I am tremendously pleased that the Snow Leopard Conservancy will be welcoming in early 2007 Som Ale, (at right), a Nepalese biologist and conservationist currently completing his PhD at the University of Illinois. Som will be joining us for an extended period of “on-the-job” training. I have known Som since I served as his advisor when he attended Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu in 1990.

Som will lead our Nepal program as well as facilitate programs and provide training to local conservationists in Nepal, India, Pakistan and hopefully also Tibet.

Som photographed the cat seen here in 2005; it was the first confirmed sighting of the elusive snow leopard on the Nepal side of Mount Everest since the 1960s.

There is mixed news to report following the forum with His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, held in November 2005 at the National Geographic Society’s Washington D.C. headquarters, and His Holiness’s subsequent urging of Tibetans to stop wearing the skins of tigers, snow leopards and other endangered animals. In the Feb. 15, ’06 issue of Britain’s “The Independent,” Justin Huggler wrote:

A rich and unusual smoke has been drifting into the Tibetan skies. People have been emerging from their homes and burning furs and animal skins. Onlookers have gathered to watch as Tibetans burned tiger skins worth as much as £6,000 in the streets...

In one town, it is said you can see the smoking ruins of tiger skins and other furs along the roadside. These scenes are not part of some exotic ritual. They are part of a major new environmental drive among Tibetans...

The Chinese government has enacted legislation prohibiting international trade in endangered species, although skins are still sold openly in some cities. But the network of protected areas along the Tibetan Plateau has been expanded, a critical action, as China is thought to harbor some 60% of the snow leopard’s habitat.

It is gratifying to know that people everywhere care what happens to the earth’s remaining wild cats. Fully seventy-eight percent of the Snow Leopard Conservancy’s funding in 2006 came from individuals who share our determination to help local communities become the best guardians of their snow leopards.

We think of our donors — individuals, foundations and companies — as members of a special family whose names can still fit on one page of our annual report, but who are a powerful force for conservation. Kids alone raised over $2,000 for our in-country education programs. That’s partnership at its best!

Congratulations to our colleagues at the International Snow Leopard Trust, who recently placed a satellite radio collar on a beautiful female snow leopard in the Chitral Gol region of Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province.

Rodney Jackson, Founder-Director
Snow Leopard Conservancy
The summer of 2006 brought the century’s worst flooding to Ladakh, Nubra, and Zanskar. Roads, bridges, and one entire village were washed away, adobe homes were heavily damaged, crops and lives were lost. To add to the challenges of community-based conservation in this remote area, a dispute between the district government and local NGOs led to the putting on hold of many activities. Still, we were able to stay on track with most of our work.

The Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust participated in a situation analysis for the Changthang Biodiversity Conservation and Rural Livelihoods Improvement project, sponsored by the World Bank Global Environment Fund.

SLC-India Trust’s Pune-based education program partner, Kalpavriksh, trained two village-based facilitators to conduct activities in targeted rural schools. Workshops reached some seventy children in six settlements in Hemis National Park. The State Education Department was so impressed with Kalpavriksh’s special teaching materials (posters of the flora and fauna of northern India, interactive games, and a teachers’ manual) that they asked SLC-India Trust to mass produce them for wider distribution.

Thanks to a generous donor, SLC-India Trust replaced its wornout vehicle with a new Indian-built Maruti Gypsy. Director Rinchen Wangchuk drove the vehicle some 1200 km. over unimproved mountain roads, since the highway to Leh was closed for the winter.

With the completion of ten new corrals in the Zanskar and Nubra areas, we have now predator-proofed twenty-two corrals since the program began, serving 194 households and some 3,000 head of livestock. These corrals are protecting from herder retaliation up to twenty snow leopards in Zanskar, five in Nubra and ten in Ladakh.

Himalayan Homestays continue to grow and attract accolades. FabIndia Overseas Pvt. Ltd. donated Rs. 150,000 worth home fabrics, curtains, and linens, helping Himalayan Homestay host families improve their guest rooms and increase visitation. The Oct. 14, 2006 Guardian Travel Section said: There are plenty of places in India that bandy around the words “eco” and “responsible”, but you have to look carefully to find those places that offer an authentic green holiday rather than a greenwash. Himalayan Homestays is the real deal. You’re invited to eat meals in the kitchen with the family...and there are plenty of local trekking guides to take you to see ancient monasteries and wildlife...the local thing is just what it is, not what it pretends to be.
Pakistan Program

In Gojal, volunteer Andrew Chinn, consultant Rehman Posh, and representatives of the Khunjerab Village Organization developed a methodology for identifying depredation hotspots in the Khunjerab National Park buffer zone. They conducted a baseline corral inventory and created an action plan for 2006-2007. Five areas were identified with pens most in need of predator-proofing, and a total of thirteen corrals are scheduled for construction starting in 2007.

