua Thien Hue Province.
- In partnership with the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), the Centre for Biodiversity Conservation of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), the Vietnam National University of Hanoi, and the Institute for Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR), WWF conducted a landscape assessment of the distribution, status of and threats to the saola in the Hue-Quang Nam landscape.
- Communication outputs this year include: global media coverage on grey-shanked doucs and official endorsement of the 'saola landscape'; saola article in *Science* magazine; article in the *Wall Street Journal* on the Ho Chi Minh Highway and its socio-economic and conservation impacts; a BBC World Service documentary on the Central Annamites currently in production; a series of biodiversity reports and *Earth Observation and Geographic Information Toolkit* published under the Green Corridor project.

Results by Objective and Activity**Objective I.1: Protect, restore, and sustainably manage biodiversity elements of high scientific and economic value in the ecoregion**



Photograph: Training of rangers in camera-trapping for saola

WWF supported the National Forest Protection Department (FPD) in the completion of Provincial Saola Action Plans for saola conservation.

WWF assisted Government agencies to strengthen law enforcement to deter wildlife trade. Initiatives included development of improved capacities in Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue provinces, in addition to completing a provincial action plan for wildlife trade in Thua Thien Hue Province.

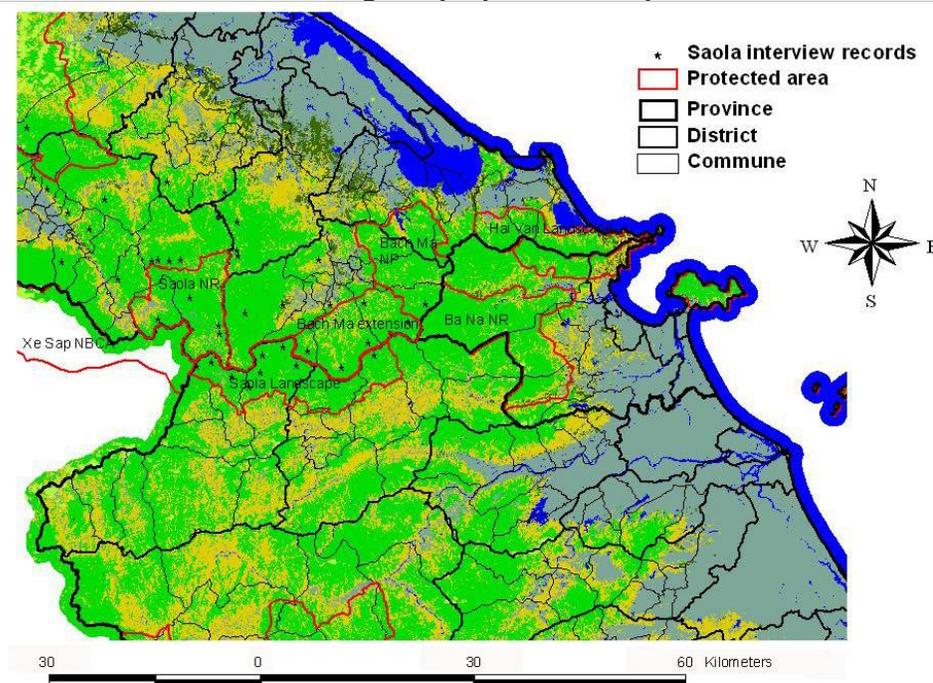
WWF trained Forest Rangers in two provinces in enforcement, mapping, forest restoration and awareness raising techniques.

WWF supported 'Village Protection Teams' in five communes in Quang Nam, including training of the commune rangers who coordinate these teams.

WWF maintained four primate (doucs and gibbons) and tiger prey monitoring grids in Hue and Quang Nam and is currently developing two additional grids in Quang Tri.

Activity I.1.2. Protect key sites in the Central Annamites:

Provincial Governments have agreed to two new protected areas (Saola Nature Reserve in Thua Thien Hue province and Saola landscape in Quang Nam province) and a 13,500-hectare extension to Bach Ma National Park, which directly contribute to saola conservation. As part of the process, communities were consulted, and they agreed to the extension of Bach Ma National Park. Provincial Government endorsement is due end of September 2007.

Figure 2. The distribution of existing and proposed new Special-Use Forests

Management plans for Bach Ma National Park including its new extension and for Tay Giang District Forest Protection Department (FPD) in Quang Nam Province using the same methods already employed in Song Thanh Nature Reserve and the Western Que Son Elephant Conservation Landscape (funded by USAID/MacArthur/USFWS) are currently being developed by the National Park Administration and FPD, with assistance from WWF.

The Quang Nam People's Committee has agreed to the gazettelement of Ngoc Linh Nature Reserve and the Elephant and Douc Conservation Area

The production of the initial monitoring report for the Central Annamites Landscape is delayed due to the delayed start of the BCI project. Development of the report is now planned to start in the second half of 2007.

WWF conducted a conservation evaluation of Thua Thien Hue Province which the provincial Government used in developing conservation strategies, including determining the location of Bach Ma National Park extension and the new Protected Area for the saola, revising forest types and developing conservation management plans for two Watershed Protection Areas, for the forests of Hue.

WWF is facilitating forest land allocation to communities on the Quang Nam side of the landscape as a continuation of activities ongoing for the last three years. Allocation of forest land has been conducted in one commune, and allocations are planned for four other communes by the provincial government. Due to the late start of the BCI project, the process is delayed, but it is hoped that by the end of 2007 all communes will have forest allocated.

WWF piloted four community forestry models on the Hue side of the landscape, facilitating development of community forest management plans and implementation of conservation-

orientated income generation schemes, including community-based ecotourism, rattan and tree nurseries, non-timber forest products, and a traditional Ta Oi weaving project.

Objective I.2. Mitigate the most urgent, broad scale pressures on biodiversity in the ecoregion

Activity I.2.1: Address immediate and apparent threats to biodiversity at the national and regional levels in the Greater Annamites

WWF carried out a study to look at the impacts of small scale mining within the Greater Annamites and Dry Forest ecoregions. In Vietnam, the study highlighted the fact that small scale, often illegal, mining, is most pervasive in the Central Annamites area, impacting on this critical landscape. Based on these findings WWF is currently developing a mining strategy. In addition to small scale mining, WWF has also begun to look at the potential impacts of large scale mining, such as bauxite. Mapping currently underway will provide sufficient information to decide how to move forward. International companies, such as BHP Biliton and Alcoa, have contacted WWF and are interested in working together. A mining review by WWF is about to begin in Quang Nam.

