Twenty Villages Sign Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary’s Carbon Credit Agreement for Community Development

The Ministry of Environment (MoE), Provincial Authorities and WCS provided local communities from 20 villages with Community Development Agreements under Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary’s (KSWS) REDD+ project (Reduced Emissions from avoided Deforestation and Forest Degradation). This agreement will provide them with a large share of the revenue from KSWS’s carbon credit sales for use in implementing their prioritized village development plans, with typical activities including improving access to clean water and providing community meeting buildings.

KSWS, under the international REDD+ approach, is projected to avoid the emission of more than 14 million metric tons of CO2 equivalents over the first 10-year period between 2010-and 2019. In 2016, the Royal Government of Cambodia through the MoE, in partnership with WCS, sold KSWS’s first carbon credits to an American company. Read More

US Ambassador Visited Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary

Conservationists from the Ministry of Environment and WCS welcomed Ambassador William A. Heidt, U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia, and his embassy colleagues to Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS), Mondulkiri Province. During the trip, the Ambassador was briefed about the background of KSWS and its global importance for wildlife conservation. Importantly this visit focused on the progress of the REDD+ project that sustainably funds the conservation activities in KSWS and improves livelihood of local villagers.
At the end of the trip, the KSWS team gave the ambassador and his colleagues a tour around the KSWS’s head quarters to see confiscated equipment, including trucks, luxury timber, chainsaws, snares, and others material stored as evidence.

**Community Members Confiscate over 500 Snares and 80 Chainsaws in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary**

Over 500 snares and 80 chainsaws confiscated in 2017 by community patrol teams, led by Ministry of Environment’s (MoE) officials with members from local communities, show the commitment of local people to crack down on illegal activity that degrades their legally owned land, kills Seima’s rare wildlife, and causes conflict within communities. More efforts are needed to safeguard the sanctuary’s forests and wildlife into the future.

The community patrol teams, with support from WCS, have actively patrolled in KSWS to prevent forest and wildlife crimes. In 2017, they patrolled 52 times, spending a total of over 150 days staying in the forest. As a result, they arrested seven offenders, issued 57 warning letters to those whose committed illegal activities in KSWS, and seized many pieces of equipment, such as 86 chainsaws, 513 snares, six homemade guns, 72 machetes and axes, and 17 motorbikes. 

**Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary Holds Potential for Further Ecotourism Development**

Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS), formerly known as Seima Protection Forest, is home to more than 60 species of animal and plants on the global Red List that are threatened with extinction, according to the criteria of IUCN. The area is of international importance for the conservation of primates (including the world’s largest known populations of black-shanked douc and southern yellow-cheeked crested gibbons), wild cats, Asian elephants, wild cattle and several species of birds. A series of study have shown KSWS is potential for future ecotourism development.

"Through 10 years’ experience in KSWS, I observe that KSWS is an amazing wildlife sanctuary in
Cambodia. Besides providing support to important wildlife, this sanctuary has many rare wild trees and flowers, especially over 10 waterfalls that national and international visitors have never seen before. KSWS has great potential for ecotourism development that will generate funding to support conservation and local livelihoods in the future," said Sot Vandoeun, WCS’s Wildlife Monitoring Team Leader for KSWS.

To visit KSWS and see some of this natural world for yourself, book a tour with SVC (samveasna.org) or visit the Hefalump Café, Mondulkiri’s responsible ecotourism hub, in Sen Monorom town.

Meeting with Minister of Environment to discuss collaborative conservation activities in Keo Seima

Mr. Colin Poole, WCS Regional Director, and Mr. Ken Sereyrotha, WCS Country Program Director, met H.E. Sam Samal, Minister of Environment and other Ministry of Environment’s (MoE) senior officials to discuss cooperation between MoE and WCS in conserving Cambodia’s forests and wildlife, especially in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS) over the past 15 years.

Special attention was dedicated during the meeting to discuss the ongoing investigation and legal prosecution of the murder case involving three conservation heroes who were killed while they were patrolling forests in KSWS on the 30th January 2018. MoE and WCS are extremely shocked and saddened for the loss of these three conservation heroes and jointly re-enforced their commitment to protecting Cambodia’s forests and wildlife, especially conservation in KSWS.

Statement from WCS on the killing of three conservation heroes in Keo Seima

"At WCS, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and relatives of our three conservation heroes, Teurn Soknai, Ministry of Environment Ranger; Sek Wathana, Military Police Officer; and Thul Khna, WCS SMART Officer, killed on January 30th in the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS) while they were patrolling forest near the Cambodia-Vietnam border.

"Soknai, 37, Wathana, 34, and Khna, 24, were killed
Officer, Toeun Soknai, Ministry of Environment Ranger, and Sek Wathana, Military Police Officer, were killed while patrolling in KSWS on January 30th.

“Every day, rangers and law enforcement staff risk their lives to protect wildlife and forests. We should not allow criminals to destroy the forests of Cambodia and to threaten and murder those working tirelessly to protect this country's natural heritage. Soknai, Wathana, and Khna will always be remembered as conservation heroes.”

Conservationists encouraged by Cambodia’s pursuit of justice in murder case of three Rangers

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is encouraged by the Cambodian Government’s actions pursuing justice in connection to the murder two weeks ago of three rangers, including one WCS staff member, and is committed to continue working with the authorities and other partners to protect the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary.

Ken Serey Rotha, Country Program Director of WCS Cambodia, said: “We will not be deterred in our support of our Cambodian partners who are courageously working to safeguard our country’s wildlife in the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary. Our work in Keo Seima is not easy as the loggers, land-grabbers and poachers ruthlessly target our natural resources and our people, but we will not succumb to their total disregard of the law and the importance of the forest to local communities, biodiversity and our nation. With the continued implementation of the SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) patrol system and with the support from REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) partners we all remain committed to the successful management and protection of Keo Seima. Read More

A young Asian Elephant found dead inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary

A young male wild elephant, age about one year old, was found dead trapped in a hole near O’Am village, Sre Ktum commune, Keo Seima district, Mondulkiri Province inside the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS). It is a tragedy for wildlife conservation in Cambodia.
that requires strong conservation efforts to conserve the species from future extinction.

Listed as Globally Endangered, Asian elephants (Elephas maximus) are some of the largest mammals on the planet, but have a declining global population. As estimate, there are about 250-500 wild elephants in Cambodia, while fewer than 115 individuals are in KSWS. Read More

A young Red Muntjac
Rescued in Keo Seima

This young Red Muntjac was handed in to Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary project staff by local villagers from Andong Kraloeng village, after it was found in the forest nearby. Sadly, it is very unlikely to be returned to the wild as it is so young, and has been habituated to people by villagers bottle feeding it for the last few weeks. There is also a risk of disease transfer back into the wild population.

The infant Muntjac has been transferred to Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescued Center, where experts from Wildlife Alliance will give it the veterinary care required after a difficult start in life.

You can help protect Cambodia’s wildlife by refusing to eat bushmeat, by refusing wild species as pets, and by reporting wildlife related issues to your nearest relevant authority or conservation NGO.