

**Cambodia
Central Cardamoms Protected Forest Project
News from the Field**

May 2016

Conservation International

Central Cardamoms Protected Forest Management Plan

A process of transferring the responsibility for Protected Areas (PAs) across Cambodia, including the Central Cardamoms Protected Forest (CCPF), was initiated. While not made official over the reporting period, it seems likely that the Ministry of Environment (MoE) will take over from the Forestry Administration (FA), which is seen as a positive step. However, in discussion with the FA it was decided to delay completion of the CCPF Management Plan until the handover is completed. This will allow for input by the MoE. It should be noted that while this transfer of management to the MoE is a large change, it is not expected to have any negative impact on law enforcement and community engagement of the CCPF in general and CI's work specifically.

Trust Fund

The CCPF Trust Fund was launched in Phnom Penh on January 15. The event was attended by government officials, donors, the media, and representatives of NGOs and the private sector. Key speakers included representatives from the Cambodian Government, Daikin Corporation, and CI Chairman and CEO Peter Seligmann. A video on the CCPF was shown at the event. The Trust Fund received an initial US\$2.5 million from the Global Conservation Fund and the Daikin Corporation, with a goal to collect US\$10 million to cover law enforcement, research and monitoring activities, and community engagement.

Patrolling and Enforcement

Over the reporting period, a new system of weekly planning was implemented to include long-range, random, and stop-check patrols, as well as community engagement.

Up to 18 rangers participated in a large operation in the Rolek area to address land encroachment, illegal logging, and wildlife poaching. The operation continued for a month, making it hard for illegal actors to return to the site. This has had a very positive impact on the area, with seven illegal camps destroyed and land clearance amounting to 70 hectares halted. In the rest of the CCPF, 373 patrols were undertaken, resulting in the confiscation of two

tractors, 24 chainsaws, 42 pieces of timber, 29 traps and snares, seven monkeys and five turtles.

The CCPF Management team continued to meet over the reporting period. CCPF FA managers from the northern and southern sections of the CCPF, along with representatives of Fintrac, Fauna and Flora International (FFI), and CI met monthly to review day-to-day management issues, SMART data, ranger performance, and outstanding issues. This has become a critical tool for the management of the area and will continue with the transfer of the CCPF to the MoE. Also over the reporting period, rangers received new equipment, such as boots, motorcycle helmets, hammocks, and raincoats. A new well was built for the rangers at Rolek station.

Daikin support continued to make possible regular community patrols in three communes. The patrols focused on dragon fish ponds and Siamese crocodile sanctuaries. Patrols were conducted over 90 days involving 60 villagers, two of whom were women.



(Left) Ranger patrols (Right) Community patrol

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Training

Daikin funding supported training of rangers over the reporting period. The training included SMART Refresher (tool that uses geographic information to aid patrol) training, GIS (geographical information system) training, and compass- and map-reading.

Camera Trap Data

Camera trapping continued over the reporting period. In support of this process, CI started collaborating with the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Pangolins Group (for the protection of pangolins: a type of anteater) to share camera trap data. This is an important cross-institutional initiative. CI also started working with a camera-trap monitoring

group, called TEAM, on improved camera trap software. This has helped CI share and manage data more effectively.

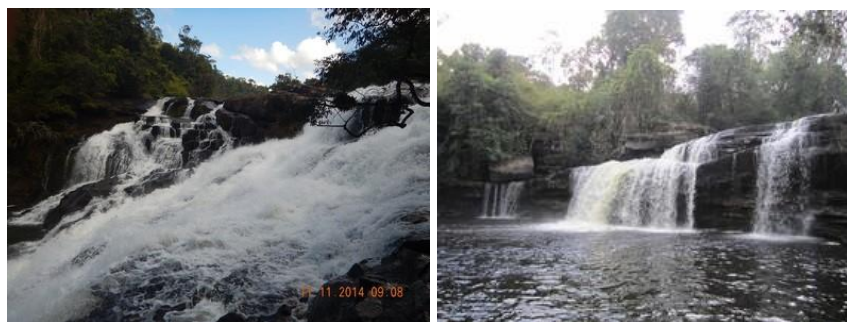


Setting up a camera trap © Jeremy Holden

In a previous report, we announced that we had captured camera trap footage of 12 individual Asian elephants, including young, as they grazed, interacted, and moved through the forest. Video of this was shown at the Trust Fund launch. This led to significant national and international media coverage, including in the Guardian and the BBC. The footage can be seen on youtube and in the Japan Times.

Community Based Eco-tourism (CBET)

With Daikin’s support and at the request of the community, CI has continued its CBET initiative in the Tatai Leu commune. An exciting development over the reporting period has been the new relationship with an eco-lodge on the Tatai River. This relationship looks set to increase tourist numbers and to boost local economic development through the sale of banana wine to the hotel for use in its restaurant.



The Tatai River © Conservation International/Photo by Chanthon Cheb

A community information center for tourists has been completed and an itinerary for hiking routes and other activities developed. Specific packages, such as bird viewing, banana-wine making, jungle camping, and boat and fishing expeditions, are being negotiated with the Eco-lodge.

Discussions with neighbouring communities to ensure they are involved in the program are on-going and there is the possibility of developing a bicycle rental service between villages.

Ranger/Community Engagement Strategy

Given the discussions around the transfer of the CCPF to MoE management, the Community Engagement strategy will be revised in order to ensure it complies with future MoE policies. In the meantime, the ranger teams are proceeding with a program in which they use basic information sheets to teach school children how to identify poisonous snakes. In addition, meetings have been held with communities to provide support to community forest patrols.

Communications

The first edition of the CCPF Newsletter was released at the Trust Fund launch. It has been shared with the rangers, who are providing feedback on ways to improve it. This is an important step in improving communication with the rangers.

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