WWF's agriculture work has developed significantly over the past year, moving from discussions to implementation, with the first community cocoa agro-forestry project in Vietnam. Specifically ethnic communities have been targeted as partners in this project. The chosen area is critical within the overall southern Annamites landscape, not far from Cat Tien National Park. The government had allocated the area to the local communities who had planned to burn it to plant cashew and cassava. WWF is working with the district agricultural extensions offices and ACDI/VOCA – a US-based NGO with expertise in cocoa production in Vietnam. The planting just began in anticipation of the rainy season. So far there has been a small problem of termites and some concerns over the spacing of the trees, but overall progress is good.

To scale up the agricultural activities WWF is currently involved in a study to look at best management practices for sugar. One of the sites to examine this issue is in the Southern Annamites, though the focus is on the delta. Given the growth of cashew production and its impacts on the Southern Annamites (in particular Cat Tien National Park), WWF continues to look for support to work on more sustainable cashew production.

WWF Vietnam has been in discussions on a public-private sector partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Vietnam, Masterfoods, and the Dutch Government. The aim is to develop a joint program for cocoa development in Vietnam. At the World Cocoa Foundation, WWF in partnership with the Government of Vietnam made a presentation on sustainable cocoa production in Vietnam.

A large number of dams are planned for Quang Nam in the Central Annamites. Over the past year WWF has continued discussions with ADB and its consultants, to provide input into the Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments. Some of the information and results from these studies have highlighted several potential problems with the current hydropower plans. However, it is unclear how much ADB or the national partners are

taking WWF's views into account. Many of the decision makers are not WWF's traditional partners and WWF needs to rethink its strategy of engagement. WWF is currently in the process of carrying out an SEA to highlight the issues and to bring the key decision makers to the same table.

WWF completed a study of alternative energy options in Vietnam. This focused primarily on the potential for biofuels, but also provided a background on the current use of a range of different energy sources.

Objective I.3: Harness local, national, and international support for long-term conservation of the ecoregion

Activity I.3.1: Extend capacity to mobilize and manage large-scale conservation

WWF has established two field offices in the Southern Annamites:

1) The Bien Hoa office will focus on a WWF project on the reservoir and Dong Nai River flowing through the Dong Nai District. The goal of the project is to combat the growing problems of water pollution in Tri An Reservoir and the Lower Dong Nai River. Further deterioration of water quality will have major implications for the continued rapid economic growth of the area. To achieve this goal, the project will work with a range of stakeholders to encourage better environmental practices and hence to reduce the pollutants entering the reservoir and adjoining river.

2) The office in Bi Doup Nui Ba National Park will focus on working with communities in the buffer zone of the protected area. The project will deliver a comprehensive framework for the allocation of land and management of natural resources in the buffer zone of BDNB National Park, to indigenous communities. This will be a pivotal step in securing indigenous property rights, recognizing local institutions and re-enforcing social, environmental and economic benefits. The main activities include detailed participatory development of an allocation procedure and an adaptive mosaic of local management regimes to reflect the diversity of local institutions and aspirations. Three pilot sites will precede a provincial process to devolve large areas of government land to local community institutions by 2010. This three year project will therefore shape provincial capacity and policy, and harmonize with other models of forest land management in Vietnam

WWF was instrumental in organizing a national workshop on the plight of the Javan Rhino in Cattien National Park. WWF, in close collaboration with the park, put forward a strategy to help protect the Rhino and will continue to provide technical support to Cattien National Park. Funds will be sought to implement this.

Winrock currently has a large USAID-supported project in the Southern Annamites landscape, and they have asked WWF to work with them. With recent Vietnamese Government approvals for the Winrock project, WWF intends to join Winrock in several activities, particularly in the area of sustainable livelihoods.

Activity I.3.2: Develop and strengthen the Central Annamites Conservation Initiative

The production of the initial monitoring report for the Central Annamites Landscape is delayed due to the delayed start of the BCI project. WWF plans to begin developing the report in the second half of 2007.

This activity will be continued with funding from the BCI.

Activity I.3.3: Engage broader stakeholder support through advocacy-based communications in the Greater Annamites

Of the activities mentioned below, the Global Conservation Program has particularly supported the press event on September 28, WWF's overall media work in the Central Annamites, and the publication of the booklet *A Fair Share?* (See Annex to this report). However, the article in the *Wall Street Journal* did not mention USAID. Although the USAID support has been highlighted in our work with the BBC, there is no guarantee that the BBC World Service documentary on the Central Annamites will finally name USAID.

WWF has planned a media event for September 26, 2007, to promote international media coverage of the discovery of several new species in Hue in the course of the Green Corridor project.

Another international press event to acknowledge the work done by Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue Province in creating an east-west corridor that will protect the saola landscape, is scheduled for September 28, 2007.

The booklet *A Fair Share? – Experiences in Benefit Sharing from Community-managed Resources in Asia* was jointly published by WWF, SNV (the Netherlands Development Organisation) and the Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC).

With input from WWF, an article on the Ho Chi Minh Highway and its socio-economic and conservation impacts was published in the *Wall Street Journal* on August 4, 2007.

With input from WWF, an article on the saola was published in *Science* magazine in December 2006.

With support from WWF, national media coverage on biodiversity planning workshops in Hue was initiated with a press release and workshops for the production of a CD-Rom toolkit for the EPOSTEM project, under the Green Corridor project, were undertaken with involvement of WWF. The CD-Rom toolkit was published in April 2007.

A series of reports has been published as part of the Green Corridor project (see www.huegreencorridor.org).

A BBC World Service documentary on the Central Annamites is currently in production.

