

Workshop Held on Sustainable Co-Management for Biodiversity Conservation



USAID's Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project, in collaboration with the Forest Department arranged a daylong workshop on 'Sustainable Co-management for Biodiversity

Conservation' for Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) on May 5, 2016.

Mr. Md. Yunus Ali, Chief Conservator of Forests, Bangladesh, inaugurated the workshop while Dr. John A. Dorr, Chief of Party, CREL and

Mr. Md. Abdul Latif Mia, Project Director, CREL (Forest part) were present as special guests. Mr. Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad, IUCN Country Representative and Mr. Akbar Hossain, Deputy Conservator of Forests, presented and facilitated the workshop sessions.

The workshop covered sustainable co-management issues including strategic approaches for co-management of protected forest areas; challenges of sustainable co-management financing; evolution and present status of co-management in Bangladesh; structure, roles, and responsibilities of co-management organizations; CREL activities for sustainable co-management in protected areas; and co-management achievements and challenges.

Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Protected Area Rules Held

An inter-ministerial meeting on Protected Area Rules 2016 was held on May 5 with Mr. Abdullah Al Mohsin Chowdhury, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), as the chair. Mr. Abdul Latif Mia, Project Director, CREL (Forest part), and CREL staff participated in the meeting and presented changes that were decided upon from the first inter-ministerial meeting held in November 2015. The meeting reviewed draft clauses on management plan directives, co-management system and roles of forestry stakeholder groups. The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and Ministry of Local

Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives along with MoEF reviewed the management rules. These draft changes include identifying fishermen in the Sundarbans, the representation of government agencies, and devolution of power from higher authorities to co-management organizations (CMO) with Forest Division's approval to execute ADP activities.

Another meeting was held on May 24 at the MoEF with other ministries participating, including the Ministry of Finance, where participants discussed revenue sharing mechanisms and government allocation for CMOs.

Meeting on Jolmohal Issues Held at Moulvibazar

A meeting with the district administration of Moulvibazar was held on May 11 on jolmohal issues. In the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner shared that the report for registering two wetlands in record book number six as jalmohals has been sent and suggested that CREL follow up with him. He also ensured that whenever the lease expired for the jolmohals, he would take steps to provide those jolmohals to resource management organizations.



Students Paint the Biodiversity of Bangladesh

USAID's CREL project organized an art competition at Sylhet District Cultural Academy on May 12 to raise awareness among the students about their landscapes and its biodiversity. Students from secondary schools drew pictures of the places they live and the forest biodiversity surrounding them, while college students created artwork that depicted the biodiversity of wetlands in Bangladesh. Over 70 students participated in the competition and nine were awarded prizes in three different categories.

Soldiers of Conservation Strike Fear in the Hearts of Poachers

USAID's CREL project works to empower communities so they play a greater role in conservation. Community patrol groups are a result of USAID's support for co-management for conservation and are soldiers on the front lines in the war against illegal poachers in forests of Bangladesh. Recently, the Kadamtola and Mirgang-Tengrakhal Community Patrol Group, patrol groups in the Sundarbans, confiscated a large shipment of illegally felled Bain trees from the side of the river. A source had tipped off patrol groups about a large shipment of logs from the forest, so the joint patrol group, who patrol three days a week, went out that night to investigate. The tip proved correct, as they discovered a boat full



of illegally collected logs anchored on the bank. The nine-member patrol team immediately approached the boat, surprising the poachers, who fled the scene leaving behind 45 cubic feet of logs. The patrol group handed over the logs to the Forest Department, who filled a case against the loggers and destroyed their boat.

Training on Bamboo Production and Clump Management Held in Chittagong



USAID's CREL project organized five daylong trainings on Bamboo Production and Bamboo Clump Management at Dudhpukuria, Dhopachari, Jaldi, Baroiyadhala and Sitakunda. Dr. Mahabubur Rahman of the Bangladesh Forest Research Institute conducted the training with one hundred participants joining. This workshop will help reduce pressure on the forest by diverting people into bamboo production and bamboo clump management.