



Message from HE Lyonpo Yeshey Dorji, Minister, MoAF on Social Forestry Day, 2014

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The support to enhance the linkage between traders and producers is one of the major activities under Market Access and Growth Intensification Project

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365M

Value addition to the Breathtaking view



Tshophu Lake

Ecotourism is defined as a responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people. The ecological aspect means that ecotourism contributes positively to the conservation of nature. The economic aspect means it is a tool for a sustainable economy. The focus is enjoying what the earth has to offer, without humans having a negative impact on natural resources, cultures, or communities.

A thought on the developing the community of Soe gewog under Thimphu Dzongkhag through the value addition to Tshophu Lake located 4100 mts above sea

level is to create an recreational scheme. The highland community relies on livestock and a bit of crops for their livelihood. The harsh environment restricts sustainable

"Fishing can be made possible but in a sustainable approach. Visitors can fish at the lake on a catch and release manner or could get it for cooking session"

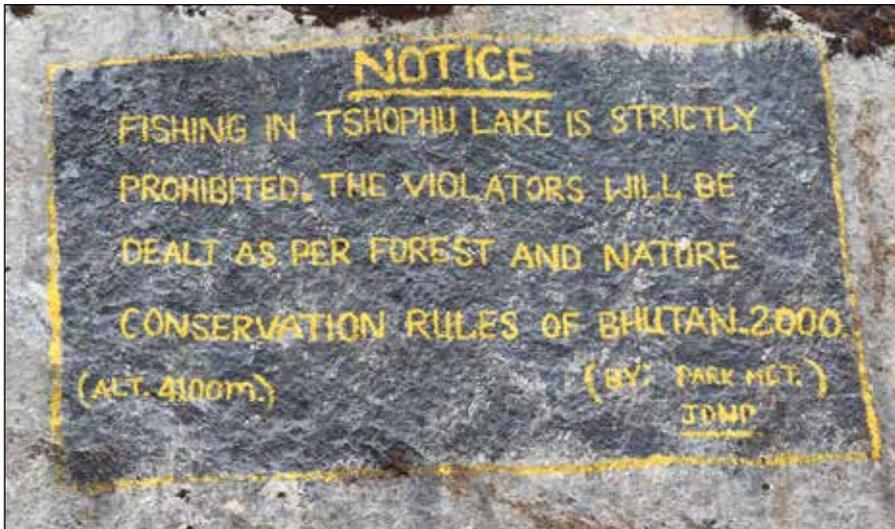
development activities to flourish and as a result rural urban migration is becoming a major issue.

An idea to develop the highland community is through eco-tourism, an idea that enable the community to offer visitors unique and exciting tourism experiences that foster an appreciation and understanding of natural and cultural heritage, provide visitors with opportunities to experience attractions of local communities and assist in realizing the tourism potential through sustainable economic development.

Managed by the community, horse and yak riding around the lake is a possible

Cont. on page 2

Cont. from page 1 :Value addition to the Breathtaking view



Fishing is currently prohibited at Tshophu lake

approach, whereby visitors enjoy the serenity and breathtaking view of some of the highest peaks in the world, while the local people share about the history, legends and unique ecology of the area.

Fishing can be made possible but in a sustainable approach. Visitors can fish at the lake on a catch and release manner or could get it for cooking session. The community could also provide fishing equipments on hire. Although fishing is restricted, an understanding could be created with the authority where by the community administer the control over fishing and permit for fishing.

Community could arrange local guide to visit other lakes and hike over passes some located 5000mts above sea level.



Blue sheep: Blue sheep are found throughout the northern Bhutan above 4,000 to 4,500 masl particularly in Jigme Dorji National Park. They stand 69 to 91 cm high at the shoulder and are usually found near cliffs, bare and rocky hills above the tree line but below the snow line, where grass is abundant. Blue sheep generally live in large groups

and feed on grass and alpine herbs and lichens. They are preferred prey for snow leopards. Its body mass can range from 35 to 75 kgs. It is found that males are slightly larger than a female which breeds during December-January. According to records, Blue sheep can live 12-15 years and is listed as least concern under the International Union

for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. In Bhutan, the species is not in immediate danger and numbers seem to be increasing.

Its native names include Bharal, Barhal, Bharar and bharut in India, Na or Sna in Ladakh, Nabo in Spitian, Naur in Nepali and Na or Gnao in Bhutan.



Social Forestry Day 2014 Message

Forests are integral and indispensable parts of our lives and even more so for us Bhutanese who have relied on forests since time immemorial. The Land Cover Atlas of Bhutan 2011 shows that 80.89% of the total land cover constitutes forest including 70.46% tree cover and another 10.43% of shrubs.

