

Project Update: February 2018

Ecological sampling in three elevation bands (900 m, 1100 m, and 1300 m) was completed in October 2017. Three 25 x 20 m plots were established in each elevation band. The host tree characteristics (tree height, position of orchid, height above ground) and physical parameters (altitude, slope, aspect, and disturbance) were noted for epiphytic and terrestrial orchids.

The major host tree species includes *Schima wallichii* and *Castanopsis indica* in lower altitude (900 – 1300 m). In the middle zone between 1300 – 2100 m, *Daphiphyllum himalayense* and *Symplocos ramosissima* were the major host species. *Quercus semecarpifolia* and *Rhododendron arboreum* host most the orchid species at higher altitude between 2100-2500 m. The major conservation threats observed were free grazing and unsustainable harvesting of fuel wood.

Third and fourth visits were made in December 2017 and February 2018 respectively. Six members of the 'Orchid Conservation Group' was formed in Bhadaure Deurali. Household survey and field observation were organized with active participation of the group members.



Left: Tree cut down for fuel wood. ©Prabin Bhandari, February 2018. Right: *Pleione praecox* (Sm.) D. Don - a beautiful orchid blooming at 2400 m in Panchase forest. ©Prabin Bhandari, October 2017.



Left: Field observation. ©Syam Kumari Saru, February 2018. Right: Questionnaire survey. ©Mitesh Shrestha, February 2018.