



**KSWs
REDD+**



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Quarterly Newsletter

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Passing on knowledge gained from encouraging community participation in the KSWs REDD+ project

Cambodia is currently developing a new REDD+ project in the north of the country, in an area known as Prey Lang. The KSWs REDD+ team recently provided training to individuals developing the Prey Lang REDD+ project, including best practice for explaining REDD+, climate change, and benefit sharing to local communities. Each community affected by the proposed project will be consulted and will have the chance to ask questions and decide whether or not to participate. The KSWs REDD+ team have worked with local communities in KSWs for many years and were eager to share their experiences to help the new project get off to a good start. Community participation and engagement have been key to the success of the KSWs REDD+ project, so learning how best to work with communities will be an essential component of developing the new project.



Protecting Mondulkiri's first Indigenous communal land title

Andoung Kraloeng in KSWs was the first village in Mondulkiri to successfully obtain an Indigenous communal land title (ICT), in 2012. The KSWs REDD+ team supported the community throughout the application process and continue to provide guidance on day-to-day matters related to the community-managed area. Recently, the owner of private land adjacent to Andoung Kraloeng's ICT used a bulldozer to clear some land in the ICT that had been reserved for community agriculture. The ICT chief lodged a complaint with the commune chief, and an official from the Ministry of Interior visited the site to check the land measurements and mediate between the two sides. After investigation, the authorities confirmed that the private landowner was wrong to clear the land. The landowner has given the land back to the community, and the ICT committee have installed additional boundary markers surrounding their ICT to make clear the extent of the community-managed land. They hope that this will make it less likely that something similar would happen in future.



Removing snares to reduce hunting pressure on wildlife in KSWs

As mentioned in the last newsletter, some hunters continue to illegally set snares inside the forest in KSWs. A snare is usually made from a loop of metal that tightens around an animal's leg if the animal steps on it. This loop is held up by a rope tied to a flexible branch. Snares are very dangerous because they can catch any kind of animal, both big and small. They are also left in the forest for a long time, so can cause a lot of suffering to animals that become trapped in them. The KSWs REDD+ team regularly combs the forest searching for snares so that they can be removed. The hunters take great care to disguise the traps so that the animals cannot see them, which means that the team needs a huge amount of skill to spot these in the dense undergrowth! Thanks to their expertise, many animals have been saved from being caught. Occasionally, the team finds live animals inside the snares, which they release—a difficult and dangerous task! All materials related to the illegal snares that are found in the forest are collected, counted and documented (see photo), and passed to the Department of Environment for destruction.





KSWS REDD+ project recognized for outstanding community development work

H.E. Mom Thany, secretary of state in the Ministry of Environment, recently met with the KSWS REDD+ team to learn more about community development work in KSWS. Her Excellency was particularly impressed with the community improvements, such as improved supply of clean water, that have been made possible thanks to the REDD+ benefit sharing fund. She has asked the KSWS REDD+ team to host a visit by political and technical officials in the Ministry of Environment so that more individuals from the ministry can learn about how the project is being implemented and the lessons that it can provide for sustainably managing protected areas throughout Cambodia. The team is looking forward to hosting the visit soon.

KSWs REDD+ team help to simplify applications for Indigenous communal land titles

In KSWs, seven villages have Indigenous communal land titles (ICTs), while another eight are at various stages in the process of applying for an ICT. These titles are provided to Indigenous community groups that can demonstrate that they have a history of using land within a protected area, for example to gather resin or food from the forest. The KSWs REDD+ team have been supporting some of these villages in their ICT applications since 2003. Applying for an ICT can be time-consuming and complicated because it involves four different ministries and sub-national departments. In a quest to simplify the process, the Ministry of Interior is currently reviewing economic, social, legal, and environmental challenges associated with ICT applications. An inter-ministerial working group has been formed that will work with NGOs to improve the process of establishing and managing ICTs throughout Mondulakiri province. The KSWs REDD+ team will continue to provide technical expertise to this working group to ensure that communities in KSWs can complete their ICT applications more easily in future.



Elections for committee to manage new community protected area

Residents in Pu Nhav village in the northeast of KSWs recently took part in an election to select the members of a new committee that will be tasked with managing a community protected area (CPA). The community has been working with the KSWs REDD+ team to identify a suitable location for their new CPA, which will provide formal recognition of their rights and responsibilities in managing forested land near their village. Sixty-one people voted in the election, which resulted in the selection of nine people to sit on the committee, including two women. The first task for the new committee will be to request recognition from the local administration of all committee members in their new role of coordinating the community's establishment and management of a CPA. The KSWs REDD+ team will support the new committee members as they adjust to their new positions.





Learning to co-exist peacefully with elephants in KSWS

As villages around KSWS grow, the natural habitat available for wildlife is decreasing. This makes it more likely that people and wild animals will encounter each other. The KSWS REDD+ project is documenting these encounters so that we can better understand how wildlife movements are changing and the impact that this has on local communities. Residents call a dedicated hotline when they encounter wildlife inside agricultural or residential land, and the team visit the site to record more information. While there, the team explains ways that residents can reduce the frequency of these encounters, and teaches practical and humane methods for reducing damage to crops and buildings. Usually, these encounters occur in fields that were forest until recently; wildlife is used to finding food in these areas! This photo shows the team's visit to some banana plants that were recently damaged by wild elephants.

Evaluating capacity of management committees in KSWs REDD+ communities

Community committees play a central role in local management of natural resources in KSWs and in coordinating local participation in the REDD+ project. For some committee members, this is the first opportunity that they have had to take on a leadership role and steer future community development. The KSWs REDD+ team is there to support these committees in all of their work, coaching individuals to progressively take on more responsibilities in community natural resource management. To make sure that committee members can grow into their roles, they have recently completed self-evaluations of the capacity of their committee, in terms of structure, management ability, and member engagement. The outcome of this exercise will help both the committees themselves and the KSWs REDD+ team to tailor training and support to the specific needs of each committee. We're looking forward to seeing each committee continue to flourish as time goes by.

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