Shepherds reported that in more than 58 years no depredation on livestock occurred on the Biobar pasture, but recent attacks indicate that snow leopard populations have increased. In fact an attack had just occurred three hours away, with the loss of twenty livestock. Shepherdess Tai Bergum witnessed the snow leopard attack. "It was the first time I had seen the snow leopard and I was very scared."

Bibi Sulton expressed the views of the community. "Hopefully, SLC can document this attack and help us. Allah arranged by fortune that you arrived at the time of this incident to help our community."

Tai Bergum suggested a half-time paid shepherd with a dog would benefit the community greatly. Then the men would not have to travel to Sost looking for work.

"If the men are here again they can build the big walls. We can then revert to our traditional jobs of making milk, yogurt and bread. We would be happy to provide food for the workforce."

In Baltistan, corral predator-proofing continued at several sites, and the Snow Leopard Conservancy recruited a Pakistani student to undertake snow leopard food habits studies in order to determine the importance of livestock in the cat’s diet.

World Environment Day, June 5

The consultants were guests of honor at the Gircha School’s celebrations. They described the corral predator-proofing in partnership with SLC, and conducted conservation education activities with the children.

The students were interested to hear that in Andrew’s homeland of Scotland the lynx and wolf had been hunted to extinction in the 18th Century and now tourists went to other countries to see these wonderful animals. They understood the importance of protecting the beautiful snow leopard.

Going the Extra Mile for Snow Leopards


Try www.Goodsearch.com and help us grow this “free” source of funding! Goodsearch directs $.01 to your designated nonprofit, every time you use their Google-sponsored engine to search the web. The Snow Leopard Conservancy received $26.33 for 2006.

Does your employer have a Matching Grant program? In 2006 the Snow Leopard Conservancy received matches from Bank of America, Harder & Company, IBM, Microsoft, and Systems Applications and Products in Data Processing (SAP)

Thanks to Dr. Georges Barth and the Zurich Zoo for the great photo of Dshamilja and her cub Gul’cha - soon to be available for purchase on our website!
But SLC has provided something much better: the protection from predators that the villagers desire, and a chance for the snow leopard to live, as well.

I recall interviewing villagers who described “ammunition” and “bullets” as their greatest development need—to rid their villages and pastures of snow leopards. Fences—benefiting a sizable share of the sheep, goat, and yak herders in the region. While working as Field Director for the American Himalayan Foundation, Program Coordinator Chhimi Gurung has worked with the communities to install predator-proof corrals—including successful trials of solar-powered electric fences—benefiting a total of 144 households and 14,190 sheep and goats. These corrals, along with the five others built since 2003, are protecting up to twenty snow leopards.

The local herder Pema Rinjin said, “The new gyang corral protects our livestock from cold wind during the winter, as well as from snow leopards.”

Chhimi Rinzen Gurung oversaw the construction of two standard corrals and two Gyang wall (rammed earth) corrals benefitting a total of 144 households and 14,190 sheep and goats. These corrals, along with the five others built since 2003, are protecting up to twenty snow leopards.

Chhimi also introduced conservation education in three schools, reaching seventy-six students from Classes 4 to 8. A teacher from each school participated in the training. Educational activities included plant and animal identification, a field trip to the experimental forage plot, and various contests. Students and teachers asked that the program be continued. Chhimi wrote:

All the students are very excited to know the different kinds of wildlife, and they are eager to learn more. Drawing wildlife is the best program in school. Some of the students asked lots of questions, and they now have a good concept of how to conserve the endangered wildlife. Most of the creative students brought a lot of new ideas to develop the program.

SLC’s Education Consultant Nagendra Bhudathoki received the Jane Spence/ Joe White Alumni Award from Audubon of the North Woods, for his commitment to environmental education in his home country.

The progress, and results, of SLC’s innovative and enterprising work in upper Mustang, Nepal, have been nothing less than remarkable. With modest funds, Program Coordinator Chhimi Gurung has worked with the communities to install predator-proof corrals—including successful trials of solar-powered electric fences—that benefit a sizable share of the sheep, goat, and yak herders in the region. While working as Field Director for the American Himalayan Foundation, I recall interviewing villagers who described “ammunition” and “bullets” as their greatest development need—to rid their villages and pastures of snow leopards. But SLC has provided something much better: the protection from predators that the villagers desire, and a chance for the snow leopard to live, as well.”

