

# Darwin Project Ref: 14-045: Sustainable Support for Biodiversity & Forestry in Tomsk Taiga, Siberia

## Minutes of review meeting August 16<sup>th</sup> 2005

Time: 14:00 to 16:00

Venue: WTA Royston office

Attendees: Kevin Hand, Nick Langley, Wayne Talbot, Janet Sackman

### 1. Objectives

- Ensure all milestones identified.
- Issues raised during expedition.
- Itinerary confirmed.
- Reports and PR stories identified.

### 2. Review project plan

- Project plan presented, updates on progress.
- Michael from Price-Batch RU is a forester of repute and KH suggested that he get involved to aid the process of certification. KH had discussions with Heather from Price Batch concerning the less approachable person who had been assigned to it.
- Agreed WT to go through and plan next steps with Russian project team during his visit.

#### Actions required:

WT to go through the plan with IIES to agree dates

### 3. Administration update

- IIES haven't yet produced an invoice, WT to work on this with Svetlana, as KH hadn't got time to do this.
- IIES hadn't yet bought the capital items due to the money being delayed. WT to check this through so that we can adjust the amount that is paid to them for the next quarter.
- WT to take the cost of the ticket over with him in sterling along with the cost of the hotel to avoid excessive charges. It was calculated that he takes around £700. JS to provide the invoice and budget for IIES for WT to go through that with Svetlana.



**Actions required:**

WT to go through the invoice with IIES to ensure an accurate claim is submitted for JS to offset against the amount already sent to them.

JS to provide documentation for WT to use.

#### 4. Student expeditions

- This year's expedition was based at Kirak in the water protection zone that extends to 30% of the Tomski forest region, which fits with the FSC requirements for 10% protection. Baseline data was gathered over 100 transects set up in the old-growth forest area recording what is there now, measuring size of trees and amounts of dead wood so that changes could be monitored in the future to assess the impact of FSC certification. Dr Blinova from Tomsk State University and Professor Marina (professor of Botany) from TSU collected information on rare species and data book species. Six red data book plants were found in the first few days.
- KH suggested that next year's students could look at the social sciences aspects of the changes in the community, this would be for a higher-level of students such as MSC or PhD. These opened up the possibility of the students living within the community and possibly lead to the development of eco-tourism.
- KH suggested sending a social science based group of students to the same camp, Rob Fuller will look at Norwich University as a potential source of students as an alternative to having another group of ecologists.
- WT to put KH in touch with Steve Trudgill at Cambridge University about the moral geography elements of the project. Steve is part of the Field Studies Council and there may be scope for their involvement. Possible sources of funding need to be investigated ready for next year with this in mind. JS to look at this. WT to develop more ideas about this.

**Actions required:**

KH to follow up the suggestion about students from Norwich being involved.

WT to contact Steve Trudgill at Cambridge to discuss possible involvement.

JS to investigate possible sources of extra funding.

#### 5. Web site

- The web site to be managed by WTA so that it becomes less student-orientated. NL's press release to be used to help flavour the future web site.
- NL to send WT a piece for him to take to Russia and get Svetlana's input so that it can ultimately be translated into Russian.

**Actions required:**

JS to take over management of the web site and work with Wing Sham to that effect in October.

NL to send a press release to WT for Svetlana to contribute to and have translated for inclusion in the web site.

## 6. FSC certification status

- FSC Certification: WT to obtain a bound copy of the notes from the meeting with Price-Batch Russia about this process, which ended with the identification of the Tomski as the one to go for. There was a problem with the northern area that had been identified as a potential, following meetings with the person managing it. A letter is outstanding from the forest managers in Tomski to confirm their desire to go ahead with the process of certification. This will allow Price-Batch UK to go ahead with certification. The Black River forest was considered.
- WT to look at pine nut production, birch bark products and FSC forest for timber during his visit to clarify which areas seem to be most suitable, using Konstantin's input.
- Heather talked about the chain of custody to be certified, i.e. not just the forest but also the sawmill. The forest managers, who are government employees, are looking at setting a sawmill up and the idea is for that to be located on the edge of the forest and built to FSC specifications. This is an alternative to the existing forest entrepreneur who is already operating a sawmill. They are producing cut timber and planks and that is what is likely to be produced by any new sawmill. The Siberian Pine is the valuable timber and can only be extracted under licence – with Scots Pine, larch, spruce and fir to be exported.
- Additional element identified by KH to investigate the Tartar indigenous community and look at meeting the FSC criteria to take the requirements of such groups into consideration as part of the certification process. KH suggested asking WT to include a visit to that group to investigate eco-tourism as well as the elements of the FSC certification. Rural decline amongst the population has occurred and as a result there is the potential for a loss of biodiversity as the meadows are not maintained for grazing and the forest is expanding.