Progress Table

Objectives, activities, anticipated outputs/results	Indicators (what you are measuring)	Baseline (Value and date of measurement)	Current status (Value and Date) with discussion of any variance	Success rating (green, amber or red)
Objective 1.1: Protect, restore, and sustainably manage biodiversity elements of high scientific and economic value in the ecoregion				
Activity 1.1.1 & 1.1.2: Protect key species and sites in the Annamites				
Anticipated Outputs/Results for Activity I.1.1 & I.1.2				
Understanding of the distribution of the saola population improved	Persistence of saola across the landscape	No maps	Initial map produced	Green
Saola population made more stable through WWF and government interventions	Developing a probability of occupancy model	No method	Methods still in development	Amber
Monitoring system for saola and its threats established	Monitoring system established	No method	Methods still in development	Amber
Initial monitoring report produced for the Central Annamites Landscape	Monitoring report produced	No report	Under development	Amber
Management plans produced for Bach Ma National Park and Tay Giang district FPD	Management plans produced	No management plans	On-going	Amber
Protected landscape established for saola, the boundaries of which are recognized by the government and local communities	Protected landscape established	'saola landscape' under discussion, but not approved	2 new protected areas and Bach Ma National Park extension approved by provincial Governments	green
Objective 1.2: Mitigate the most urgent, broad scale pressures on biodiversity in the ecoregion				
Activity 1.2.1 Address immediate and apparent threats to biodiversity at the national and regional levels in the Greater Annamites				
Anticipated Outputs/results activity I.2.1				
Study undertaken of large-scale mining and early steps taken to address biodiversity impacts of mining in Quang Nam in Central Annamites by applying results of study	Study on large-scale mining	initial assessment of the environmental and social impacts of mining in Quang Nam	Study on small-scale mining carried out; assessment of large-scale mining under way	Amber
	Steps to address biodiversity impacts	None	Quang Nam work in preparation	Amber
Better Management Practices adopted by least one international company to promote sustainable agricultural commodity production through a corporate partnership with WWF	International company with Better Management Practices	No work on agriculture	Discussions with Masterfoods ongoing	Amber

Work program initiated on two other agricultural commodities (from cashew, rubber and sugar). Activities will include prioritizing the two commodities, identifying feasible best management practices for farming and production and working with the Government to introduce the application in the countryside	Work program	No work on agriculture	Work program initiated on cocoa and sugar	Green
Initial steps taken to address large scale energy expansion in Vietnam by targeting supply side of energy needs in Vietnam, in particular environmental guidelines for dam developments	Environmental guidelines for dam development	guidelines do not exist	Discussions on guidelines ongoing	Amber
Objective 1.3 Harness local, national, and international support for long-term conservation of the ecoregion				
Activity 1.3.1 Extend capacity to mobilize and manage large-scale conservation				
Anticipated Outputs/results activity I.3.1				
A fully functioning office established in Lam Dong, DARD (pending other donor decisions)	Established Office	No office	Office established in Bien Hoa (Dong Nai province); office under establishment in Bi Doup Nui Ba National Park (Lam Dong)	Green
Plan for the Southern Annamites agreed upon by multi-stakeholder group including WWF and WWF strategic action plan developed, to be carried out with partners	Agreed plan, Developed WWF strategic action plan	No agreed plan for Southern Annamites, no WWF strategic action plan	Delayed, WWF strategic action plan developed	Amber
Projects identified and supported within the landscape; at least one project building on the successes of the MOSAIC project replicated where applicable	new projects	No projects	WWF projects have started in Bien Hoa (Dong Nai province) and Bi Doup Nui Ba National Park (Lam Dong)	Green
Activity I.3.2: Develop and strengthen the Central Annamites Conservation Initiative				
Anticipated outputs/results for activity I.3.2				
A robust monitoring and evaluation plan for the landscape developed jointly with partners	M&E plan	No M&E plan	Delayed due to delayed start of BCI	Red
Activity 1.3.3: Engage broader stakeholder support through advocacy-based communications in the Greater Annamites				

Anticipated outputs/results for activity I.3.3				
Coordination and cooperation increased between government agencies to work at landscape level conservation	Improved coordination and cooperation	Poor coordination and cooperation	Pending as BCI funding has been removed	Red
Awareness of the public on Douc langur and gibbon conservation and the impacts of their trade increased, as evidenced by changes in local consumption patterns	# of trade records	No recording of trade records	Recording of trade records via press articles has started	Amber
Communication productions disseminated among government partners, conservation and development community and donors	New communications productions		global media coverage on grey-shanked doucs and official endorsement of 'saola landscape'; saola article in <i>Science</i> magazine; <i>Wall Street Journal</i> article on Ho Chi Minh Highway, BBC World Service documentary on Central Annamites; series of biodiversity reports and Earth Observation and Geographic Information Toolkit published under the Green Corridor project.	Green

Next Steps

Activity 1.1.1 Protect Key Species

- Support strengthened law enforcement for saola protection through direct grants to FPD and National Park staff in Thua Thien Hue province, in particular to support law enforcement in the newly established protected area.
- Continue to establish a monitoring programme specifically for the saola to follow threats and mitigation measures.

Activity 1.1.2 Protect Key Sites

- Assist Bach Ma National Park, Quang Nam Forest Protection Department (FPD) and Thua Thien FPD with the development of management plans for Bach Ma National Park including its new extension, and for the two new protected areas.
- Support provincial agencies in the effective implementation of the 'Saola Sanctuary' in Thue Thien Hue province through awareness raising, enforcement, development of staff capacity and establishing Community Forestry Management agreements with local communities as to the boundaries.

Activity 1.2.1 Address immediate and apparent threats to biodiversity at the national and regional levels in the Greater Annamites

- Develop a mining strategy and activity plan for the Annamites - both small scale and large scale - to address this growing threat.
- Step up activities on Best Management Practices for cocoa, cashew, rubber and coffee.

Activity 1.3.1 Extend capacity to mobilize and manage large-scale conservation

- Carry out biodiversity surveys in Vinh Cuu Nature Reserve, as a basis to establish a management plan.
- Develop a priority species protection action plan for the Southern Annamites.
- Produce a five-year WWF strategic action plan for the Southern Annamites.

Activity 1.3.2 Develop and strengthen the Central Annamites Conservation Initiative, Greater Annamites Ecoregion

- This activity will be continued with funding under the BCI.

Activity 1.3.3 Engage broader stakeholder support through advocacy-based communications in the Greater Annamites

- A film for broadcasting on national TV will be made by WWF on the work in Hue province under the Green Corridor project.
- A photographic exhibition will be conducted in Hue and Hanoi to look at communities, landscapes and forests as part of the Green Corridor project in Hue.