- Broughton Coburn, Co-editor, Himalaya: Personal Stories of Grandeur, Challenge and Hope
Conservation Highlights
(Continued)

Thanks to the Christensen Fund for the major grant in 2005 that funded this work.

Tajikistan Program

Reviving Traditional Attitudes Towards Snow Leopards and Other Wildlife in Tajikistan’s Pamir Mountains

Snow leopards and Marco Polo sheep are important to the high altitude ecosystem. Also, animals and plants play important roles in human culture: in language, sacred ceremonies, folklore, and medicine.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Tajikistan’s recent civil war, poaching with easy-to-find automatic rifles has become widespread. Traps are set for snow leopard, wolf and brown bear, and Marco Polo sheep meat sells for half the price of mutton. Thus a major challenge to conservationists is the issue of rampant hunting and how to combat the loss of taboos that traditionally preserved wildlife or kept hunting within more reasonable bounds.

In 2006 the Snow Leopard Conservancy’s multi-disciplinary team visited Pamiri and Kyrgyz communities to explore ways in which the herders might reestablish their historic connections between culture and conservation. SLC India Trust Director Rinchen Wangchuk traveled from Ladakh to share his experiences and learn from the local communities. We adapted a participatory planning technique known as PhotoVoice for engaging communities and facilitating long-term planning.

Small teams of women, men and children were given digital cameras to photograph the most important aspects of their lives and surroundings.

They shared their stories as their photos were displayed on a laptop. Discussions followed about why they chose the subjects they did. Photos ranged from the participants’ homes and cherished family members, useful plants, livestock and animal products.

The planning phase provided the background needed to initiate a program aimed at strengthening and giving support to mountain voices and improving the ability of local communities to take action. Our approach will be to build their capacity for participatory planning and action in community-based biodiversity stewardship, and to support local organizations in designing and implementing initiatives focused on sustainable extraction, hunting practices, and wildlife conservation and linking these with strategies for improving livelihoods.

Russia

The Snow Leopard Conservancy provided camera traps to the Altai Assistance Project for monitoring of snow leopards, and supported pilot-testing of remote detection devices for anti-poaching efforts in protected areas in the Russian Altai.

Ticken chop - This plant is useful not only for humanity, but also for wild animals. It is also useful for the stomach diseases of wild animals. And people also eat this plant for headache and blood pressure. In present times there is not as much of this plant as there used to be.

- PhotoVoice exercise participant
Building community capacity for stewardship of the endangered snow leopard, its prey and habitat

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Darla Hillard, Education Director
Joyce Robinson, Office Assistant

In-Country Staff
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Tsedar Bhutia, Coordinator, Nepal
Chhimi Gurung, Mustang Program Coordinator, Nepal
Ghulam Wafi Shah and Ulfat Shah, Village Stewards, Pakistan

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All Spiti Youth Organization, India
American Himalayan Foundation, USA
Dunai Boarding School
Ecotourism & Conservation Society of Sikkim FabIndia Overseas Pvt. Ltd.
Hushey Village Conservation Committee, Pakistan
Jammu & Kashmir Dept of Wildlife Protection, India
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Kalpavriksh, India
National Trust For Nature Conservation/Annapurna Conservation Area Program, Nepal
Kangchendzonga Conservation Committee, Sikkim Khunjerab Village Organization, Pakistan
Ladakh Ecological Development Group, India
Manang Youth Society, Nepal
The Mountain Institute, USA
Mountain Spirit, Nepal
Muse, India
Nature Conservation Foundation, India
Overland Escape, India
Project Snow Leopard, Pakistan
Snow Leopard Network, USA
Snow Leopard Trust, USA
Society For Environmental Education, Pakistan
Students’ Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh, India
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, France
U.S. Geological Survey’s Fort Collins Science Center
U.S. National Park Service, Lassen Volcanic National Park
Wildlife Institute of India
WWF-Nepal

This Wild Snow Leopard from Manang, Nepal Helps us Send Special Thanks to All Those Listed Below

Charles Knowles and the Wildlife Conservation Network staff and volunteers provided significant fundraising assistance

Sabine Stevens and the Del Dios Country Store Bar & Grill, Escondido, California, hosted our 2006 event

Sculptor Mark Coreth donated his beautiful snow leopard sculpture, filmmaker Rubert Merton documented the sculpture’s creation, and the Sladmore Gallery, London, England mounted Five Journeys, an exhibition of Mark’s work on endangered species

