



2016 Annual Report

The Snow Leopard Network (SLN) is a worldwide organization dedicated to facilitating the exchange of information between individuals around the world for the purpose of snow leopard conservation. Our membership includes leading snow leopard experts in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

The main goal of this organization is to implement the Snow Leopard Survival Strategy (SLSS), which offers a comprehensive analysis of the issues facing snow leopard conservation today.

SLN Steering Committee (2015-2017):

Ms. Lu Zhi, Ph.D. (People's Republic of China) - Chair
Mr. John Farrington (Bhutan) - Member
Mr. Kun Shi, Ph.D. (People's Republic of China) - Member
Mr. Muhammad Ali Nawaz, Ph.D. (Pakistan) - Member
Ms. Sibylle Noras (Australia) - Member
Mr. S. Sathyakumar, Ph.D. (India) - Member
Mr. Steve Redpath, Ph.D. (United Kingdom) - Member

Charudutt Mishra, Executive Director

The SLN Steering Committee is supported by:
Rakhee Karumbaya, Program Coordinator

Steering Committee Meeting

The Steering Committee held a meeting (via Skype) in September 2016 in which they were updated on the IUCN listing and the status and finances of the Grants Program.

SLN support of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP).

The GSLEP program was launched after political leaders from snow leopard range countries endorsed the Bishkek Declaration in October 2013 during the International

Snow Leopard Forum hosted by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. The program aims to secure c. 500,000 km² of habitat, or over a quarter of the global snow leopard range, through community-based conservation, sustainable development and anti-poaching efforts in more than 20 large landscapes, each capable of harbouring at least 100 breeding snow leopards.

The SLN steering committee and members are involved in all activities of the GSLEP program from helping manage the program to providing key assistance in implementation.

Currently, various activities are being undertaken by the GSLEP program with engagement and inputs from SLN members. These include, but are not limited to preparation of management plans for GSLEP landscapes based on landscape management planning guidelines, and preparation of eight advice documents, on strategic management planning, participation in conservation, stakeholder analysis, integrated management and governance, best practices in conservation, climate smarting, mapping, and green growth models.

Two capacity building workshops on management planning, mapping and climate smarting have been organized by the GSLEP program with support from various partners, including SLN. These were attended by 60 participants from 9 snow leopard range countries and experts from across the world, followed by one stocktaking workshop attended by 66 participants representing 11 snow leopard range countries and experts from across the world.

Regular engagement is maintained between experts and practitioners from different parts of the world via the GSLEP website and a dedicated egroup. Three countries have been provided catalyst grants to support the management planning process. The Program has generated interest and support at the highest levels in the range country governments.

The second Steering Committee Meeting was recently conducted successfully in Kathmandu with the participation of all 12 range countries, including Ministers or Vice Ministers from 7 countries, and presided over by the Prime Minister of Nepal. Cumulatively, more than \$40 million have been channelized for GSLEP implementation via STAR GEF 6 allocations to seven range countries, apart from Government and support from various other organizations and institutions.

The Kyrgyz President has announced hosting of a Global Snow Leopard Summit in September 2017 in Bishkek. The Summit aims to energize the progress of the GSLEP Program at its mid-point (2013 – 2020), tackle the growing threats to snow leopards and their habitats, and raise financial resources for GSLEP implementation. The event is expected to help raise resources to support implementation of national and global priorities, and to foster integrated development of local economies and conservation of wildlife in Asia's mountain areas.

Countries have undertaken various activities that are being implemented to achieve their National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities. These include amendments in laws to include collaborative management of Protected Areas (Afghanistan), and

increased penalties for poaching and illegal wildlife trade have been undertaken (Bhutan). New Protected Areas have been created covering at least 25,000 km² of the snow leopard habitat (Wakhan, Afghanistan; Khan-Tengri, Kyrgyzstan; and Tost, Mongolia) and steps undertaken to strengthen the effectiveness of existing Protected Area Systems through conflict and garbage management and monitoring (Sanjiangyuan, China).

Training and capacity building programs have been held to address needs of the frontline staff, managers and conservation practitioners in combating illegal wildlife trade, conducting surveys, implementing community based conservation programs and using Geographical Information Systems.

Cumulatively, more than 250 people have been trained under various themes in various range countries (India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and China). Comprehensive snow leopard population databases have been developed for selected sites within 11 different GSLEP landscapes (Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan). Research and monitoring programs have been facilitated in parts of at least 16 GSLEP landscapes (Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia and Tajikistan).

Community based conservation programs have been implemented in at least 14 GSLEP landscapes (Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, India, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia and Tajikistan). Special programs have been initiated to improve capacity and ability of frontline staff to combat illegal wildlife (Kyrgyzstan). Cross learning trips by country teams have been conducted from at least two range countries to other range countries to understand successful research and conservation programs (Uzbekistan, Pakistan).

Request for considering the elevation of Tost Local Protected Area, Umnu-Gobi

In April 2016, members of the Steering Committee wrote to to the Speaker and Members of the **Great Ikh Hural**, Mongolia, requesting them to consider elevating the protection status of the Tost Local Protected Area (LPA) in Umnu-Gobi. With due consideration and after reading such letters from SLN and other organisations, the Mongolian Parliament declared Tost, a State Protected Area. The mountain range is home to a stable, breeding population of snow leopards.

The Great Ikh Hural, Mongolia's parliament, approved a proposal to turn the Tost Mountains, a prime snow leopard habitat in the country's South Gobi province, into a Nature Reserve, one of four categories of State Protected Areas under Mongolian law.

Under this designation, only traditional economic activities such as livestock grazing that aren't harmful to nature will be allowed, while mining, construction, and hunting will be prohibited.

2015 Grant Projects

Upon the request of the major current donor to the Grants Program, this year's funds were made available to range country governments or their partners towards developing management plans of GSLEP landscapes. The Steering Committee therefore decided to defer the open competitive grants cycle.

Membership

By the end of 2016, SLN membership totalled 676 members from 46 countries. 45 new members were welcomed to the SLN during 2016.

Bibliography

By the end of 2016, the SLN Bibliography contained 1428 articles and references with 14 new additions during the year.

SLN Communications

During 2016 the SLN continued to actively share news and information from members and others via the List Serve, the website and the SLN Twitter account.

The SLN Twitter account followers grew substantially from 235 followers at the end of 2015 to 418 at the end of 2016. Most of our followers are key stakeholders and active players in snow leopard conservation including many NGO and conservation agencies. The over 140 Tweets shared have been key to spreading news of meetings, studies, research activities, publications, range country activities, illegal trade activities and more.