



# Protected Area Co-Management Where People and Poverty Intersect:

LESSONS FROM NISHORGO IN BANGLADESH

# Protected Area Co-Management Where People and Poverty Intersect:

LESSONS FROM NISHORGO IN BANGLADESH

## **Editors:**

Philip J. DeCosse  
Paul M. Thompson  
Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad  
Ram A. Sharma  
Azharul H. Mazumder

2012

This book is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this book are the sole responsibility of the Authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.





## Dedication

This book is dedicated to those men and women of Bangladesh that have struggled to conserve their own forests, pitted against power and poverty, and to one man in particular who gave his life for that cause. Md. Rafiqul Alam was murdered on March 23, 2008 while trying to protect his forest at the Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary. He and other men and women throughout the country have faced enormous hardship in reaching for the opportunity to benefit from forest conservation.



The book is also dedicated to the children of Bangladesh: the “future generations” highlighted in the slogan used by Nishorgo. For them, the forest Protected Areas are and can be places of discovery and learning, in the spirit of Tagore’s Shantiniketan, and they are just as much places for unabashed joy and laughter, as the poet T.S. Eliot writes:

Sudden in a shaft of sunlight  
Even while the dust moves  
There rises the hidden laughter  
Of children in the foliage  
Quick now, here, now, always—  
Ridiculous the waste sad time  
Stretching before and after.

# Acknowledgements

This book attempts to draw lessons from five years of efforts to develop models for forest conservation that benefit citizens neighboring those forests, and benefit the country with lasting places of refuge for wild nature. Nishorgo could never have been undertaken without the dedicated efforts of some individuals and institutions worthy of particular mention. While some of those mentioned below did not contribute directly to this book, their work in support of forest co-management made this attempt to capture Nishorgo's early lessons learned worth the effort, and for this reason we would like to include them in these Acknowledgements.

We note in particular the Nishorgo Co-Management Committees and Councils, whose experiments in governance provided the source for learning, and whose generous hospitality and experiences were critical to success. We should also thank the many organizations associated with the Nishorgo sites: Nishorgo Clubs, Forest User Groups, Community Patrol Groups, and the leaders of community groups whose contributions have allowed us to learn from this effort. In this respect, we would be negligent if we failed to acknowledge in particular the time generously given by the "*Mantri*" at Lawachara, Gidision Suchiang Pradhan. Probably no other leader at any Nishorgo site received more unannounced visits than he did, and he graciously received all of them.

Senior Government officials in the Ministry of Environment and Forests, and within USAID, showed a commitment to this endeavor that far exceeded their normal and routine obligations, and reflected a commitment to public service that remains a model for what government can be.

From the beginning, Nishorgo was rooted in partnerships between public and private entities, and a number of institutions exemplified what such partnerships can offer to public conservation goals. Bay Developments' Itekhhar (Pintu) Khan worked from the project's earliest stages to attract corporate attention to Nishorgo, and similar efforts by the Radisson Hotel proved critical to sustaining that support. The Institute of Architects of Bangladesh offered their expertise to ensure that architectural standards for visitor center construction would meet global standards and yet fit the particular needs of the forest's Protected Areas. The Scouts of Bangladesh, from the most senior leaders to many of the youngest Scouts, gave generously of their time and effort purely out of love of nature and a commitment to the cause of conservation.

The wildlife enthusiast community in general, and the birding community in particular, hold a special place in the development of Nishorgo. Within the first month of Nishorgo's start-up, the renowned birder Enam ul Haque offered a vision of what a love and knowledge of birds can offer to a conservation program, not least as a window into the culture of forest communities. Dentist Ronald Halder made himself available repeatedly for advice and frank observations about Nishorgo. Professor Md. Monirul H. Khan of Jahangirnagar University frequently brought his students into Nishorgo forests to learn about the association between healthy bird populations and healthy forests. And Professor Md. Anwarul Islam worked to develop a brilliant young group of students while giving of his own time for research and policy support, including extensive efforts to improve the Wildlife Act.

Amongst all these wildlife enthusiasts, the efforts of Sirajul Hossain must be noted in particular. He has freely given his time to travel throughout Nishorgo sites, and produced an extraordinary photographic essay based on those visits. In addition, he has repeatedly offered the use of his wildlife photographs to many Nishorgo publications and publicity efforts – including this book, always doing so without complaint about the urgency of the requests and never asking for payment.

