



COMMUNITY FORESTRY INTERNATIONAL

1051 Via Regina

Santa Barbara, Ca 93111 USA

Street Address: 1051 Via Regina

Santa Barbara, CA 93111 USA

Tel: (805) 696-9087

Fax: (805) 696-9097

www.communityforestryinternational.org

Front cover: Forest Spirit House, Kampong Thom, Cambodia

Back cover: Members of the Umden community forestry committee, Northeast India

COMMUNITY FORESTRY INTERNATIONAL



Annual Report 2005

CFI FINANCIAL REPORT
YEAR END JUNE 30, 2005

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

<u>Revenue:</u>	
Grants	\$729,322.00
<u>Private</u>	<u>\$ 550.00</u>
Total	\$729,872.00
<u>Expenses:</u>	
Program Services	\$529,260.00
<u>Admin. & Mgmt.</u>	<u>\$ 92,421.00</u>
Total	\$721,681.00

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

<u>Assets:</u>	
Cash	\$149,311.00
<u>Accounts Receivable</u>	<u>\$109,062.00</u>
Total Assets	\$258,373.00

All information based on Community Forestry International's financial statement for the period from July 1, 2004— June 30, 2005.

- DAMNAK NEAKTA THMOR PUON (\$500) Project to support livelihood improvement.
- PHNOM CHAM BANG, KRANG SKEAR TBOUNG (\$500) Project to support materials to facilitate protective patrols of forest area.
- CHAMBAK COMMUNITY FORESTRY (\$480) Project for community forestry extension.
- KEOV PICH PON NA REAY COMMUNITY FORESTRY (\$500) Office supplies.
- PO CHROK CHUMRAK RITHYSEN COMMUNITY FORESTRY (\$500) Office supplies.
- PHNOM TEUK CHROUS SROS BAM PRONG COMMUNITY FORESTRY (\$500) Office supplies.
- DA REANGSEI REAKSMEY TOUK MEAS CF (\$500) Funds to be used to support travel to another village to see how CF is in practice.

- KANG REI PO BANG KRASANG TENG KLUON COMMUNITY FORESTRY (\$500) Project to develop and produce a sign to demarcate the community forestry and protected areas.
- NE INDIA
- NORTHEAST HILL UNIVERSITY (\$16,578) To act as secretariat for the CF Working Group and provide technical assistance.
- CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION (\$22,000) To building capacity of indigenous community institutions.
- WEAKER SECTIONS DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (\$8,300) Project to provide guidance and monitoring to the CFI pilot project in Manipur.
- MAWPHLANG LYNGDOHSHIP (\$5,556) To provide community forestry facilitation for the Mawphlang Lyngdohship.
- DOLAN MALAI (\$3,334) To provide community forestry facilitation in Umden.

CFI Mission



Board of Directors

Gary Mcdonald, President
David Barker, Ph.D.
Charles Dixon, CFO
Zohar Kaplan, CPA
Kathryn LePage, M.A.
Walt Rozett, M.S.

Ex-Officio

Mark Poffenberger, Ph.D.
Kate Smith-Hanssen, Ph.D.

Staff

Evelyn Boyle
Kristal Passy
Ron Yttri

Community Forestry International (CFI) assists rural communities to regenerate forests by helping policy makers, development agencies, NGOs, and professional foresters develop the legal instruments, human resource capacities, and negotiation processes and methods to support resident resource managers. Community forest management leads to livelihood security and poverty alleviation that, in turn, leads to sustainable development. CFI enables community forest management strategies to become an integral part of stabilizing forest management worldwide. CFI strategies are implemented through four interrelated thematic program area: 1) Regional and National Policy Dialogues, 2) Mediation Processes and Methods for Enhancing Tenure Security, 3) Participatory Research & Field Programs, and 4) Communication. The program components are designed to engage national policy makers, professional practitioners, and communities to facilitate learning, reduce conflicts, and ultimately create management agreements that result in more equitable, sustainable forest use.

CFI GRANT PROGRAM 2005

CAMBODIA

COMMUNITY FORESTRY OFFICE/FOREST ADMINISTRATION (\$24,963) Community Forestry Project, Kg. Leang.

COMMUNITY FORESTRY OFFICE/FOREST ADMINISTRATION (\$9,825) National CF Program.

CAMBODIA COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM NETWORK (\$1,200) National training for community-based ecotourism.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (\$9,994) Project to promote decentralized management of natural resources.