Success Stories

Certainly the biggest success in FY 07 is that the Provincial Governments of Quang Nam and Hue have agreed to two new protected areas (Saola Nature Reserve in Thua Thien Hue Province and Saola Landscape in Quang Nam Province) and a 13,500 hectare extension to Bach Ma National Park, all of which directly contribute to saola conservation. A chain of Protected Areas now stretches from the Vietnamese coast in the East to the top of the Annamite mountain range at the border to Laos, covering main habitats of the saola. This is a key achievement for the long-term survival of the saola, the flagship species of the Greater Annamites.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

After the ADB-BCI project was finally approved (with a big delay) and ready to go, it needed another 8-12 months to start activities as this is a big project. A conclusion is that we should have lower expectations for the start –up of bigger projects. This has had also implications for the USAID GCP as both programs are closely interlinked (see progress table above).

Another challenge has proven that it is more time-intensive than originally expected to interact with businesses, e.g. Masterfoods, and establish dialogue and partnerships. A lesson learned is that more staff time must be allocated and more perseverance is needed to successfully engage with businesses.

Subgrantees

None

Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion

Please note that no direct funding support has been provided to the Cambodian government.

Collaborators/Partners

Royal Government of Cambodia:

- Ministry of Environment (MOE); Department of Nature Conservation and Protection (DNCP) and Mondulhiri Provincial Environment Departments;
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF); Forestry Administration (FA); Fisheries Administration (FiA); Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDA);
- Ministry of Urbanization, Land Management, and Construction (MULMC); Mondulhiri Provincial Department of Urbanization, Land Management, and Construction (PDULMC);
- Ministry of Rural Development (MRD); Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD);
- Ministry of Tourism (MOT); Mondulhiri Provincial Department of Tourism (PDT);
- Ministry of Interior (MOI); Mondulhiri Provincial Government Office (PGO); Mondulhiri Provincial Department of Police.
- Provincial Rural Development Committee (PRDC)
- Commune Councils (CCs)

International NGOs

- Birdlife International (BI)
- Conservation International (CI)
- Oxfam America
- TRAFFIC Indochina Programme (SE Asia)
- Wildlife Alliance (formerly WildAid)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Summary: Period 10/01/06—09/30/07**Lower Mekong Dry Forest Highlights:****Cambodia:**

In the Lower Mekong Dry Forests, USAID support during FY07 has catalyzed significant progress and achievements within the Eastern Plains Dry Forests priority landscape as follows:

- The ADB BCI project² recruited a Provincial Conservation Planning Specialist to set up a newly established Provincial Conservation Planning Unit (PCPU) embedded in the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Monduliri Provincial Rural Development Committee (PRDC).. The PCPU is the first of its kind in Cambodia and aims to facilitate improved coordinated development decision making among government line agencies.
- Also in the ADB BCI project, a Memorandum of Agreement was established among the Monduliri ExCom/PRDC, WWF, and WCS to integrate biodiversity conservation and environmental management into the Monduliri Province’s development planning institutions, mechanisms, and processes.
- With the Forestry Administration, WWF completed a comprehensive ‘Monduliri Protected Forest Management and Zoning Plan’, which was subsequently submitted for approval by the MAFF in August 2007. Developing the MPF Management Plan has also built capacity in Forestry Administration (FA) and set new standards for FA in management plan development.
- Three more transects for biological monitoring in the Srepok Wilderness Area and Phnom Prich were established by WWF and reserve staff, and baseline data readied for MIST (Monitoring Information System) 10-day field-based workshop in the Monduliri Protected Forest and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary, in order to develop an integrated regional GMP strategy for monitoring flagship species populations (Tiger, Asian elephant, tiger prey, globally significant primate species). A monitoring protocol concept is currently being designed as an output of the workshop. Wildlife biologists from WWF Greater Mekong Programme (GMP), India, Nepal, and Indonesia region attended.
- One key Forestry Administration counterpart in the Srepok Wilderness Area (SWA) project attended courses at ‘The Nature College and Aardvark Nature Reserve CC’, South Africa, as a follow-up to his June 2006 study tour to Namibia. These experiences have helped him to improve protected area management and build staff capacity.
- In June 2007, three Forestry Administration Staff, a Commissioner of Police, a Provincial Judge, and three WWF SWA staff participated in a ten-day study tour to Nepal focusing on ecotourism and park management approaches and achievements. This helped them to complement the South Africa system applied in Cambodia’s Eastern Plains landscape.
- WWF Cambodia completed an “*Ecotourism Feasibility Study for the Srepok Wilderness Area, Monduliri Protected Forest*” to further develop ecotourism as a financing mechanism for protected area management in collaboration with local communities, aiming to protect the landscape and generate new, alternative jobs for local people to replace hunting, commercial logging, etc.
- WWF started the process of building a stakeholder platform among NGOs and government agencies working in and around Lomphat Wildlife Sanctuary (one of the key protected areas

² TA 6289–REG: Greater Mekong Subregion – Core Environment Program (CEP) and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (BCI) Phase 1 (2006 – 2008) - Cambodia: Eastern Plains Biodiversity Corridor; started in October 2006 and jointly implemented by WWF and WCS

in the Eastern Plains Dry Forests Protected Area Complex) for a more effective coordination and collaboration at the field level.

- WWF established an informal dialogue at local, national and international levels with a large international bauxite mining company with operations in Mondulhiri. WWF's aim is to influence policy change through a potential establishment of a Cambodia 'Responsible Mining Forum' that would work to set high social and environmental standards for granting concessions and mining operations.
- WWF provided follow-up training in Participatory Rapid Appraisal, Livelihoods Assessment tools, and Participatory Land Use Planning in all three community clusters around Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary and Srepok Wilderness Area and completed three three-dimensional community resource maps.
- WWF facilitated development of community conservation agreements among communities, government agencies, and NGOs in all three community clusters.
- WWF established and evaluated a pilot Monitoring Oriented Management System (MOMS) involving Srepok Wilderness Area project community rangers. Results indicate simplification is needed.

Communications and events in FY07:

- WWF Cambodia produced and distributed a 23-minute documentary "*Mondulhiri Protected Forest - the making of a protected area*", documenting in detail what WWF Cambodia and the Forestry Administration have achieved by applying the highly successful southern African approach to protected area management in the Mondulhiri Protected Forest (MPF) in Cambodia's Eastern Plains. The film was publicly launched during Cambodia's first-ever Environmental Film Festival, co-organized by WWF in June 2007.
- In January 2007, WWF hosted the British Ambassador to Cambodia in a 4-day visit to the MPF, the first-ever visit by a high-ranking foreign diplomat to this protected area. A visit is planned for the US Ambassador at the end of December 2007.
- Other WWF communications materials and media releases developed and distributed include: summary brochure of the Biovision for the Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion (summarizing the 200-page report) and a new WWF Cambodia Programme portfolio.

