

## Project Update: December 2015

### Snow Leopard Foundation in Kyrgyzstan

I just went on a Snow Leopard Enterprises product buying trip to the mountain villages of Enylchek and Ak-Shiyarak to pick up 1,100 wool handicrafts made by 38 herders. Almost 400 of these handicrafts are from our new product line developed at our June 2015 Design Workshop. Herders told me how much they love making the new items that are beautiful and fun to make. I have shipped the handicrafts to our partner, Snow Leopard Trust, in Seattle, USA.

While herders made handicrafts this summer, Trust staff introduced prototypes of some of the new handicrafts—such as pet mats and pet toys—to US wholesale buyers. The response was overwhelming. They loved them. This is good news because a stronger market means ensured income for herders, and stronger conservation commitments. The Trust will put the new handicrafts on its website and I look forward to reporting how they are selling.



Photograph number one caption: This circular rug with stylized motives of the snow leopard and its wild prey (ibex) is one of an exciting new range of Kyrgyz rugs recently developed to support snow leopard conservation in Kyrgyzstan.

Photograph number two caption: Herders love making these pet toys using a technique called “needle felting”. Income from these and other newly-developed crafts are enabling herders to turn down income from illegal hunters.



Photograph number three caption: Snow leopard photographed by remote motion-sensing camera, Sarychat-Ertash National Park, Kyrgyzstan, June 2015. To join our handicraft program, herders from Enylchek and Ak-Shiyarak villages (that border the park) sign agreements that protect the snow leopard from poaching and illegal hunting.