CHILDREN’S DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (\$8,928) Project to develop community forestry in Rumduol Veasna.

SATREY SANTEPIEP DAMBEY PAKRISTAN (\$6,100) Project to help indigenous people develop community forestry in Kratie and Mondulkiri.

KHMER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (\$8,193) Community forestry development project in Pursat.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION & DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (\$12,953) Promoting good governance of forestry resources.

KHMER ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRYSIDE CAMBODIA (\$6,423) Community forestry project in Kratie.

BUDDHISTS FOR DEVELOPMENT, KG. THOM (\$9,801) Sustainable forestry resource management in Kg. Thom.

COMMUNITY FORESTRY OFFICE/FOREST ADMINISTRATION (\$9,921) To support the Information Management Unit of the CFO to create a community forestry database.

MLUP BAITONG (\$25,000) Environment radio and advocacy program on community forestry.

SAVE CAMBODIA’S WILDLIFE (\$15,866) Project to support community outreach in Bokor National Park.

SIEM REAP FORESTRY ADMINISTRATION CANTONMENT (\$12,000) Project to provide bridging support for FA office while in between two major donor support projects.

RATANAKIRI NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (\$47,860) Project to support capacity building for indigenous communities in Ratanakiri.

Seed Grants

SANGKROS PREY CHHER PHOM ANCHAGN (\$500) Project to develop and produce a sign to demarcate the community forestry and protected areas.

KHMO SOCHET (\$472) Materials to facilitate protective patrols of forest area.

KHOM DANG KAM BET (\$\$472) Materials to facilitate protective patrols of forest area.

KHOM MEAN RITH (\$472) Materials to facilitate protective patrols of forest area.

KHOM KBAL TRACH (\$500) Project to develop and produce a sign to demarcate the community forestry and protected areas.

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CFI Vision

CFI supports programs that empower local people to sustainably manage their natural resources, protect biodiversity, provide livelihood opportunities, and stabilize their cultural traditions and values.

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Community Forestry committee in Dsem Commune, Kratie Province. Eight communes are protecting 50,000 ha. Forest that is home to tigers and elephants.

President's Message



Dear Friends:

I continue to be impressed by the impact CFI achieves through ideas of its directors. While CFI continues to generate funding that allows the programs to move forward, it is the vision that is fundamental to providing a road map that can guide a transformation in forest management worldwide. CFI is demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach in Cambodia, where participatory management of state forests represents a major paradigm shift for the entire forest sector. The social and environmental benefits are clear as innovative forest management programs are launched that empower ordinary people with the authority to act as responsible stewards for their environment. This contrasts sharply with the dismal failure of industrial logging concessions in the 1990s.

The past few years have been a critical time for securing the on-going funding that CFI requires to implement its mission. As a result of long hours of grant writing, CFI staff and consultants are now fully engaged in their work with communities and NGOs on the ground, as well as collaborating with national forestry planners and policy makers and development agencies to formulate national community forestry strategies. In 2005, CFI has strengthened its relationship with USAID and the MacArthur Foundation, while designing a new collaborative agreement with the World Bank. CFI is increasingly recognized as an organization with considerable depth of experience in community forestry legislation, policy development and field program implementation.

CFI's current efforts in Cambodia and Northeast India are creating new partnerships between rural people, foresters, and local government, a process that is providing a people-oriented framework to management that is helping to stabilize forest cover. From the sacred groves of highland Meghalaya in NE India to the flood forests of the Tonle Sap in Cambodia, Asian villagers are increasingly committed to protecting their forests and CFI will continue to try and support them.

CFI will continue its efforts in Asia in the coming year, striving to encourage innovation and capacity building within the organization and among its partners through sharing, while providing a voice for forest-dependent peoples. CFI has appreciated the support it has received over the past year from funding agencies, public donations, and the voluntary efforts of the board and associates. We look forward to further achievements in 2006.

Gary McDonald

President, CFI Board

Building Community Forestry Patrol Stations in Kampong Thom (Cambodia)

The community in Dong Kombut, Sandan District, Kg. Thom, is highly dependent on forest resources. When Mr. In Nam, the head of the community, visited Community Forestry International in Phnom Penh to apply for a seed grant he provided a long list of forest products which villagers collect, including resin, rattan, mushrooms, fruits, and medicines. Dong Kombut has



two community forestry areas with a total area of approximately 12,000 ha. Though the area is not yet officially recognized by FA, it would be one of the largest CF areas if approved.