Objective II.1: Conserve species, habitats, and their interactions

Activity II.1.1: Landscape-scale conservation in the Eastern Plains Dry Forests

During FY07, WWF began a 28-month ADB-funded project aiming to maintain the ecological integrity of the Eastern Plains landscape through development of sustainable use corridors that connect existing protected areas. One of the main goals of the project was to establish a Provincial Conservation Planning Unit (PCPU) the aim of which would be to provide technical support to provincial level development planning across all sectors. The PCPU has been established and approved by the provincial government. The next challenge is to ensure that the PCPU is fully integrated into existing local development planning mechanisms (such as the commune development planning process and commune investment programme and the Provincial Land Use and Allocation Committee). Once this integration begins, the project will facilitate the development of a landscape-level, provincial conservation-corridor strategy for approval by the provincial government. The strategy will be developed along the same lines as

has been achieved in recent years through WWF's work in Quang Nam, Vietnam. The project also endeavors to develop liaison mechanisms with neighboring provinces, including those in Vietnam.

The completion of a comprehensive management plan for Mondulkiri Protected Forest further strengthens the ability of the government to make informed decisions about development activities that might otherwise undermine conservation efforts. The management plan, together with PCPU coordination among government agencies, is part of WWF's strategy to ensure growing pressures from agriculture, infrastructure, and mining developments, do not have irreversible negative impacts on the landscape integrity. Our partnerships with the government (primarily MoE and MAFF) and with WCS are crucial for future success.

With USAID assistance, WWF provided programmatic support to achieve the following specific results:

- Leveraged and secured funding support from the ADB to work on a landscape approach aiming to conserve key species, habitats, and their interactions by addressing threats and improving coordination at the national and provincial levels.
- Collected monitoring data from established line transects in PPWS and MPF, and three more line transects established for biological monitoring in the MPF and PPWS. All baseline data were readied for the MIST (Monitoring Information System) database as part of the strategy to improve monitoring and evaluation of conservation across the landscape; thus these efforts form part of a national monitoring database.
- Completed a comprehensive five-year strategic management plan for Mondulkiri Protected Forest in July and will have government approval by the end of September.

Activity II.1.2: Develop and strengthen the Srepok Wilderness Area Project

The Srepok Wilderness Area Project (SWAP) is the flagship project for the Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion (LMDFE). It embodies the ambition to conserve and restore the Dry Forests and reflects the commitment to innovation and sound scientific approach, and aims to provide valuable lessons for replication and adaptation in other parts of the Dry Forests in Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. The project is focused within Mondulkiri Protected Forest (MPF), which is one of the largest protected areas in Cambodia, and is in the heart of the Eastern Plains Dry Forests landscape, within Mondulkiri province. Two of the three main components of the project – Protected Area Management, and Community Extension – are now fully established and relatively well resourced.

It seems unlikely for the short to medium term that the Cambodian government will have the financial capacity to maintain a suitable level of professional protected area management within the MPF. WWF has therefore been considering various mechanisms to secure sustainable financing for the area. It was decided that an ecotourism revenue mechanism should be the first potential area to explore, and a feasibility study was commissioned and completed by an expert in Cambodian tourism. In late FY07, WWF strengthened the project's tourism component, employing an ecotourism advisor, conducting an ecotourism feasibility study, initiating a community consultation process, and initiating discussions concerning the organization of Wildlife Ecotourism Management Boards (WEMB) at the key commune levels around MPF.

The community consultation process and the establishment of WEMBs at the commune level will be the primary step towards establishing an acceptable and transparent mechanism for benefit sharing of revenue from future Ecotourism activities in the MPF.

With the aim of further demonstrating the potential benefits from ecotourism, and to build capacity in community-based and wildlife ecotourism planning, WWF sponsored an educational trip to Nepal for a selected group. Participants included government officers from the Forestry Administration: The Deputy Director, Chief of Forestry Cantonment in Mondulkiri, Forestry Administration Project Officer for the MPF, along with the Police Commissioner in Mondulkiri, and a senior Provincial Judge. Accompanying the Community Extension Team Leader was a local 'Bunong' woman from a family indigenous to the area and who is also part of the MPF Community Extension Team (CET) team. The study tour provided participants with an opportunity to experience and to explore high end ecotourism operations, to interact with and learn from indigenous communities who are active participants in, or direct beneficiaries of, ecotourism projects in and around protected areas, and to experience and learn from Nepal's long history of community-managed protected areas and the country's success in maintaining its well known national parks. As a result of the visit, WWF feels that there is a much greater understanding, particularly among the senior participants, of not only the potential for tourism to benefit communities, but also that there is a need for in-depth planning that ensures all key stakeholders participate fully.

One of the key goals of the SWA project is restoration of large mammal populations, including tiger and tiger prey. While funds are still required to set up and run a comprehensive biodiversity monitoring system, the current combined efforts of protection and ranger monitoring are indicating positive progress towards achieving this key project goal. In FY07, WWF camera traps recorded an Asian leopard with cubs – the first photographs of a leopard with young taken in Cambodia, and the apparent high density of Asian leopard in MPF was corroborated by preliminary research undertaken by a British Ph.D. student. Also encouraging were photographs of Asian elephant with young calves taken well inside MPF in the dry season – the first confirmation that elephant remain in MPF outside of the wet season. This photographic information is important not only because it demonstrates age diversity in the population but also improves our understanding of seasonal elephant movements in relation to corridors between the protected areas in the landscape.



Elephant with calf photographed in MPF in February 2007



Leopard with two cubs photographed in MPF in January 2007

During FY07, the Community Extension Team (CET) continued to work extensively within the three key community clusters around the MPF (northern, southern, and western clusters) as a part of its long-term strategic approach to assist local communities in sustainable resource use and management. The CET team has continued to build relationships with key government agencies and local communities at the site level. These interactions with communities have resulted in a decision to establish a permanent presence of CET members in the northern and southern community clusters of the MPF. This has enabled SWAP to take community extension work and monitoring to the communities on a daily basis. It has also enabled the CET to extend the use of tools such as the 3-dimensional mapping models to both of these communities. In FY07, WWF established a new project: the “Deep Pools Community Fisheries Project” in the northern community cluster on the Srepok River. The project is making good progress in achieving one of the key goals: to secure fishing rights for local communities so that future stocks will be safeguarded. The alternative scenario is severe depletion of fishing resources, as has happened in some parts of the river and several other major rivers in the Lower Mekong region, which would result in increased pressure on forest resources.

