

Project Update: March 2008

We have completed collection of existing fisheries scientific data from the Langry-Bolshaya region. Sergei P. Nikiforov, senior scientist at the Sakhalin Fisheries and Oceanography Institute, carried out this work through a contract with the SSI Center. The result of this effort was a large work entitled “Freshwater fish of Northwestern Sakhalin Island.”

We have also signed a contract with Dr. Valeriy N. Yefanov, professor at Sakhalin State University. He is charged with drafting the expedition research plan (“Research on the Fish Populations of the Langry and Bolshaya Rivers”) and obtaining official approval of the plan and permits for sampling from the Federal Fisheries Agency. During the June 10-30 expedition, additional data will be gathered for use in the drafting of the Conservation Action Plan and the protected area creation basis document. The plan has been fully drafted and is currently awaiting approval at the Federal Fisheries Agency main office in Moscow. We hope to hear in mid-April that the plan has been approved, at which point we can fill out the paperwork to receive sampling permits.

We are basing our Conservation Plan for the Langry-Bolshaya on The Nature Conservancy’s Conservation Action Planning methodology. English-Russian translation of this program was recently completed. We are currently negotiating a contract with Tatiana V. Grizhebovskaya, director of the Langry River research station of the Federal Fisheries Agency Okha Branch. We are offering her the job of serving as lead author of the Conservation Plan. Grizhebovskaya participated last year in a Conservation Action Planning-focused seminar on Kamchatka. She has agreed in word to the scope of work, and the terms of reference are being prepared.



In order to refine Grizhebovskaya’s effort, an expert council will be created to review her plan during and after its drafting. The council will include some of Sakhalin’s best ichthyologists – Yefanov, Nikiforov and Anatoly Semchenko. Additionally, the SSI Center has achieved an agreement with the Okha Municipal Administration to organize an anti-poaching effort during the 2008 salmon spawning runs.

We have purchased the necessary equipment for the June expedition, including that which was listed in our grant application: a dry suit for snorkel surveys, a GPSMAP system, a YSI Multiparameter Instrument and seine and gill nets.

We plan to hold public hearings in the Okha Region following completion of all planned 2008 research work. The Conservation Plan draft will be reviewed by the public at the hearings. In the meantime, we have already held several official meetings with representatives of regional government, businesses and public. As a result of these efforts, we have established

collaborative relationships with S.V. Pakulin and A.C. Kolosovskiy (mayor and vice-mayor of Okha), O.O. Grizhebovskiy (director of the local branch of Rosselkhoz nadzor, the environmental permitting federal agency), V.T. Grivtsov (director of the Okha Forestry Agency) and V.V. Agnun (official representative of the local indigenous tribes). From these organizations and others we have received official letters of support for our project.

We plan to take many photographs during the June 10-30 expedition, and will immediately send you another update and photos upon its completion. In the meantime, I am attaching a photo from a recent working group meeting regarding the project, which was held at our office in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Representatives of the Federal Fisheries Agency, the Sakhalin Fisheries and Oceanography Institute and the Wild Salmon Center participated.