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SNAPSHOT

Protecting Afghanistan's Natural Resources

**Wakhan Corridor
benefits from
conservation efforts.**



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The Natural Resource Management project included renovation of dilapidated infrastructure needed to protect the Big Pamir reserve, including the community ranger station.

Welcome to the Wakhan Corridor in northeast Afghanistan: an isolated and breathtakingly beautiful mountain landscape that is sparsely populated by fierce people and even fiercer creatures, such as the elusive Snow Leopard and the Marco Polo sheep. Survival in such a landscape is challenging at best. Thanks to the USAID-sponsored project, however, both the people and wildlife of the Wakhan Corridor have been given new hope.

The “Improving Livelihoods and Governance Through Natural Resource Management” (NRM) project, which is implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), has been working since 2006 to improve livelihoods and restore the Big Pamir protected area in the Wakhan Corridor. Thanks to the work of NRM’s forty-two community rangers, not only is the area regularly patrolled, cutting down on poaching and other dangers, but key infrastructure in the area, including a ranger station, have been restored. The stage is now set for the Big Pamir area to become a nationally-protected conservation area, only the second after the Band-i-Amir National Park in Bamyan. An announcement is expected in 2013.

Said Mohammad Wafa, head ranger for NRM: “This project was not only important for us rangers and our community,[but] we hope it will show the world that Afghanistan is truly rebuilding”.

Afghan ownership is the key to the project’s long-term success. Afghanistan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) is closely involved in the project, helping draft a protected area management plan and hiring additional rangers.