USAID support was used to provide overall assistance to facilitate and coordinate the smooth implementation of the project among key decision-making and technical government and NGO partner agencies. Following are the key achievements for FY07:

- Completion of a five year Management Plan for the Mondulkiri Protected Forest together with a Zoning Plan. This comprehensive management plan also includes a 20-year vision for the area and was constructed in consultation with all of the key MPF stakeholders. The plan also forms the basis for an annual operational plan, providing guidance for the government-WWF partnership on priority management interventions.
- Through the recently established transect system and ranger patrolling activities, observations of direct and indirect wildlife sign suggest that the presence of large mammal

populations is stable. While no scientific analysis of the data has yet been done, tiger sign and wild water buffalo sign continue to be seen in areas of the MPF and PPWS (tiger) where they were not previously recorded. Photographs of elephant and leopard, both with young offspring, are an encouraging sign for the project staff.

- Permanent presence established in two of the three community clusters. Two additional CET members will be added in the western cluster before the end of this year.
- Provided community clusters with technical training and informal education and information on natural resource management and conservation. In addition to the CET team providing advice and training on alternative livelihoods, SWAP also employs almost all staff from the province, and in many cases from the adjacent communities, thereby helping to increase awareness and support among these communities.
- Continued support for Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP). The recent land concessions in the Southern cluster (southern MPF excision) where PLUP was already being implemented have made this planning approach a priority. Some of the threats posed by situations where local communities are suddenly dispossessed of their land property can be reduced through improved community understanding of their access rights and of the usefulness of land use planning;
- Completion of ecotourism feasibility study. The future of the MPF will largely be decided by the ability to develop and secure a sustainable financing mechanism. The findings of the study were positive and indicated potential for an ecotourism operation within the MPF.

Objective II.2: Capacity building of local, national, and international stakeholders to plan long-term biodiversity conservation in the Dry Forest Ecoregion

Activity II.2.1: Extend capacity to mobilize and manage large-scale conservation across the Dry Forests

Following the completion of the Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion (LMDFE) Conservation Plan and the WWF Dry Forests Conservation Action Plan, WWF has been working to identify the appropriate means to institutionalize the plan. In a country that still has a rather fragile national legal and policy framework, it was concluded that the approval process for the Dry Forests plan must fit clearly within the existing system as much as possible.

To gain approval for the plan as a stand-alone plan would be relatively straight forward in Cambodia, but for the plan to be operationalised there would need to be strong commitment at senior political levels. Therefore it was decided that we should not seek approval of the plan on its own, but rather wait for an opportunity to embed the goals and targets of the Dry Forests plan within existing or planned national strategies. MOE is planning to hold a national workshop at the end of 2007 to review and update the current National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP); an activity required by all signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This gives WWF the ideal opportunity to work with MOE to integrate the LMDFE Conservation Plan into the new Cambodia NBSAP.

WWF efforts in FY07 have been focused heavily on ensuring effective site-, and landscape-level interventions in the Eastern Plains, requiring increasing effort and resources to keep on top of current and emerging large scale threats, as previously mentioned. Of particular concern is the ongoing conversion of large areas of forest for agriculture, especially rubber and other cash crop

plantations, new road development, proposed dams, and mining explorations. The BCI project partly aims to build capacity of government agencies to improve decision making for development planning, and significant steps have been made through the establishment of the PCPU to coordinate among government agencies at the provincial level. WWF's strategy to address the growing threats from mining has so far been ad hoc. We hope to address this gap in the next six months.

In order to raise the profile of the importance of the landscape, WWF has made every effort to participate in national level forums discussing the pertinent issues, including land concessions, extractive industries, and land use planning in general. WWF has been invited to make presentations at several high profile political events and maintains a regular feedback mechanism with senior government departments. WWF's standing with the government has continued to result in opportunities to influence important decision making processes, including a personal call from the MAFF Minister requesting WWF to provide advice on urgent policy preparations.

USAID support has catalyzed the following specific results in FY07:

- Establishment of a Provincial Conservation Planning Unit (PCPU) with a full-time Conservation Planning Advisor embedded in the Executive Committee of the Mondulhiri Provincial Rural Development Committee.
- Improved capacity of the Forestry Administration and key local government counterparts via training, workshops, and study tours in survey and research design, wildlife management, law enforcement, biodiversity monitoring, and community participation in resource management.
- Establishment of an informal Dialogue Group (WWF, WCS, and Oxfam America) to design an engagement strategy to address potential impacts from large scale mining in Mondulhiri province.
- Senior level government meetings conducted with the goals of influencing government discussion, raising awareness on key issues threatening the Dry Forests landscape, and offering WWF technical support to facilitate further discussion and action on the ground. Because Chinese investment has been clearly identified as a major threat to the integrity of not only the Eastern Plains or the Dry Forests, but also Cambodian natural resources in general, WWF met Chinese Embassy officials in Cambodia, taking the first steps toward establishing regular dialogue and an opportunity to provide advice and technical guidance on improving the sustainability of Chinese investments in the Cambodian natural resource sector.
- A visit by the British Ambassador to the SWA project site in Cambodia, the first-ever visit by a high-ranking foreign diplomat to this protected area, increased awareness among government agencies of the international importance of the landscape.

Activity II.2.2: Build awareness and effective communication on conservation

WWF continues to focus on increasing understanding of local government agencies and communities of the economic and livelihoods importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the Eastern Plains Dry Forests landscape. The communications materials, meetings, workshops and other events WWF has organized during FY07 have had

multiple goals, while the overall purpose is to change perceptions, and ultimately bring about positive behaviour changes at a number of different levels.

For example, at the lowest community level, WWF's daily work brings us into contact with a large number of forest-dependent people whose resource use behaviour has a direct impact on the integrity of the forests. This direct impact generally is one of two types: either resource use activity is based on traditional practices and is generally low impact and can be managed sustainably, or it involves significant or irreversible ecological damage through overharvest of a resource. Increasingly, competition from new settlers is forcing ethnic communities to adopt unsustainable resource use practices. Therefore WWF's response must be appropriate in dealing with what is essentially a two-part problem: 1). Raise awareness of new settlers about resource use laws and regulations, while also supporting indigenous communities to understand their use rights; and 2). Increase awareness and capacity of government to improve land use planning processes including the allocation of suitable areas for new settlements. Several activities in FY07 have followed this approach with considerable success. A good example is the elephant migration corridor between PPWS and MPF that was previously under considerable pressure by new settlers who were clearing land for agriculture. WWF's work to get government commitment to designate development boundaries has resulted in no further conversion in the habitat corridor.