### Actions required:

WT to obtain bound copy of the meeting notes during his visit to Russia.

WT to look at pine nut production during his visit and report back.

WT's visit to include contact with the Tartar community to investigate including their issues in the FSC certification process.

## 7. Tartar Youth Centre

- Additional element was identified by KH to investigate the Tartar indigenous community and look at meeting the FSC criteria to take the requirements of such groups into consideration as part of the certification process.
- KH suggested asking WT to include a visit to that group to investigate eco-tourism as well as the elements of the FSC certification. Rural decline amongst the population has occurred and as a



result there is the potential for a loss of biodiversity as the meadows are not maintained for grazing and the forest is expanding.

**Actions required:**

WT to include a visit to the Tartar Youth Centre to assess the possibility of eco-tourism and report back.

## 8. Eco-tourism

- KH had spent time with Konstantin investigating this; Konstantin had seen the students as the first group, envisaging that Tomsk could be a venue for students in their gap year. KH suggested a more upmarket package that included hotels in Tomsk, with the potential for ACE to take a group out. The Hotel Rubin would make a good base for eco-tourism as it is in the suburbs yet within the forest. Another hotel in the village was a potential as well. WT to investigate.
- KH had discovered a “floating hotel” option that could be developed. Cruise-type boats were used already (without accommodation) for local people to go out into the forest to gather berries and nuts in the forest. WT to investigate with Konstantin.

**Actions required:**

WT to investigate hotels in Tomsk area as potential for up-market eco-tourist packages.

WT to investigate the “floating hotels” option and report back.

## 9. Pine-nut production

- Traidcraft report due October – look at birch bark products and pine nut production in the Asivo – district manager Galina Sergevina Loichencko – forest manager for Asivo.
- KH brought back samples of birch bark products to send photographs to People Tree and Evolution so that we can consider using them rather than Traidcraft although we would still use Traidcraft to look at pine nut production. WT to contact Traidcraft prior to the meeting and speak to Jackie MacAdam about the pine nut production in particular. It is possible that we could save a significant amount of money if we could switch investigation of the birch bark products to another organisation but still use Traidcraft for investigation into the pine nuts.
- Dr Adam (Environment Minister) advocated an existing pine nut manufacturer – which poses a potential problem to the project as we envisaged IIES being involved in the production of pine nuts, although it was noted that Dr Adam is very supportive of IIES and may be willing to work with them as part of the production process. WT to discuss with Svetlana and Konstantin from IIES.

**Actions required:**

WT to contact Jackie McAdam prior to the trip about pine nut production.

WT to investigate other potential ways of producing pine nuts.



## 10. School forests

- WT to discuss this with Svetlana during his visit.

### Actions required:

WT to discuss with Svetlana and report back.

## 11. Promotion

- NL has been in the process of gathering information, carrying out interviews with Rob Fuller and Fred Currie, and hoping to meet up with the students to get some stories.
- WT to go through the schedule with Svetlana to ask when they are doing their press releases etc.
- NL to produce an article on the discovered biodiversity and the expeditions.
- Future topics are the FSC process, and conflict with the way in which the forests were currently managed, as well as the differences in the amounts charged for external auditors to go to Russia to certificate the process. KH has identified the difficulty of introducing FSC certification into poor economies, which is something that needs to be raised carefully with FSC, which have just relocated to Germany. Another issue is the Tartar community. JS suggested an article for women's magazines to capitalise on the all-female student team.

### Actions required:

NL to complete interviews and information gathering to develop suitable articles.

## 12. Report production for DEFRA

- Information required for NL from Svetlana to provide the Russian side of the project. WT to source this in the visit.
- NL to gather information on the hardware used for data capture in Tomsk, to include this in the annual report, will contact Alex Benton.

### Actions required:

WT to ask Svetlana for information for NL.

NL to develop piece on the hardware used for data capture.