Today, our forests are under tremendous pressure from human population, urban sprawl and forest fires, which lead to their deforestation and degradation. We have lost about 47,501 acres of forests in 239 incidences of forest fires, and 38,577 acres of forest area to farm roads construction and power transmission lines among others in the last five years. When forests are lost or severally degraded, their capacity to function as regulator of climate, soil, water and air is either diminished or lost. We have also seen that Human Wildlife Conflict is on the rise over the years due to increasing anthropogenic pressure on natural resources, thus driving wild animals from their forest habitat into agricultural land. Therefore, maintaining good forest cover is crucial for the Bhutanese economy as well as for a healthy ecosystem goods and services.

Every year we welcome June 2 as our Social Forestry Day to ensure sustainable management of the forest resources and nurture our forest stock with each individual making a small effort for a bigger impact. This year our theme is "Plant trees for Green Bhutan" which corresponds and conforms with our developmental theme for the 11th FYP. We urge school children, general public and individual citizens to plant tree seedlings on this day and nurture it. The primary purpose is to inculcate love and care amongst our young students towards forests and nature.

On behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and on my own behalf I would like to extend my warm greetings to everyone in celebrating Social Forestry Day, 2014. Let me also take this opportunity to solicit the cooperation and commitment of each and every individual in conserving our natural resources. The seedlings you have planted today will contribute to meeting the sacred provision of the Constitution of Kingdom of Bhutan of maintaining 60% forest cover in perpetuity.

On this auspicious day, June 2, the Coronation Anniversary of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck, let us not only plant tree seedlings but also join hands in offering our collective prayers and good wishes for the long life and well-being of our revered monarch His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo. We must persevere in our efforts to maintain this standing and pride by contributing in our own small ways by planting tree seedling and ensuring their growth and survival.

Tashi Delek

Yeshey Dorji
Minister
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests





Marmot: Marmots are large rodents with flat heads, small ears, and short necks. They are about the size of a large housecat; it has a dark chocolate-brown coat with contrasting yellow patches on its face and chest. Their feet all have five digits with sharp claws and pads well-adapted for digging burrows. Large groups of marmots live together in underground burrows made up of tunnels

and dens. They are found at elevations between 2,400 and 4,300 m. They hibernate during the winter and are diurnal (active during the day) the rest of the year.

Marmots feed on grasses, leaves, flowers, fruit, and other plant materials and are prey species for snow leopards where their habitats overlap.

Considering its wide distribution,

presumed large population and because it is unlikely to be declining fast, Marmot is listed as Least Concern in threatened category.

Besides Bhutan, Marmot is also found in the countries like Afghanistan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Tajikistan.



Blood Pheasant: The Blood pheasant (*Ithaginis cruentus*) is the only species in genus *Ithaginis* of the pheasant family. They have the size of a small fowl, about 17 in (43 cm) in length with a short convex, very strong black bill, feathered between bill and eye, and a small crest of various coloured feathers.

Both males and females have red feet and a distinct ring of bare skin around the eye that typically is crimson colored, females are overall dull brown and often with some gray to the nape.

They move their range depending on the seasons, and are found at higher elevations of 3300 mts during the summer. With snow increasing in fall and winter they move to lower elevations. Blood Pheasant is common in eastern Himalayas, ranging across India, Nepal, Bhutan and China.

Since the trend of the population appears to be slowly decreasing, the species has been evaluated as Least Concern by IUCN in 2009.

The Blood Pheasant is the state bird of the Indian state of Sikkim.



His Majesty the King appointed Dasho Tenzin Dhendup as the new Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture & Forests on 23 May 2014.

The RNR family would like to offer our heartfelt congratulations to Hon'ble Dasho on his new appointment and look forward to his continued leadership.

Prior to his current appointment, Dasho Tenzin Dhendup has served as Officiating Secretary and Director General for Department of Agriculture. Dasho started his career as Trainee Officer at Warm Water Fishery, Gelephu, Department of Livestock in 1981. He has Bachelors in Zoology from St. Edmunds College, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India and M.Sc in Aquatic Biology from Auburn University, Alabama in the United States.

Linking traders to market local produce

By Bhim Raj Gurung, RAMCO

The agricultural marketing is a complex system which requires proper identification and functioning of different actors in value chain of RNR products. The linkage between producers and traders is a key towards effective agricultural marketing. While producers would know what they have to produce depending on the need from the traders, the traders on other hand will provide information on what market demands to the producers. Therefore, traders play a vital role by linking producers with the consumers.

The Regional Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives Office (RAMCO), Mongar under the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives (DAMC) as a facilitator in enhancing agricultural marketing system considers linking of all the actors in value chain as an important means to develop agriculture production and marketing system. The support to enhance the linkage between traders and producers is one of the major activities under Market Access and Growth Intensification Project (MAGIP).