CFI approved a seed grant of \$472.10 last April to build two patrol stations in their community forestry area. Mr. In Nam and other CF members have already marked the boundary of the CF area by putting up simple signs and clearing pathways. Some 10-15 villagers conduct regular patrols of the CF area. Mr. In Nam says that there is very little problem with illegal activity because the community is managing the area very carefully. He has also communicated with other villages in the surrounding area to make sure there is no conflict.

Mr. In Nam was very grateful for the CFI funds which allowed the villagers to build the two patrol stations.

Funds were used to buy materials, and villagers contributed their own labor for construction. The patrol stations are located 6 and 8 km from the village, so it was a big effort to build them. Mr. In Nam plans to apply for another seed grant in the near future so that his community can formalize the boundaries of the CF area by putting up larger signs. Because he and the community were so grateful for the assistance received from CFI, he made a special trip to Phnom Penh to the CFI office in order to hand-deliver the final report on the grant along with the photos which were taken by him using a disposable digital camera supplied with the grant to document their activities.

Protecting Land Rights in Ratanakiri (Cambodia)

Over the past three years, with support from USAID, Community Forestry International has been training and educating energetic extension workers, both young and old, from the indigenous Tampuan, Jarai, and Kreung tribes of Northeast Cambodia. These extension workers are part of an indigenous peoples’ network that is dedicated to protecting the land and forest rights of the unique cultural groups who are often taken advantage of by the more politically and economically powerful elite. Due to these outreach efforts, a growing number of communities have rejected attempts by land grabbers to intimidate villagers and purchase their ancestral domain lands, including sacred forests, for large scale commercial development.



Located between two Protected Areas (Virachey National Park and Lumphat Wildlife Sanctuary), community forests of the region provide a unique habitat rich in biodiversity. Ratanakiri Natural Resource Management Network operates in 4 districts and approximately 30 communes that elect their network representatives. Over 100 villages have received basic land and forest rights training. In each commune workshops are being organized to discuss the situation with regard to culture, rights and natural resource management. This initiative is building community capacity to resist illegal land sales that have been eroding indigenous culture, depleting forest resources, and threatening the rich biodiversity of the area.

Letter from the Directors

Dear Colleagues & Friends:



The past year has been an important year for CFI, as our organizational capacity and field programs have expanded substantially. In Cambodia, CFI currently works with 15 NGO and government partners located in eight provinces, while our field support reaches over one hundred rural communities. In Northeast India, CFI’s new pilot projects assist Kuki, Naga, and Khasi tribal villages in the states of Manipur and Meghalaya, to use their indigenous institutions to address critical forest management problems. In CFI’s two projects areas we have also increased our staff and support structure. In NE India, our project staff moved into a new office and with additional space, while country staff in both nations have taken on greater administrative and project management responsibilities.

As part of CFI’s project in NE India, we produced a new documentary video directed by Ms. Minnie Vaid entitled “Sacred Forests of Meghalaya: Wisdom from the Mother’s Hearth” that chronicles much of the progress to bring greater awareness and organization to the management of traditional sacred groves in Meghalaya, NE India. The film was shown on national television in India and was well received. In March, we traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with representatives of USAID and the World Bank. The film was featured at a bag-lunch meeting sponsored by the Natural Resources Management Thematic Group attended by about 50 people with a Q & A following. In addition, we presented a CFI program update to USAID representatives from the Asia and Near East Bureau. One of the outcomes of the film showing was that CFI was asked to collaborate on a WB project in NE India. Mark will present a power point presentation of that research in Guwahati, India in November 2005 and prepare a published report in 2006.

Included in this year’s Annual Report are brief summaries of our current programs. We discuss some of the aspects of the CFAC program in Cambodia, the field project in Ratanakiri, and give an update on our program in NE India. In addition, we have included a summary of our grant awards.

We continue to be grateful for all the support we receive to keep our vision implemented.

Best wishes!

Mark Poffenberger, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Kate Smith-Hanssen, Ph.D.
Administrative Director

CFI Scrapbook 2005

CFI Field Trips in Cambodia with Mr. Paul Mason (USAID), Mr. Peter Jipp (World Bank), and Mr. David Hulse (MacArthur Foundation)



Top Left: Peter Jipp accompanies CFI staff to meeting at Angkor Wat CF group. Meeting was held in the community pagoda.

