



Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust

October 2011 to March 2012



We at Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT) are proud to collaborate with the Ladakh International Film Festival (LIFF) in June 2012. LIFF aimed at making Ladakh a melting pot for cross cultural cinematic experience to be cherished by all in years to come. Snow Leopard, is the official mascot of the festival, it will support in generating awareness about the ghost of the mountains. SLC-IT will be partnering with LIFF.



Join us in June 2012 in the highlands of Ladakh for films, workshops, snow leopards and a whole lot more!

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to thank the Department of Wildlife Protection (J&K), Animal Husbandry Department (J&K), Education Department (J&K) and Tourism Department (J&K). Our program partners Panthera, International Snow Leopard Trust, Snow Leopard Conservancy (USA), NABARD, Kalpavriksh, Rufford Small Grants, WWF-India, Create Foundation, Ecotourism Society of India (ESOI), INTACH, Nature Conservation Foundation, Eco-Sphere, Wildlife Conservation Network, Mountain Initiatives, Friends of Lingshed, Australian Himalayan Foundation, Monasse Films, Love & Faith, Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, I Love My Mother Earth (ILMME)

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MISSION

Since its inception in 2000, the Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT) has been dedicated to promoting community based stewardship of the endangered snow leopard, its prey and habitat to the benefit of local people and the environment in the trans-Himalayan regions of Ladakh and Zaskar.

REMEMBERING RINCHEN WANGCHUK



Just over a year ago, on 26th March 2011, Rinchen Wangchuk, the illustrious son of Ladakh who was the co-founder of Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT-Ladakh) passed away succumbing to Motor Neuron Diseases. A year later, Rinchen's family, friends and colleagues with whom he passionately worked for the community conservation initiatives in remotest areas of Ladakh and also to save Snow leopard in the Himalayas of Ladakh and the neighbouring area, remember him fondly.

A young man who was quite passionate about Snow Leopard and its conservation, Rinchen was born to an equally illustrious father, the famous Colonel Rinchen of Ladakh



who was awarded the highest army award the Paramvir Chakra twice, on 11th August, 1969 in Dehradun. After his graduation in different parts of North India as his father

served Indian army at various places in the region, he came back to his homeland Ladakh. In 1997 he started working with International Snow Leopard Trust in Ladakh as a field associate. He conducted surveys and closely studied the community-snow leopard conflicts. His vision was to support impoverish local communities who suffered heavily due to livestock losses to predators, especially Snow Leopards.



To continue support to local communities and conservation efforts, he co-founded the Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust along with Dr. Rodney Jackson in 2000. During the course of the work, his vision of towards adopting innovative community conservation initiatives to solve conflict issues was perhaps his greatest achievement. He initiated the Himalayan Homestay Program in Ladakh in 2002 along with the Department of Wildlife Protection (J&K). With this program, he was able to convince local communities to curtail retaliatory killings, at the same time provide alternative income generating activities such as homestays. The UNESCO funded program, brought about pioneering conservation measures in Ladakh that has only grown from strength to strength since its inception.

Rinchen Wangchuk will always be remembered by colleagues and friends as a spirited soul who changed the path of conservation in Ladakh. Since his untimely death, SLC-IT has been now led by his contemporaries, who are enduring the legacy that he has left behind. His wife, Rigzin Dolma, is now a Trustee of the organisation, and actively involved in the work of SLC-IT. His vision for Ladakh and the Snow Leopards will continue to strengthen thanks to foundations laid by him.



Sadly, Rinchen's dreams died quite young, just at 42.



CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR HANDICRAFTS MICRO-ENTERPRISE IN SHAM VALLEY

As a part of our continual support to the on-going efforts in Sham Valley, SLC-IT conducted the handicrafts training in two villages - Saspoche and Ullay.