A number of conservation organizations, most notably the Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh, have also repeatedly given of their time and energy to support conservation causes. The Trust's Enayetullah Khan offered his own time and resources – and the gracious use of his home – in order to bring together those devoted to conservation. The Arannayk Foundation for Tropical Forest Conservation has been a particularly steady partner to the Nishorgo cause, as has IUCN-Bangladesh.

Nishorgo would not have worked, and will not work in the future, without partnerships with leading universities. Professors and staff at Jahangirnagar University, North-South University, the Independent University of Bangladesh, and Dhaka University in particular deserve special thanks. Like these places of higher learning, the Forest Academy in Chittagong also contributed to the development of human capacity throughout recent years, not least in making its facilities available for numerous training programs, and often on short notice.

Finally, we must note the extraordinary efforts of a number of individuals without whom this book would simply have never seen the light of day. From the earliest days of Nishorgo, Bob Winterbottom of IRG has tirelessly provided critical conceptual and technical guidance. Sumaiya Firoze has served as assistant editor and coordinator of the book since its inception. Mohammad Inamul Shahriar offered the creative graphical layout of the front and back covers and provided the final layout for all the chapters. Zaid Ahmed has also worked many hours on chapter layout. Editorial review by IRG's Laurie Chamberlain has provided a critical set of additional eyes to refine the book. Reema Islam stepped in to coordinate final edits and corrections. And Reed Merrill, as head of the follow-on USAID co-management project, has made it a priority to learn from the past by providing resources to see that this book could be completed.

Finally, to all those individuals whose contributions have improved this book, and the Nishorgo effort as a whole, and whose names we have omitted, we recognize that those omissions are purely due to our own oversight. We thank you.

The Editors

# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	i
<b>Acronyms and Glossary</b> .....	v
<b>Introduction and Context for Forest Co-Management in Bangladesh</b>	
<b>Chapter 1.</b> Introduction .....	3
<b>Chapter 2.</b> The Conservation Context in 2003 .....	17
<b>Chapter 3.</b> Genesis of the Nishorgo Forest Co-Management Experiment .....	29
<b>Elements of Co-Management: Governance, Planning and Policy</b>	
<b>Chapter 4.</b> Development of the Collaborative Governance Model .....	53
<b>Chapter 5.</b> The Pace, Nature and Logic of Empowerment at Co-Management Sites .....	73
<b>Chapter 6.</b> Assessing the Capacity and Progress of Forest Co-Management Organizations .....	85
<b>Chapter 7.</b> Management Plans and Restoration of Protected Areas .....	97
<b>Chapter 8.</b> Monitoring Change and Impact .....	105
<b>Chapter 9.</b> Remote Sensing and Spatial Information in Support of Co-Management Planning .....	113
<b>Chapter 10.</b> Using Indicator Birds to Assess Management Impacts .....	123
<b>Chapter 11.</b> Policy and Legal Framework .....	133
<b>Elements of Co-Management: Alternative Incentives and Incomes</b>	
<b>Chapter 12.</b> Approach to Stimulation of Alternative Economic Incentives .....	161
<b>Chapter 13.</b> Incentives for Community Patrolling and Protection .....	171
<b>Chapter 14.</b> Nature Tourism Enterprises .....	181
<b>Chapter 15.</b> Value Addition through Labeling in Hand-loomed Cloth Products .....	193
<b>Chapter 16.</b> Carbon Sink Projects as a Revenue Source .....	199
<b>Chapter 17.</b> Enhancing Access to Capital within PA Landscapes through Microfinance and Grants .....	207
<b>Chapter 18.</b> Energy Use and Options in the Protected Areas .....	217



## **Elements of Co-Management: Supporting Approaches and Institutions**

<b>Chapter 19.</b> Institutional Capacity Development of Forest Department and Local Stakeholders .....	227
<b>Chapter 20.</b> Applied Research and Knowledge Management .....	237
<b>Chapter 21.</b> Architectural Design and Infrastructure .....	241
<b>Chapter 22.</b> Presenting Interpretive Information .....	251
<b>Chapter 23.</b> Communication Tools and Strategies .....	261
<b>Chapter 24.</b> Public Private Partnership in Support of Conservation .....	269

## **Perspectives and the Way Forward**

<b>Chapter 25.</b> Perspectives on Participatory Forest and PA Management .....	281
<b>Chapter 26.</b> Revisiting the Context for Co-Management .....	287
<b>Chapter 27.</b> Conclusions and Reflections on a Way Forward .....	311

<b>About the Authors</b> .....	343
--------------------------------	-----