



## Happy New Year

As we welcome 2017, let us take a moment to reflect on highlights picked from 2016

### CREL E-Newsletters



Mr. Paul Sabatine, Deputy Mission Director, USAID meets CMCs.

The year started with a good news January

### Government of Bangladesh has approved USAID's CREL Project Technical Assistance Project Proforma (TPP)

Government of Bangladesh has approved USAID's CREL Project Technical Assistance Project Proforma (TPPs) that endorses CREL interventions in the Protected Area landscapes. CREL now has these formal cooperation agreements (TPPs) with three Government Departments: The Forest Department and Department of Environment (Ministry of Environment and Forests) and the Department of Fisheries (Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock). The TPPs establish a set of activities and associated budgets that the Government of Bangladesh and USAID will undertake collaboratively, as well as joint targets for results and impacts of their investme

### DoF Hands over Jalmohals to RMO in Sreemongal

On 6 February 2016, 3 government-owned wetland areas (jalmohals) from Hail Haor in NE Bangladesh were handed over to local Resource Management Organizations (RMO) by the Department of Fisheries. This milestone is part of a larger effort by the USAID-funded Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project to entrust the stewardship of up to 30 jalmohals to similar community organizations in northeast Bangladesh, building on parallel wetland

policy efforts. CREL supports previous USAID programs which have established effective community-level management processes for wetlands to achieve both biodiversity and livelihoods objectives. Ms. Parul Rani, elected Secretary of Khajura RMO, received the government document on behalf of her group. This group is one of the 3 community RMOs first to receive jalmohals. Representatives of the DoF, Upazila, CNRS, Winrock and the communities were present at this ceremony.



Another good news February

The community resource organization will manage jalmohals in a manner that will help ensure sustainable levels of fishing, conserve fish breeding stocks and preserve biodiversity of these wetlands.

### Loss of a Conservation Hero

Baikka Beel sanctuary in Hail Haor wetland lost a true hero, Mirash Mia, on November 15, 2015. Mirash, age 54, was an exceptional man. He grew up in poverty and physically challenged by polio. He devoted himself since his late 30's, to nature conservation activities in Baikka Beel. As an active member of Borogangina Resource Management Organization, he spent most of his time in and around Baikka Beel sanctuary. Trained in bird watching and tourist management by USAID-funded MACH project, he served as an eco-guide in Baikka Beel for ten years during 2006-2015.

Whenever a visitor arrived at the Baikka Beel watchtower, he assisted them in spotting different bird species with a telescope and binoculars and provided a description of the key characteristic and behaviour of each species, demonstrating a level of expertise equal to a professional guide or experienced bird watcher. In this way, he has assisted thousands of local and foreign visitors at Baikka Beel Sanctuary over the past decade. He created a special bond between visitors, the wetland ecosystem and the local community through his strong commitment to the environmental and his personal journey of

On World Wetlands Day - February 2, we remembered a good friend February



physical disability and poverty. Mirash's loss is irreplaceable. We will remember him.

### Best Community Patrol Group (CPG) Award, 2016



Bangladesh Forest Department and the Fashiakhali and Medhakachapia CMCs have jointly organized a “Best Community Patrol Group (CPG) Award, 2016” for the 91 members of Community Patrol Groups (CPG) of Fashiakhali, Medhakachapia and Dulahazra CMC to acknowledge their outstanding performance. This event, supported by CREL, was held in Fashiakhali CMC office on February 17, 2016. 15 CPG members were awarded. Aysha Begum of Medhakachapia CPG was the only women member. She received this award for her outstanding performance and support to conservation. UNO Chakaria, Mohammad Mr. Shahedul Islam was the Chief Guest and DFO Cox’s Bazar North Forest Division, Karamat Ali Mallik presided over the ceremony.



CREL constructed a water reservoir for ethnic Tripura community in Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary (RKWS).