At the other end of the spectrum, WWF has faced the challenge of working to influence senior government officials, both Cambodian and of other countries, as well as the private sector. Good examples of WWF efforts in this regard have already been described: the first meeting with the Chinese Embassy; the stakeholder dialogue group formed to tackle a potential large mining operation by a major international mining company in Monduliri province; and regular meetings with the Forestry Administration to agree on joint strategies to tackle specific threats.

With USAID support, key outputs and achievements in FY07 include the following:

- Produced and distributed a 23-minute film "*Monduliri Protected Forest - the making of a protected area*", documenting in detail what WWF and the Forestry Administration have achieved by applying the highly successful southern African approach to protected area management in the Monduliri Protected Forest (MPF) in Cambodia's Eastern Plains. The film was publicly launched during Cambodia's first-ever Environmental Film Festival, co-organized by WWF in June 2007;
- Developed a 37-page "*Communications Strategy for the Greater Mekong Cambodia Country Programme 2006-2008*", as one component of an overall communications strategy for the WWF Greater Mekong Programme. One of the main objectives of this strategy is to build and raise the level of environmental education and awareness of the Ecoregion and WWF's conservation work among target audiences including: local communities who live in and/or adjacent to the natural resources; local and national authorities; government decision-makers; donors; and other key stakeholders in the Ecoregion.
- 33 individual appearances in the mass media including: website stories, press releases, interviews with local/international newspapers, radio talks and television slots. Of note is the BBC news front webpage coverage of the leopard photograph story;
- New communications materials and media releases were developed and distributed, including: Summary document of Biovision for the Lower Mekong Dry Forests

Ecoregion (summarizing the 200-page report), and a new Cambodia Programme portfolio;

- Meeting with the First Political Councilor of the Embassy of People's Republic of China to discuss areas of common interest in the management and development of Cambodia's natural resources. This was the initial starting point to try to establish a good relationship with Chinese Embassy and its state-run enterprises in Cambodia.

Objective II.3: Protect priority landscapes and corridors through sustainable use of forest resources, sustainable agriculture, and forest restoration

Activity II.3.1: Increase community benefits from community-based natural resource management, contributing to the learning exchange on payment for ecological services within WWF

The Srepok Wilderness Area Project's Community Extension component has made significant advances in its community extension work in the MPF during FY07. The CET has identified three strategic community clusters in the MPF, continued to build trust with local communities, provided technical assistance and capacity building for land use planning, and conducted a series of socio-economic surveys in order to increase understanding of community resource use needs and to empower local people through participation in resource use planning (including tourism) and decision making.

Of particular significance for FY07 was the initial implementation of the Namibian-inspired Management Oriented Monitoring System (MOMS) seen in operation by community and government project staff during a visit to Namibia in FY06. The MOMS system has a number of aims, not least of which is to provide direct opportunities for local communities to participate in management of biodiversity. WWF began piloting this approach following the Namibia trip, first with the community rangers working on the project. The aim is to start slowly, as it can take several years to develop the system to the stage where it is simple to implement and delivers the information that is of use both for the communities themselves and for the government to improve protected area management. Materials have been developed, and after some modifications to ensure simplicity of use, these will be rolled out in the coming six months to all the ranger stations in the MPF.

In the FY06 annual report, we described the great success of the use of 3D model mapping as a community resource management tool. This approach has been replicated twice in the northern and southern community clusters during FY07. Permanent 3D models in these areas means communities have instant access to a tool that is invaluable when looking at, for example, participatory land use planning projects. It gives the CET team in these areas a huge advantage and gives communities a better sense of participation and contribution to the project.

Specific achievements in FY07 include the following:

- Conducted an exchange visit to Nepal where Cambodian field staff learned about the success of implementing a community engagement project, participatory PA management, and alternative livelihood development through ecotourism activities;

- Provided follow-up training on Participatory Rapid Appraisal, Livelihoods Assessment tools, and Participatory Land Use Planning in all three community clusters around PPWS and SWA and completed three 3D community resource maps;
- Facilitated development of community conservation agreements among communities, government agencies, and NGOs in all three community clusters;
- Established and evaluated pilot Monitoring Oriented Management System (MOMS) involving SWA project community rangers (Results indicate a simplification is needed);
- Coordinated and facilitated the completion and approval of local management structure and local regulations of two Community Protected Areas (CPAs). Allocated and demarcated 4,730 ha of two CPAs in Sre Thom and Khnheng of Sok San and Chong Plas Communes within Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary;
- Established and built capacity of NRM committees in two of four villages in Pu Chrey to implement PLUP and to integrate NRM into the Commune Development Plan.

Progress Table

	Indicators (what you are measuring)	Baseline (Value and date of measurement)	Current status (Value and Date) with discussion of any variance	Success rating (green, amber or red)
Goal level				
Objective II.1: Conserve species, habitats, and their interactions				
Activity II.1.1: Landscape-scale conservation in the Eastern Plains Dry Forests	Integration of DF conservation plan into national strategies	Plan completed	Opportunity identified to work with government to integrate DF plan into new NBSAP at end of 2007	Amber
Activity II.1.2: Develop and strengthen the Srepok Wilderness Area Project	Completion of Management Plan for Mondulkiri Protected Forest	Draft Management Plan completed in FY06	The plan has been completed and submitted to government for approval.	Green
	Increased management capacity in MPF	25 staff in place but under trained	41 trained staff in place: 7 additional field rangers, 14 police, and 8 FA officers, 2 FiA officers, 1 HWRU officer, in place, equipped, and trained.	Green
	Ecotourism feasibility study	No study	Completed in FY07	Green
	Patrolling activities and law enforcement	Inaccuracies and gaps in database	Updated and data gaps largely filled	Green