Middle Left: David Hulse, Kate, Mark, Paul Mason, and Amanda arrive at airport in Ratanakiri to meet with CFI project staff and tour project areas.

Bottom Left: David Hulse, Paul Mason, with Graeme Brown (CFI Ratanakiri Coordinator) and project staff member at Ratanakiri Natural Resources Management Network office.

Top Right: Phirom (CFI National Coordinator) with members of Kampong Thom community forestry villagers at meeting in their forest.

Bottom Right: Members of Kampong Thom community gather at the oldest and tallest tree in their forest.



Revival of Sacred Groves (NE India)

The cluster of five villages in Umden which is the project site supported by Community Forestry International as part of the Community Forestry Alliance for North East India project, is dotted with patches of degraded, clan-owned sacred groves. In their effort to enhance their livelihood, communities have taken to large-scale plantations of broom grass and bamboo which has led to a decrease in the water table in the region and a loss of forest cover. Many of the sacred groves which in the past harbored a rich diversity of flora and fauna, are on the verge of extinction. The community facilitator trained under the project has taken an initiative to revive two abandoned sacred groves: the Mawshapliang Sacred Grove and the Dehal Umrang Sacred Grove.



The Mawshapliang Sacred Grove and the Dehal Umrang Sacred Grove owned by the Tado Clan and Malai Majaw Clan respectively are abandoned Sacred Groves covering an area of 6 hectares and 75-80 hectares respectively. After a series of discussions with senior members of the



Clan members, the community facilitator convinced the Clan members to revive the groves which they have agreed to do so. The Clan members have shown their willingness to avail outside assistance to enable them to replant and preserve the area. The local community has always been afraid to avail any outside assistance for planting and reforestation of their land for fear of losing rights over the land. This fear is now gradually decreasing through efforts of the community facilitator and the positive manner in which the project have been designed.

The confidence of the Syiem (Traditional Head) and his Dorbar in the community facilitator has resulted in their assigning the responsibility of drafting necessary rules and regulations for protection of the grove in consultation with the village heads and clan elders and Project members to him. It has also been decided that thereafter these Sacred Grove and the rules and regulations will be registered with the Autonomous District Council. This will be the first instance of its kind in the entire State.



Community Forestry as a Grassroots Initiative (Cambodia)

Phum Dong in Kampong Speu province is a new community forest site supported by Mlup Baitong since January 2005. Phum Dong demonstrates how efficiently and effectively the CF establishment process can move with the right combination of grassroots initiative, capable and supportive village leaders, local authorities, and strategic technical support from NGOs and FA. Between January and September 2005, the Phum Dong community was able to complete most of the steps in CF establishment, including CF formulation, election of the Community Forestry Management Committee, development of By-Laws, Rules and Regulations, border demarcation with GPS, and installation of signs. Over the course of nine months, the community accomplished what other communities had taken years to do. Interviews and discussions with the community and Mlup Baitong project staff indicate that the progress is not only swift, but the participation, understanding, and commitment of the community is very high.



The Phum Dong community forestry site is 351 hectares, located about 30 kilometers south of National Road 4 in Kompong Speu. The community originally learned about CF from television broadcasts. They were eager to establish CF in order to combat rampant deforestation and protect the forest for their children, while also being concerned about land grabbing in the area and the loss of grazing land for their cattle. An active school teacher and community leader, Mr. Min Moeurn, lobbied local officials including the Forestry Administration for CF establishment, and requested the support of local NGO Mlup Baitong, a subaward recipient of Community Forestry International.

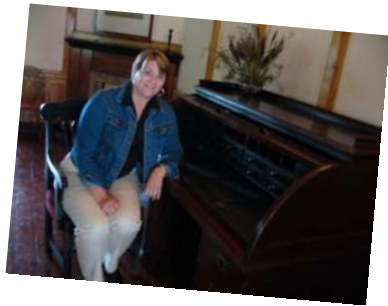
There are approximately 150 families in Phum Dong, with over 300 adults applying as CF members (virtually all). Both women and men play an active role in management and daily patrol activities. Meas Samsosheat, CF Project Officer of Mlup Baitong, feels that CF is successful in this area because the livelihoods and education levels of villagers are relatively high, so that it is easier for villagers to attend meetings and they can grasp CF concepts more quickly. He also recognizes the importance of the grassroots initiative as a factor of success.