### “Sustainable Financing for Co-Management Organizations” Dialogue Held in Cox’s Bazar



USAID’s Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project and partner organizations, in association with the Bangladesh Forest Department, organized a dialogue in Cox’s Bazar on “Sustainable Financing for Co-Management Organizations in Bangladesh” in March 2016. Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Honorable Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), was the chief guest of the event while Mr. Md. Yunus Ali, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) of the Bangladesh Forest Department, presided over the dialogue. In his speech Mr. Yunus declared March 23 as Co-Management Day and called for responsible action on forest conservation from stakeholders at all levels, saying that co-

management is a praiseworthy approach for conservation. “In Bangladesh, USAID supports co-management as a primary tool for conserving biodiversity,” said Mr. Farhad Ghaussy, Director, Economic Growth Office, USAID Bangladesh, in his speech as special guest. Four parallel sessions were organized as part of this dialogue to identify the roles of government, the private sector, development partners and co-management organizations to ensure sustainable financing for the co-management organizations in Bangladesh. This dialogue actively involved 104 participants representing government, non-government organizations, civil society, the private sector, media and co-management organizations.

### CREL Mangrove Afforestation Shows Improvement in Biophysical Conditions



The afforestation and reforestation work begun by USAID’s Climate Resilient Ecosystem and Livelihood (CREL) project in Dakshin para, Koyra, has started to produce visible impacts. Afforestation work started in September 2014 on 13 hectares with 10,000 mangrove seedlings consisting of native species such as Kankra, Keora, Bain, Golpata and Sundri. To protect the seedlings, the area was fenced in with a bamboo structure covered with fishing nets, with all the work completed by village conservation fund (VCF) members. After only 19 months, spotted doves and weaver birds have started nesting there. Two beehives have also been spotted and VCF members have extracted honey from those combs.

CREL has planted around 150,000 seedlings of Sundri, Keora, Bain, Gewa, Kankra, Golpata, Pashur, Dhundal and Khalisha covering more than 200 hectares in southwest region of Bangladesh.



CREL supported mangrove plantation in Pankhali and Chuna Villages of Munshiganj, Satkhira



Students paint the biodiversity of Bangladesh on Earth Day, 2016

Towards the future  
June

## Training on Bamboo Production and Clump Management Held in Chittagong

USAID's CREL project organized trainings on bamboo production and bamboo clump management in Dudhpukuria, Dhopachari, Jaldi, Baroiyadhala and Sitakunda. Dr. Mahabubur Rahman of Bangladesh Forest Research Institute conducted the training with one hundred participants. These trainings would help to reduce pressure on the forest by diverting people into bamboo production and bamboo clump management.



## CREL Project Steering Committee Meeting Held



The first meeting of the project steering committee (Forest Part) of USAID's Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project

was held in June 2016. The meeting was presided over by Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed, honorable Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), and attended by other high-level government officials including the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), members from the Bangladesh Forest Department and CREL staff. The CREL Project Director (Forest Part) presented a current progress review. The MoEF Secretary led a discussion on CMC sustainability for protected area management after CREL ends. Meeting participants suggested that CREL prepare a realistic plan including required investment on eco-tourism, natural resource management and climate change adaptation and present it by September and then government officials will search for the required resources for implementation of the sustainability plan.

Moving forward  
July

## CREL Organizes Tree Fair in Cox's Bazar

"Tree for life and livelihoods; eat more native fruits for health, wealth and nutrition" was the theme of a CREL-organized tree fair in Cox's Bazar from July 18-24, in close collaboration with the Forest Department and Department of Agricultural Extension. The core attraction of the fair were 20 smart stalls of native forest, fruit and medicinal plants. The seven-day long tree fair was inaugurated with a rally and discussion meeting, with participants including district administration, Forest Department and Department of Environment officials, co-management organizations, journalists, teachers, students and stakeholders from all levels. Over 500 people participated in the rally and discussion meeting, and visitors to Cox's Bazar were enthusiastic about the attractive stalls of trees and purchased saplings to plant at home.