Ullay is presently one of the homestay sites in Sham Valley, and Saspoche will be developed in the near future for the same. To diversify their income potentials, this training program had both men and women participating in the training program. The training program was conducted by SLC-IT along with Ute Meuser from Germany, who is also an expert on Dry Felting Techniques.



The workshop continued for over two days. The training emphasized on using dry felting techniques, that would enable them to make handicrafts designs pertaining to wild animals found of Ladakh. We were glad and have been much impressed by the creativity and enthusiasm of the participants. With Ute's support we hope to continue these workshops in other parts of Ladakh.



NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN SHAM VALLEY

SLC-IT with support from Panthera is presently implementing a community conservation project in two villages of western Ladakh to address the issues of predation and conservation with the local communities.

Community consultations were held with the communities of Saspoche and Skindiyang for the construction of the predator friendly enclosures. The objective of the workshop was to develop an action plan for the enclosure that was to be built at the respective villages. There were more than 15 members present at Saspoche and 18 members from the village of Skindiyang. Due to the early winter and the cold, the livestock had been brought back to the village. The community has decided on the place and the size of the corral. For Saspoche the number of livestock to be kept is 202 and the size of the corral will be approximately 16x30 feet and for Skindiyang, the number of livestock will be 366 and the approximately size will be 20x40. The Saspoche enclosure will be built in Matuka summer pasture and for Skindiyang it will be built in Skindiyang Phu, upper pasture. Both communities will provide labour for construction and built the outer circular wall with mud bricks that will be made at the respective villages itself.



SLC-IT also conducted a consultation in both the villages to introduce the community conservation program in the village of Saspoche and Skindiyang. It was subsequently followed by an ecotourism awareness workshop with the village communities at Saspoche and Skindiyang. The objective to introduce them to the principles of community based homestay tourism that will be developed in the both the villages, also emphasizing on importance of conservation and signing of agreements that would ultimately lead to no retaliatory or revenge killings of snow leopards and other predators. In the coming months, SLC-IT with support from Panthera will develop environmentally-sound tourism



project. This program is aimed at providing incentives to preserve wildlife, help offset economic losses from livestock depredation and reduce the dependency on animal husbandry. Since the project sites fall in the existing trekking routes, this will add value and encourage more longer stays from tourists covering all sites in the Sham Valley.

CONSTRUCTION OF CORRALS IN ZANSKAR VALLEY

The construction of the corrals was started in the end of September and completed in October. During the construction of the enclosures, the team also undertook monitoring and depredation survey for the period. A person from the village was chosen to supervise the construction of the enclosure and for repairs in the future.



The team also brief them about wildlife preservation and other important conservation issues. The main objective of the enclosures that were being built was there would be less livestock losses and NO retaliatory killings of snow leopards and other wildlife.



The team in Zanskar also conducted a monitoring and a depredation survey of livestock numbers and losses during the summer period. This would ensure the number of losses and help established the decrease in losses after the construction of the corrals. Also, there have been many losses reported in the house enclosures, SLC-IT will be providing small mesh wires for the underground home corrals as well.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

ON-GOING RESEARCH IN WESTERN LADAKH

As a part of the 2011 population estimation program on Snow Leopards in Western Ladakh, SLC-IT alongwith its partners mainly Panthera and Department of Wildlife Protection is continuing with camera trapping covering a larger area this year. This study will help estimate the snow leopard population from a relatively smaller region of Western Ladakh known as the Sham Valley. The study has been designed with the support of Dr. Koustubh Sharma and Dr. Raghu Chundawat.