	Indicators (what you are measuring)	Baseline (Value and date of measurement)	Current status (Value and Date) with discussion of any variance	Success rating (green, amber or red)
Goal level				
	database up-to-date			
Objective II.2: Capacity building of local, national, and international stakeholders to plan long-term biodiversity conservation in the Dry Forest Ecoregion				
Activity II.2.1: Extend capacity to mobilize and manage large- scale conservation across the Dry Forests	Establishment of independent CET teams in the northern and southern community clusters of MPF	Survey results indicated that focus should be in these two community clusters.	CET teams on the ground and functioning	Green
Activity II.2.2: Build awareness and effective communication on conservation	Communications and awareness raising materials, events, and opportunities LMDFE Biovision published	Inadequate communications and awareness raising materials and events Completed but not published and distributed	Communication materials, press releases, radio interviews organized and produced Published and distributed	Green Green
Objective II.3: Protect priority landscapes and corridors through sustainable use of forest resources, sustainable agriculture, and forest restoration				Green

	Indicators (what you are measuring)	Baseline (Value and date of measurement)	Current status (Value and Date) with discussion of any variance	Success rating (green, amber or red)
Goal level				
Activity II.3.1: Increase community benefits from community-based natural resource management, contributing to the learning exchange on payment for ecological services within WWF	3D models developed for PLUP	One model complete in FY06	Three 3D Models functioning as effective community education and PLUP tool	Green
	Study tour/exchange visits	Namibia tour in FY06	Nepal tour completed	Green
	Establishment of Community Protected Areas in priority communes of PPWS	None prior to FY07	4,730 ha of two CPAs in PPWS allocated and demarcated	Green
	NRM committees established in PPWS	One NRM committee in FY06	One additional NRM committee in FY07	Green

Next Steps

Within the Eastern Plains landscape, support is needed to ensure the integrity of additional protected areas (Lomphat Wildlife Sanctuary - LWS and Seima Biodiversity Conservation Area – SBCA - in Cambodia, and Yok Don National Park - YDNP in Vietnam) to ensure connectivity and ecological integrity of the landscape. WCS has long been active in SBCA, and there has been some support to LWS and YDNP. WWF is now seeking funding support to scale up activities in LWS, particularly in the corridor to MPF.

WWF will continue to garner support from the national government's key natural resources ministries (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries) to maintain ecological integrity and connectivity at the landscape level. At the provincial level, WWF will build on its 2007 agreement with the Executive Committee (Ex Com) of the Mondulhiri Provincial Rural Development Committee (PRDC) to integrate biodiversity conservation and environmental management into the Province's development planning institutions, mechanisms, and processes to develop sustainable use and biodiversity corridors that connect the protected areas. This activity represents a significant scaling up of the previous WWF activities that aim to influence decision-making processes at the landscape level. Cooperation between national ministries and provincial line agencies in the Provincial Rural Development Committee is essential to an integrated framework for collaborative landscape-level planning, improved protected area management, and improved community livelihoods. WWF will begin to work to secure and integrate more support for corridor and protected area management for Lomphat WS by consolidating a nascent platform of stakeholders active in and around the sanctuary.

Success Stories

For the Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion programme, the following main success stands out for FY07:

In addition to the highlights already described, perhaps the most significant achievement during the FY07 is the embedding of a provincial conservation planning specialist in the Executive Committee of the Monduliri Provincial Rural Development Committee, thereby for the first time opening a formal channel to mainstream conservation in the provincial development planning processes. As a result, there is a formal recognition of biodiversity conservation within the processes for decision making at the commune development planning level - a unique situation for any province in Cambodia.

Problems and Constraints

- The Eastern Plains Dry Forests priority landscape (particularly in Monduliri province) experiences rapid change due to new developments, immigration, land concessions, and many other threats. The fact that at present almost 80% of the provincial area is under some form of legal protection is both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing because we are starting from a good position: habitats are intact, well connected, and legally protected. It is a curse because government agencies (and potential national and international investors) see the huge development potential. Despite the massive pressures (hydropower, agriculture, extractive industries), WWF is well placed to positively influence development decision making, as long as relations are maintained and governments openly share information in a timely manner. At the same time, we must be realistic about what future changes we can influence; thus it is essential that we stick with the plans for improving government coordination mechanisms, while remaining committed to the extensive conservation planning and biodiversity visioning processes that have been undertaken in the last few years.
- A very specific issue of concern in FY07 was the excision of a large area of the southern part of Monduliri Protected Forest (reduced from 429,000ha to 376,000ha). The decision was made by central government to excise this land area in order to provide more opportunities for the provincial government to attract investment in agriculture. While not a high priority area for biodiversity, the new threat of local people moving northwards into MPF in search of forest products is already becoming a reality, diverting resources from ongoing WWF activities in order to mediate between planners and communities and assist with land use planning. WWF was consulted by MAFF and provided suggestions on where the new boundary should be drawn and also strongly urged the government to undertake a thorough public consultation process. They did this although the process was not as fully consultative as WWF would have liked.

Lessons Learned

As always, the WWF team has had to work hard to develop strategies to tackle the growing threats to the landscape. Three notable strategies of engagement were developed, each involving a different tack and all requiring persistence and patience. The first involved writing to senior government to express concern about mining concessions. This did not meet with the intended result; therefore other approaches are needed to ensure that our key message is heard and acknowledged at the top political level.

Attempting to meet the Chinese Embassy was an obvious strategy, but as far as we are aware, WWF is the first NGO in Cambodia to be granted a meeting to discuss natural resource management issues. We hope we can build on this initial success.

Engaging with a global mining company requires an altogether different approach than with government. Initial awkwardness as both parties hesitate to share information for fear of misrepresentation in the media or the development community, led to fruitful discussions once it was made clear by both sides what the objectives of the dialogue were. Again, we hope this is the first step toward making significant progress resulting not only in positive environmental benefits for the Dry Forests, but also benefits for the national environment as a whole by encouraging the development of best practices for mining exploration and operation.

Subgrantees

None

Annexes

The following materials are attached to this report:

- Mondulkiri Protected Forest: The Making of a Protected Area (DVD – pending finalization).
- Booklet *A Fair Share? – Experiences in Benefit Sharing from Community-managed Resources in Asia* (digital copy)
- Summary document of Biovision for the Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion (summarizing the 200-page report) (hard and digital copy);
- Ecotourism Feasibility Study for the Mondulkiri Protected Forest – Srepok Wilderness Area Project (digital copy);
- MIST (Monitoring Information System) Technical Report for the Mondulkiri Protected Forest – Srepok Wilderness Area Project (digital copy);