

Project Update: July 2015

I just returned from hosting the Design Workshop, and it was a great success! Twenty-six herders came (25 women and one man). Unfortunately 14 women were not able to come but will be trained on new designs by people who did attend. I was so impressed with everyone's hard work. All the attendees and designers spend 4 full days working on new designs, and training on needle felting and traditional embroidery (*basma*). They came up with some great new products. For example, we have four exciting new rugs (*shyrdaks*), felted wallets with *basma* embroidery, and delightful pet toys and pet mats. Gina Robertson from Snow Leopard Trust in Seattle will test-market our new products this summer at US trade fairs to see what buyers think. I also led a discussion on why the workshop is important to strengthen the connection between snow leopard conservation and herder livelihoods.



Project director, Cholpon Abasova (standing, left), discusses snow leopard conservation and the role of Snow Leopard Enterprises with workshop group.

New designs for Kyrgyz traditional-style rugs or *shyrdaks*. Contrasting coloured felt is inlaid and then hand sewn.



Participants display their completed, hand sewn “cat mats” with snow leopard design. We anticipate that both pets and owners will enjoy these fun mats.