Several other artists have raised money for snow leopard conservation through sales of their work: Graeme Base, Ken Bohn, Nicole Byrne, Maureen Duryee, Tom Glenn Janet Klein, Jane LaFazio, Laura Makey, Kate McCavitt, Sue Marek, Sabrina Johnston, Andrea Steorts, Sabine Stevens, Carolyn Walter, Lorena Walton Leopards, Etc. of Occidental, CA & their ambassador snow leopard, Asha, made the difference in our fundraising events. Project Survival of Dunlap, CA, Safari West of Santa Rosa, CA, the San Diego and San Francisco Zoo Keepers, and Zoofari of Carlsbad, CA all have made special efforts to spread the word

Geographic Expeditions and KarmaQuest Ecotourism and Adventure Travel organize our special Snow Leopard Treks


The Snow Leopard Conservancy volunteers donated over 500 hours to put on our Escondido fundraiser, and to conduct education and outreach activities throughout the year: Eva Au, Nicki Boyd, Kim Caldwell, Jessica Catalaine, Valinda Cranfill, Namita Dalal, Steve Davis, Alieen Deaton, Antonia DeMatto, Maureen Duryee, Heidi & Phil Enselby, Alicia Falsetto, Steve Flaherty, Richard Gooch, Patty Griess, Terry Hillard, Misti & Jessi Hughes, Rhonda Hughes, Sabrina Johnston, Kate McCavitt, Barbara Palmer, Kristine Perham, Roger Perso, Sierra Piotrowski, Lindsay Rich, Ray Richardson, Joyce Robinson, Jerry Roe, Sabine Stevens, Doug Strauss, Judy Wheatley, Lorena Walton, David Wilson, Jeanette Wong
Finances

**$20,000 or greater** - Anonymous Donor, Leonard X. Bosack & Bette M. Kruger Charitable Foundation, Jon Vannini, Wildlife Conservation Network

**$10,000-$19,999** - Adelman Foundation, Sidney S. Byers Charitable Trust, CGMK Foundation, Antonia DeMatto, Shared Earth Foundation

**$5,000 to $9,999** - American Himalayan Foundation, Nancy Abraham & Arnold Moss, Omidyar Foundation, Sabine, Rick and Nick Stevens

**$1,000 to $4,999** - Bill & Penny Andrews, Calgary Zoological Society, Latha Colby, Domke Estate, Tom & Mary Herrmann, Cathryn & Carl Hilker, Victoria Hunter, IBM International Matching Grants, Jane Goodall Environmental Magnet School, Sabrina Johnston, John & Kellee Lehr, Meyers Charitable Family Fund, Glenn Nash & Cheryl Kendall, Safari West, the Stewart family, Linda Tabor-Beck, Charles & Judy Wheatley, Wild Cat Education & Conservation Fund, John & Cathy Yee


**Special thanks to**

Charles Knowles and WCN

**Raising Awareness of Snow Leopard Conservation Here at Home**


Sanctuary Asia, India’s leading wildlife, conservation and environment magazine, published “The Ghost of the Mountains,” by SLC-India Trust’s Education Program partner Sujatha Padmanabhan. The story is an account of her unforgettable experience watching a wild snow leopard in Ladakh.

Rodney Jackson and Darla Hillard were guests in April and December on “Pet Talk,” Sonoma Community Radio Station KSVY, and the interview received coverage in the sister community newspaper, the *Sonoma Sun.*
Critical Challenges in Saving Snow Leopards and How You Can Help

Empowering communities to directly benefit from an ecosystem that includes snow leopards, so they can better tolerate occasional livestock losses

- $50 rents pack horses to carry educational materials for two visits to Markha school in Ladakh, India
- $150 supports an exchange visit to study Himalayan Homestays
- $300 buys equipment for a village-based nature guide

Predator-proofing livestock corrals, so snow leopards do not kill an entire herd at once and suffer retaliation by the shepherds

- $600 buys a solar-electric fence for pastures in Nepal
- $2,000 predator proofs a community corral in Zanskar, India

Accurately estimating wild snow leopard numbers, and learning why some cats are more likely than others to kill livestock, so villagers can monitor snow leopards and take more effective steps to avoid depredation

- $800 funds a village-based camera-trap monitoring program

Building capacity for sustainable snow leopard conservation by range country professionals

- $5,000 covers the salary and materials for Education Program Coordinator for one year

Putting Snow Leopard Conservation into Perspective

Snow leopard range covers as much as a million square miles, shown here in red. Conservation efforts are complicated by the fact that the fragmented range encompasses some of the planet’s most remote, mountainous, and roadless territory. Twelve countries are confirmed to harbor snow leopards, with much of the habitat on sensitive borders of sometimes volatile nations where civil and international conflicts are common. Local communities across the range speak more than twelve distinct languages, and the cultures are nearly as diverse. The challenges are huge, but so are the opportunities to work with local communities and organizations to help them transform a situation of conflict between people and wildlife to one of better harmony and coexistence.