The CF area is degraded and there is currently limited dependence on forest products; however, daily patrols have curtailed illegal cutting and prevented forest fires, allowing the forest to regenerate. The CF area is well-delineated since its border is the base of a small mountain. The community has taken the initiative to post a Cambodian flag on the top of the mountain to designate the villagers' claim for the area as CF. They are awaiting the passage of the CF *prakas* which will allow official legal registration with the Forestry Administration. In the meantime, the surrounding communities in Kbal Tek Leu and Kbal Tek Kraom have started their own CF initiatives, having witnessed and been inspired by the activities in Phum Dong.



CFI travels to NE India to monitor its projects, meet with staff, and open a new office in Shillong, NE India



Top Left: Mr. Palit (CFI Project Coordinator) and Mr. Ivan Roy (CFI Field Project Manager) stand in new office space in Shillong, NE India.
Middle Left: Community meeting held in classroom in Umden, NE India.
Bottom Left: Tambor Lyndoh and members of the CF group in Mawphlang discuss their project strategy.
Top Right: Kate sits at Rabindranath Tagore's desk in Tripura Castle, Shillong, NE India.
Middle Right: Kate stands with women members of the Umden CF group.
Bottom Right: Mark presents new CFI documentary to World Bank.



Mark presents new CFI documentary film at World Bank meeting in Washington, D.C.



Cambodia

In 2003, CFI initiated the Community Forestry Alliance for Cambodia (CFAC) program. CFI established a project office in Phnom Penh and a field office in Ban Lung, Ratanakiri Province. In the second year, CFI continued expanding its support through its Small Grant and Seed Grant Program. In addition, CFI continues to be an active participant in various NGO forums and networks that meet to collaborate on various community forestry issues in Cambodia.

Small Grants/Subawards

In its first project year, CFI developed a Small Grant Program to assist local NGO's who are actively engaged in community forestry and natural resource management and conservation activities. To date, this year's grantees range from organizations providing media and outreach education, to those training in mapping and boundary demarcation skills, to those who are directly supporting local communities to build their administrative and technical capacity to manage and conserve their natural resources, and to those training young Buddhist monks in forest protection and management through their local pagodas.

The small grants vary in amount depending on the need and capacity of the organization. CFI staff in Phnom Penh conduct field visits to monitor and assess the activities of the grantees. Through the experience of supporting a variety of CF organizations and groups, valuable data is being gathered that can benefit Cambodia as it continues to develop its natural resource management strategy.



Stories from the Field...

The Strength of Traditional Institutions in the Management of Community Forests (NE India)

Lyngkien Village is the Project site supported by Community Forestry International as part of the Community Forestry Alliance for North East India Project. It is comprised of a cluster of two villages, namely Wah Lyngkien Sunnei and Wah Lyngkien Ramklang which share a common boundary. The approximate area of the Project site is around 1, 200 hectares.

These cluster of villages fall under the Mawphlang Lyngdohship, a traditional institution governed by the head of the Lyngdohship the *Lyngdoh* of Ka Hima Mawphlang and four *Myntri* (ministers) representing four major Clans. A Committee (Dorbar) of 12 members within the Lyngdohship who are life-members of the Dorbar elected from any clan present in the Lyngdohship are also members of this institution.



Realizing the important role this institution can play in sustainable management of community forests, members of the Mawphlang Lyngdohship were trained and encouraged to revise their customary rules and responsibilities so as to enable them to take a more leading role in managing their community forests. This effort has resulted in the Mawphlang Lyngdohship taking a lead role in addressing issues related to sustainable management of community forests under their jurisdiction. Through the effort of the Mawphlang Lyngdohship and the three Community Facilitators who are also members of the Mawphlang Lyngdohship and who have been trained under the CFI Project, the Dorbar Hima Mawphlang Lyngdohship (the largest traditional institution of the region) held a meeting attended by all adult male members, numbering 2,200 members.

In this meeting, the establishment of the Mawphlang Lyngdohship Community Forestry Level Network (MLCFLN) was formalized with all 18 villages as members. It was also during this meeting that a resolution was passed vesting all forestry related activities within the Lyngdohship, including conservation, protection, mapping, and management of all categories of forests with the MLCFLN. The MLCFLN was also assigned the responsibility of directing Heads of the 18 villages to set aside patch of forest for creation protected forests and Sacred Groves.