Promoting green  
August

## Workshop on Natural Resource Management and Environmental Laws and Policy



USAID's CREL Project is supporting the Bangladesh Forest Department and the Department of Environment with drafting the Protected Area Management Rules (PA Rules) and Ecologically Critical Area Rules (ECA

2016 Rules). A high level workshop focused on ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the issues addressed in the newly drafted PA and ECA Rules and their potential positive impacts was organized by CREL on August

6 at Cox's Bazar. 50 top level government officials participated in this workshop including: Mr. Mohammad Shahidul Haque, Honorable Secretary, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs; Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Honorable Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF); Mr. Md. Yunus Ali, Chief Conservator of Forests; Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed, Additional Secretary Ministry of Finance; and Mr. Md. Raisul Alam Mondal, Director General, Department of Environment. In this workshop the pertinent aspects of the PA and ECA Rules were discussed in great detail. The participants to the workshop were in complete agreement on the importance of approving of these laws as they ensure the long term conservation and viability of Bangladesh's forests, biodiversity and ECA via co-management.

Join hands  
September

### Park Vehicles Handed Over To Forest Department

The Honorable Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) of Bangladesh Forest department mentioned August 3 as a "Historic Day" in response to the handover of 11 vehicles to the Bangladesh Forest Department by USAID's Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project. He also commented that the

addition of these vehicles would immensely increase FD's ability in the field to work more pro-actively in the implementation of CREL-supported activities. These vehicles will be used by the officials of Forest Department to increase their surveillance in the management of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries of Bangladesh.



An excellent news October

### Government Of Bangladesh Adopts 'Ecologically Critical Area Management Rules 2016'

The Bangladesh Government has promulgated the Ecologically Critical Areas (ECA) Rules, 2016 under Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995 on 25 September 2016. USAID's CREL Project facilitated the drafting and coordination of inter-governmental agencies, particularly the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs to adopt the

Rules to ensure sustainable management of ECAs in Bangladesh. The adoption of these Rules is a milestone for fund mobilization for conservation through community-based ECA management and establishing inclusive resource rights with multi-tier stakeholders including ministerial representation.

### First Female Office Bearer in Khadimnager National Park Co-Management Committee

Ms. Shomela Patro became the first female office bearer of Khadimnager National Park Co-Management Committee. She was already recognized to be an active participant in co-management and was selected to be the treasurer of the newly reformed committee. This committee was reformed on 4 October 2016 through a Co-Management Council meeting. The meeting was chaired by the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), Sylhet Sadar Upazila with the Divisional Forest Officer, Sylhet and Upazila Chairman, Sylhet Sadar present. This is the fourth Co-Management Committee of Khadimnagar and consists of 21 members including five women. Mr. Md. Morshed Ahmed Chowdhury Masum was selected as the President with Md. Abdus Shahid as Vice-president.

Women in Leadership November



Mr. Md. Yunus Ali, CCF hands over the responsibility of the management of a fresh water pond to the community of Purba Kalinagar, adjacent to Sundarbans.

### Establishing Co-Management in Ratargul

The Government of Bangladesh declared the 204 hectare Ratargul Swamp Forest as the "Ratargul Special Biodiversity Conservation Area" (RSBCA). USAID's CREL Project, together with the Forest Department, has been supporting the introduction of co-management for the protection and conservation of this area. At the preliminary stage, CREL helped to form 10 Village Conservation Forums (VCFs) covering the nine forest dependent villages surrounding Ratargul. Through a series



of meetings, each VCF selected two representatives to the People's Forum (PF) followed by the Forest Department Range Officer helping to form the People's Forum and selection of the PF representatives for the Co-Management Council on 14 November 2016. The People's Forum has a total of 20 members including 14 men and 6 women and the Executive Committee has 11 members with 8 men and 3 women. Lastly on 20 December the Co-Management Council and committee for Ratargul were formed, a major step forward in establishing co-management and improving protection of this unique forest.

### Last Minute Update



CREL participated in a fair organized by Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Bangladesh on the occasion of International Mountain Day 2016.