Studies has already started revealing interesting facts on snow leopard distribution and movement in the region. The camera trapping study will continue for few months, after which the results will be analyzed . Along side, we are conducting a socio-economic and depredation survey in all the villages along the sham valley.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



RI-GYANCHA IN MORE SCHOOLS

SLC-IT also conducted an orientation program with the teachers at the Government Middle Schools of Saspoche and Skindiyang. The objective was to introduce the environmental education program to the school and ensure support from the teachers and staff at both the schools. Later, the first two –day workshop was also held in the series of four workshops at both the schools. The main objective of the workshop was to train them about local biodiversity and install the knowledge familiarize. The workshop was conducted from the 21st to 25th of November, 2011. At Saspoche, there were 7 teachers and 15 students and Skindiyang there were 4 teachers and 18 students



The teachers were introduced to the Snow Leopard Conservation Education Programme. They were also briefed on the different aspects and outcomes of the program so far, including the sessions that would be conducted at the respective schools in the next academic year. Before the start of the workshop, we conducted a base assessment with the

students, to know their knowledge and understanding of environmental and biodiversity issues of Ladakh and India. There were different introductory sessions conducted with interactive games. A film was also showcased pertaining to wildlife in Hemis National Park. The innovative methods used in the workshop were very effective and the response from the students and teachers were very positive. The participants acknowledge and appreciated the workshop. The outcome of the program was that in future they want more and more workshop in their school.



WINTER TRAINING AT D.I.E.T

SLC-IT along with financial support from SLC-US conducted the winter training program for teachers & educators at District Institution for Training And Education (DITE) Kalpavriksh conducted a teacher training program from the 4th to 30th of January 2012. The training was conducted at the DIET, Leh.

A one week workshop was conducted at DIET Leh with RT teachers of different government Schools. It was workshop about the 'Ri-Gyancha' handbook of the SLC-IT Leh. The main purpose of this workshop was to educate the teachers about the handbook and the materials content in it, so, in future this book can be used in the school as an environmental subject in their Schools. Every year all the Resident teachers is given this training on the subject so that they can get more effective methods of teaching from the experts. For this purpose all the experts in respective subject, were called upon to teach them. SLC –IT conducted one week workshop there. There were 314 resident teachers participated in this training. This training was organising by DIET Leh. All the teachers were come from different block like Nubra, Leh, Changthang, and Khaltse. Teachers were divided into six sessions and each session has more than fifty teachers. All the teachers were seemed to interest in the wildlife because they were asked so many questions. They were thought using the same tools used in schools. To get teachers fully interested we tried our best efforts to ensure they would acquire more knowledge about Ladakh wild



WORKSHOP AND TRAINING



animals and biodiversity issues. Jigmet Dadul from SLC-IT was there to answer queries and questions on snow leopard. After the talk, the game tailing the snow leopard was played by them, some teachers especially the ladies, were shy to play the game. But they liked the game while seeing others teachers playing, which were active same like we found among the students in the schools. Through all the sessions, they all were keenly interested and we are sure will be better stewards to protect the Ri-gyancha that are the wild animals.

The innovative methods used in the training were very effective and the response from the participants was positive. The participants acknowledge and appreciated the program. The outcome of the program was that undertakes and continues training for using Ri-Gyancha in their classroom.

SPITI - ECOSPHERE TEAM IN LADAKH

The team Eco-Sphere, an social enterprise, based in Spiti was in Ladakh in February for a exchange trip with SLC-IT. This visit culminated into a 2nd phase of training program for Spiti educators on Ri-Gyancha environmental education and naturalist guide training program.

From 20th to 29th February, Sujatha Padmanabhan along with the SLC-IT trainers Angmo and K.C Namgyal conducted the training on how to use Ri-Gyancha resource kit in classrooms. All the sessions and games were demonstrated and discussed in detail with the team. Experiences from the Ladakh environmental education program along with suggestions on best practices for the implementation were also discussed. The participants were asked to tailor make the information pertaining to Spiti region.



After the environmental education training program, a Naturalist Guides Training Program was held for the team. Coupled with classroom sessions emphasizing on wildlife conservation and pre-briefing sessions before field visits or leading tours. Field sessions were mainly on wildlife viewing techniques and bird watching. Efforts were also made in developing Snow Leopard Treks in Spiti with emphasizes on local cultural experience and other wildlife viewing. During the field visits, the team were lucky to spot a snow leopard in Ladakh and inspired they will be able to develop responsible treks and tours focused on snow leopards in Spiti.