The effort of the CFI project in assisting the villagers in leveraging Government supported forest related schemes has started to show results. Lyngkien village has been awarded a Joint Forest Management (JFM) Scheme which provides funds for undertaking certain activities like aiding natural regeneration for a patch of 10 hectares and the planting of fast-growing species on over 25 hectares in patches of degraded community forest are underway. An even more encouraging aspect is the decision of the Mawphlang Lyngdohship to designate the 10 and 25 odd hectares of forest as a Community Protected Forest after the JFM project period ends.

Ratanakiri

Securing Customary Rights for Indigenous People

The majority of Ratanakiri communities are indigenous communities from 7 different language and cultural groups. Nearly all communities and community people experience significant poverty. Many times this is related to loss of natural resources and this has been well documented. CFI maintains its own field office in Ban Lung, Ratanakiri province for the administration and technical support in that area.

Ratanakiri is located in the forested uplands of northeastern Cambodia. Indigenous communities traditionally have a very strong relationship with natural resources and utilize them for construction, religious reasons, food supplies, particularly in times of shortage, and for medicines and treatments. In recent times the situation has rapidly changed. Recent analysis has shown that, “communities are losing control over the natural resources they traditionally used.”

Forests have been logged, wildlife traded, and land alienated by various means. At the moment, all these problems are escalating due to plans for infrastructure development within the province and within the country. CFI support is assisting local indigenous communities with education and training so that they may better network and communicate issues among themselves and to the authorities and local government.



Seed Grants

As CFI staff visited various field sites around Cambodia during its first project year, it became evident that some communities required small amounts of seed money that could be directly allocated to them to improve their natural resource management capacity and to develop livelihood strategies. In response, CFI developed a Seed Grant program to provide support directly to communities with a maximum of no more than \$1,000. We believe that by “seeding” numerous communities with small amounts of funds, we are leveraging the amount of progress and good resource stewardship that can take place. In addition, we hope to provide greater capacity building, educational opportunities, and training to improve the quality of life and the environment.

National Community Forestry Program

CFI along with Concern Worldwide, Oxfam GB, and WWF is supporting the National Community Forestry Program (NCFP). In the early part of 2005, the last of four regional workshops were held. Now, NCFP is documenting the workshops, highlighting the “lessons learned,” and planning a national workshop.

In 2005, CFI has also helped provide guidance to NCFP on the development of their extension materials for the *prakas* or guidelines to the national laws and policies. In addition, CFI is assisting NCFP in drafting a vision statement for the future of community forestry in Cambodia.

Law & Policy

CFI staff continue to contribute recommendations on legal and policy issues when requested. Rob Oberndorf, CFI Legal & Policy Advisor, is helping with the guidelines for the CF Sub-decree as well as providing valuable assistance with the extension materials. CFI is also making input into the development of the communal land and forest rights laws and policies broadly enacted under Cambodia’s Land Law. This has involved monitoring the implementation of pilot projects that seek recognition of communal tenure, as well as documenting land conflicts.

Case Studies

CFI National Coordinator, Yang Phirom, drafted a comparison and analysis of six community forestry sites: Chambok, Damnak Nakta Thmarpoun, Prey Nakta Thmar Prong, Som Thom, Krar Bey Sar, and Prey Kbal Teuk Tbeng Lek. He concluded that the strength or weakness of the overall site depended largely on the capacity of the management committee members, the involvement and commitment of the members, the support and involvement of local authority and the financial support from NGOs. With strong support from NGOs, community forestry has done a lot to improve the condition of the forest and the livelihood of the villagers.

Q and A Booklet

In response to requests from local communities, Amanda Bradley, CFI Program Coordinator, produced a simple, easy to read, question and answer booklet on community forestry. After a first publishing edition of 5,000 there was such a demand that CFI is going to publish an additional 5,000. The booklets are published in Khmer with a few in English and are disseminated to our NGO partners, community members, and community forestry leaders.

Email Exchange

One of the projects that CFAC staff have initiated is an email exchange of information and learning with local donor organizations and NGOs, international organizations, government representatives, and interested individuals. Information exchanged includes:

- Meetings, workshops, trainings related to CF
- Legal briefs and updates on CF policy development
- Commentary of forest sector developments
- Opportunities for CF funding
- CF media reports
- Other related CF information

NE India

In 2005, the NE India program continued into its third project year. This year, the project is focusing its work in two states: Meghalaya and Manipur. The CF Working Group will continue to meet periodically for regional conferences.