The RAMCO in collaboration with

Dzongkhag RNR sectors and technical support from HRDP/JICA RNR-RDC Wengkhari and SNV Bhutan always regards the importance of building strong linkage for marketing RNR products. Various meetings, consultative workshops, facilitation and interaction among the stakeholders (farmers, traders, middlemen and retailers, BCCI, RRCO, RTIO, Financial institutions, FCBL, RSTA) are conducted to create conducive environment for both producers and traders to do agricultural marketing.

Under the Vegetable Value Chain Programme in the east (VVCPE), there are 115 farmers groups producing vegetables. These groups are introduced with local and Indian traders to market their produce. 90 out of 115 farmers groups are linked with 35 schools/institutes for the supply of vegetables. The linking of farmers with schools/institutes gives guarantee to farmers to supply agricultural products for a period of 10 months (academic session).

On the other hand, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF) has entrusted Food Corporation of Bhutan

Limited (FCBL) to carry out the physical marketing of RNR products. The approach will provide opportunity to farmers to enhance production and the traders to get required quality and volume to market.

The building of strong linkage between producers and traders/vendors will help in enhancing the production and improving marketing of agricultural products. Following are some of the important points that need to be undertaken to have efficient agricultural marketing system:

- A reliable and quality production of market demanded agricultural products will encourage active participation of traders in the value chain. This will require formation of farmers groups and cooperatives with strong support from technical departments to enhance market led production.
- Relevant information sharing is vital in functioning of the value chain. Consultative meetings, workshops, information sharing and interaction are some of the important avenues to have understanding and building trust among the stakeholders.
- Provide necessary support to create enabling environment for agricultural marketing. The development of necessary market infrastructures (collection shed, stores, and cold stores) will encourage traders to carry out agricultural marketing more effectively.
- Capacity development for both traders and farmers should go hand in hand and they must be made aware of their interdependence. In many cases the agricultural marketing fails when traders and producers work independently.
- Promote linkage between traders and farmers groups to establish sustainable agricultural marketing.



Participants during the consultation meeting with traders



Assessment of non-wood forest products

By Lakey Khandu, Merak and Jigme Tshelthrim Wangyal, DzFO

The Dzongkhag Forestry Sector in Merak under Trashigang is focusing on the formation of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) groups that are economically viable and sustainably manageable through support from projects like Market Access Growth Intensification Project (MAGIP), Participatory Forest Management Project, Global Environmental Facility and others.

The natural resources that are available in Merak are of great economic value and the inhabitants depend mostly on the resources for their survival. Some resources are associated to religious while many are used for medicine and day-to-day consumption. Besides the timber resources, the commonly used and available NWFPs include Chirata spp. (two varieties), Daphne sp., Paris polyphylla, Gentiana sp. and many species (Juniperus spp., Rhododendrons spp., Lyonia sp., etc.). As such, the group management and knowing sustainable techniques for its harvest is crucial, both for the people living around and for forest conservation.

MAGIP supported various groups includes the Chirata group named Shingkhar Ngomen Tshogpa, Daphne Group, Satuwa Group, and Incense Production Group. The program supported by MAGIP and other projects has helped the four community groups to

produce the resources legally. They are now poised to sell the product without having to hide and are able to work in group and produce more giving them more economic advantage.

Further, with the support of MAGIP, at least two meetings, one for assessment of resources and the other for training the Daphne harvesters were conducted in Merak in April, 2014. The objectives of the awareness meeting amongst many included making people aware how sustainable resources use could help make the earth better place to live.

In addition, the Brogpas of Merak has proposed three new groups at both the meetings such as Shamu Tshogpa, Pangen Metog Tshogpa and Lichen/Algae/Fungi group. But before the group formation, it was felt necessary to do the resource assessment in the coming years.

As per the prioritisation of the NWFPs species result, at least 50 households considered Paris polyphylla as the most important followed by Illicium griffithii and wooden burrs (Dapa) with minimum numbers of households considering Gentiana species to be least beneficial economically.

Therefore, a consensus was reached immediately to have a Satuwa management group, for which the management planning was done and plan was prepared on the spot. When it came to mushroom, the participants

agreed that there are at least 15 species of mushroom in geog which can be traded.

The species availability assessment conducted during the meeting showed the most available resources to be Chirata followed by Satuwa which need group formation.

Merak now has management groups for Chirata, Incense and Daphne and Satuwa. It was found that more than 50% of the total NWFPs available in Merak do not have management plans and have been harvested in their own ancient ways without any proper management practices. Therefore, programs such as this “promotion of NWFPs” are very important for species conservation as well as human welfare, the reason for which, projects like MAGIP in Trashigang is in place.



Resources mapping

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