SNOW LEOPARDS 'JOY RUN'

Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT) participated in the 'JOY RUN' in Mumbai and Delhi on the 26th February, 2012. This event was organised by I Love My Mother Earth Foundation. This idea was to run to show support for the wonderful causes of NGOs small and big. For SLC-IT it was an opportunity to help us raise awareness about Snow Leopards and our efforts in conservation and community outreach in the high-altitude regions of Ladakh. With more than 15 participants each in Mumbai and Delhi, all in all it was a great start to the Joy Run 2012! We are sure to bring in more supporters and fans of Snow Leopards to join the Snow Leopards Team next year for the Joy Run in more cities in India.



NEW PARTNERSHIPS

SLC-IT has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) and Hemchandrarcharya North Gujarat University (HNGU) in February and March 2012 respectively.

We are sure these partnerships will support in establishing a framework that will support us to take on collaborative educational and research projects. Also, collaborate on joint projects that mutually benefit organizations involved. Such co-operation are intended to particularly benefit the exchange of ideas and capacity building of project stakeholders.



SLC-IT HAS A NEW IDENTITY

We have changed our Identity!

Based on the 'Shy Shan' concept, the new logo has been designed by Rajul Dhaimade from Love & Faith, production and design company based in Mumbai. Its shy and elusive, its fresh and youthful....



LADAKH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (LIFF)

Leh will play host to the highest altitude film festival of the world- Ladakh International Film Festival (LIFF), organized by Monassé, at 13,500 ft above the sea level from June 15th to June 17th 2012.

The Ladakh International Film Festival aspires to delight cinema aficionados from around the world to visit and get experience the best of world cinema in the magical environs of Ladakh. Chaired by Shri Shyam Benegal, LIFF Patrons include very senior film professionals and young, enthusiastic cine lovers and is supported by prominent luminaries from the film fraternity. Melwyn Williams Chirayath is the Festival Director of the Ladakh International Film Festival. Apart from this the Jury Head and the Jury Members will be appointed by Shri Shyam Benegal.





The mascot of Ladakh International Film Festival is 'Shan' - The Snow Leopard. Through its association with the Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT), the Festival's aim will be to raise awareness amongst people from all over the world on protecting the rare and endangered Snow Leopard. There are over 40 Snow Leopard Trophies to be given, including the 'Best Film on Endangered Species.'



Festival Director, Melwyn Williams Chirayath said, "Ladakh International Film Festival is like a dream come true as it was always a desire for me to associate my love for cinema and love for the beautiful environs of Ladakh. Through the Ladakh International Film Festival, it will be our mission to give this region its due and at the same time, make it a green initiative by conserving the ecosphere here and introducing carbon offsets. The presence of Cannes and Copenhagen Film Festival Directors and eminent Jury and Patrons members is proof to the fact that this Festival holds immense promise and potential to be one of the best and probably the most exotic Film Festivals in the world. It is high time we start thinking towards contributing back"

Chairman/CEC, LAHDC, LEH Rigzin Spalbar said on behalf of the governing body of Ladakh said, "We welcome the holding of LIFF in Leh next year. It was discussed in the Executive Council Meeting of the LAHDC Leh on Nov. 12th 2011 and was unanimously decided to grant permission. We shall be more than happy to extend our full support to the organizers in holding the Festival."

Multiple screen projections along with sound for better visibility during day time screenings will be installed at the venue. There will be an auditorium screening with 35mm dual projection and 5.1 sound facilities. Besides this, there will be two open air screenings. Films will be screened in three venues simultaneously and venues will have transportation facilities like buses and bicycles. Film Shoppé, planting fish and fish eggs in the river bodies of Ladakh, exhibitions, workshops and Green Carpet Premieré are other highlights of the festival.

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