Manipur

Manipur is located between the southern portion of Assam and Burma. They have a population of almost 2.5 million with a total land area of 8,621 sq. miles (22,327 sq. km.). There are 33 Scheduled Tribes (granted legitimacy under Indian Law) with the two major groups being the Nagas and the Kuki.

CFI selected two project sites in Manipur for its CF work: Makhan Village (Naga) and N. Songlun village (Kuki).

Prior to establishing the goals of the project in these two areas, participatory meetings were held by the CFI-NE team: S. Palit, S. Barik, and Ivan Roy. In Makhan, the CFI meeting was attended by the village headman and members of the village, including women. In N. Songlun, the meeting was attended not only by the headman but almost the entire village as well!

It was determined that CFI would collaborate with the Forest Department to assist the villagers to strengthen their institutional framework within the villages that would be capable of making comprehensive natural resource management plans, apply to development schemes for financial and technical assistance, and implement the plan.



The broad goals in Manipur are:

- 1) Sustainably manage the natural resources including: sacred groves, clan, private, and government forests, water, and *jhum* lands.
- 2) A landscape approach will be utilized to manage the broad area rather than small, site specific approaches.
- 3) In order to insure effective participation of the villagers in the planning project, survey and demarcation, 3-D modeling, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises will be used.

In January 2005, CFI signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Manipur Forest Department to assist with the project. The Forest Department are enthusiastic about community forestry in Manipur and have pledged support through their forest development agencies to at least partially fund a joint venture with the villagers.

A local NGO, the Weaker Sections Development Society (WSDS) is collaborating with the project to assist with community-based landscape management planning and needs identification. Together with the Forest Department and WSDS, CFI hosted a multi-stakeholder meeting to ascertain what areas of interest, an assessment of impact, and the



potential strategies for obtaining support for reducing obstacles. In addition, an exercise was conducted to analyze the market potential of the main agri-products of both villages. Other activities that have been undertaken have been: PRA activities, manual GIS training and mapping, documentation of manual GIS exercise, Community analysis of PRA and manual GIS data, digitization of 1:50,000 topographic sheets.

The villagers in both sites are enthusiastically participating in the project and the participatory approach along with the multi-stakeholder involvement is proving to be a great success.

Meghalaya

Meghalaya is located between Assam to the north and east, Bangladesh to the south, and W. Bengal to the west. Its capital is Shillong, a former British hill station during colonial times. The CFI-NE office is located in Shillong, which is also home to the Northeast Hill University.

Meghalaya was carved out of Assam as an autonomous state on April 2, 1970. It was declared a state of the Indian Union in 1972. The state of Meghalaya is comprised of the Khasis, Garo and Jaintia hills with thick forests and scenic beauty. 80% of the state is tribal. CFI is working in two project sites in Meghalaya: Mawphlang Lyngdohship and Umden. The Lyngdohship also manages the Mawphlang sacred grove which

encompasses 60% of the total land area with areas of good forest cover. Prior to the CFI project, the Lyngdohship was concerned that the communities were not educated enough about the importance of the valuable resources within their forests. But, after a series of meetings and approval of a formal network in November 2004, rules governing the management of the sacred grove have been developed. CEE, a local NGO, have been collaborating with the Lyngdohship to provide environmental education to students and young children. In addition to the management plan, the Lyngdohship is also planning to develop eco-tourism in the grove with a special trail that links the forest to a local village.

The second CFI project area is in Umden. This project is being managed by Dolan Malai, a former schoolteacher and avid environmentalist. After conducting a village-wide survey, he determined that 20 of the 32 villages he visited were interested in establishing community forestry. Umden also has a tradition of sacred groves and within this project area, three of the forests are designated as sacred.

But, without proper education and the establishment of rules and regulations, the sacred groves are slowly being plundered for their natural resources. With CFI support, the communities are starting to develop plans to protect their forests and revitalize their traditions of sacred groves. The rich historical and ancestral sites of Umden are starting to be valued once more as the villagers receive assistance for their efforts.

CF Working Group for the Northeast

In Phase II, the Community Forestry Working Group for Northeast India has been divided to focus on the two CFI project areas in Manipur and Meghalaya. Stakeholder workshops have been held in each state bringing together community leaders, NGOs, Forest Department staff, and senior government planners to discuss community environmental and development needs.