SeedTree

Projects in Progress

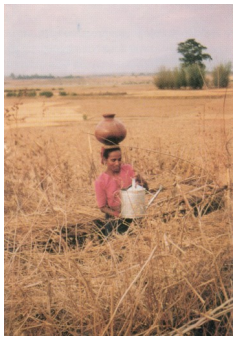
SEED — Together Renewing Endangered Ecosystems through human ecology

Issue 14 **SeedTree Annual Report 2009**

A letter from the Executive Director: Forests are seed sources of biodiversity adapted to its locale. Conservation is the first vital step toward halting deforestation, responsible for land degradation and some 30% of atmospheric increase of greenhouse gasses (GHGs). SeedTree addresses the next: ***What will it take to bring back forests?***

- ***Incentive:*** It will take people seeing it in their own interest to bring back trees,
- ***Knowledge:*** that they ***can*** *do so, and* ***how***
- ***Cultural Reintegration*** of forests with human communities for maximum mutual benefit.

While we have focused on addressing these in developing our program, it is increasingly apparent that macro-economic and climatic forces may determine our ultimate success in saving and restoring healthy ecosystems. I invite the reader to consider this report in the context of these crucial issues of our time. (cont. p. 3, col. 2)



1996 (left) to **2009** (right)

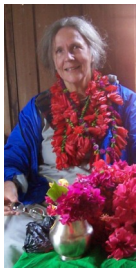
From Hope to a Wholesome Harvest

In 1996, (left) 13 women of Rampur, a deforested and desolate village of Dang, Nepal, faced a desperate situation, but did not despair. Encouraged by SeedTree's Ved Bahadur K.C. (center in lower 1996 photo) bringing our offer of seed, supplies and technical guidance, they set about making a small tree nursery hoping to restore trees to their barren lands. With resolve as steady as the clay pots they balanced gracefully on their heads, carrying water from afar with watering cans we provided, they shielded their seedlings from the harsh sun with sticks and straw. Under such difficult conditions, the Forest Officer (right in '96 photo), doubted our low-tech, *guerilla* nursery would succeed.

In 2009, with Dang's relative peace, Ved and Exec. Director Carol Kinsey returned together for the first time. Shelterbelts now line fields and roadways. Several trees from our 1996 nursery stood matured, shading the back yard of our meeting place (left), as they did most homes in the community, with their girth demonstrating the remarkable growth of tropical trees.

By 2006, several rosewood trees had a wilt disease and were harvested. The women profited considerably from the sale. Other trees we planted still grow, increasing in value, continuing to produce ample fuel, fodder and construction materials while they protect the fields from erosion. The Rampur women deemed their labors well invested, indeed.

In 2009, we led 26 tree planting groups: 21 in Nepal, 4 in Peru and 1 in Maine to plant **129,507 new trees.**



Chitwan groups showed appreciation for our education and tree-planting programs touchingly with garlands accepted on your behalf, talks, speeches, and tours of nurseries and community forests with recently planted trees.

Tree leaves are a principal fodder in Nepal. Elephant packs its lunch: branches of pipal: Ficus religiosa. SeedTree's Yuvaraj Ghatane records growth of fodder species: Bauhinia pupuria.

Integrating of Human with Forest Ecology:

In contrast to commercial monoculture plantations, our participatory process in tree-planting assures its biodiversity as it integrates the trees planted into the people's needs and lives, sustainably.

Water supply, crucial to a healthy human ecology, widely benefits the poorest peoples. We passed this SeedTree deep well in use in Dang and funded 5 new ones.

Biogas development (below)

Before: Drying dung (left) cakes for fuel is a poor substitute for firewood, wastes the fertilizing value of manure releases methane, a GHG 20 times more

heat-trapping than CO^2 Our Biogas-latrine-stoves eliminate methane, provide sanitation, enriched compost, and clean burning fuel.

markedly improves the life quality for families with livestock. We supported 6 such systems this year. For families without livestock cooking over an open fire stoves also greatly improve conditions in the home. Chimneys relieve a major cause of respiratory disease, particularly in women and their young children. The **stoves' improved fuel efficiency** can save up to 30% of firewood. This year we completed 80 and 150 more are due to be completed by summer.

ST Field Rep, Hira BK, 2nd left, with a Dang Eco-Ed Class brick-making for an improved efficient, smokeless stoves.

Education provides an enduring foundation for the transformations needed for communities to sustain and nurture their life-support systems of soil, water, air, plants, animals and energy.

Moved by a PBS "Now" program: "*Daughters for Sale,*" we directed our field staff to also address with our groups the practice of girls being sold into sex-work or domestic servitude for the price of a loan from one of our Eco-Trusts. We advocate for keeping girls in school. With education girls and women can self-reliantly contribute far more value to their communities and environments. The **Barbara Bradford scholarships** are also breaking entrenched ways by preparing 5 Dang girls for careers of their choice, free from sex-working caste expectations. **Eco-credit** allows women to undertake **eco-friendly income generation** work like horticulture, vegetable gardening, or bee-keeping. We endowed two trusts in Dang this year, though more needed training is being planned. Our classes formed 17 saving and credit groups, preparing the women with basic financial management concepts and practices.

In 2009 we completed 10 **Rural Non-formal education classes** for environmental science and applied human ecology. After republishing our manual with an improved wildlife conservation component, we began 10 more classes and are calling our 2010 teachers from 3 new districts. Participants learn concepts and such applications as building improved stoves (above), or utilizing renewable energy such as *making bio-briquettes from forest-choking invasive species (right),* which benefits both forests and the human life quality.

Workshops held included, nursery management, agro-forestry, Chitwan District level coordination for tree-planting, education class facilitator training, and an orientation for new staff and work-study scholars. At the latter, we also discussed innovative ways to expand our program. Ram Sapkota introduced the idea of combining our nursery and tree-planting with eco-touring in Achane, Dhading. We aided a 2009 nursery there.

Ram Sapkota

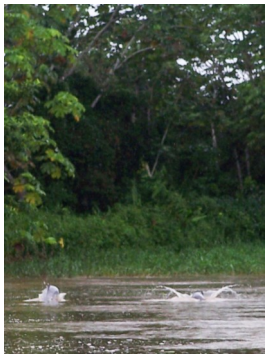
Caring for Creation: a Service Journey to Peru:

This winter-spring SeedTree V.P. Adam Stone and his wife Bella, indigenous to the region, led our first partnering of an Eco-Tour with our Nursery and Tree-planting in the great forest of Peru's Amazonia. With jungleearthlivingschool.com in Yarina Cocha, Ucayali as base camp, participants planted over 4000 native trees there and in other villages in the region: Sucre, Alfonso Ugarte, and Poh yong.

Bella, Adam and Naya Stone

Both Nepal and Peru share extremes of landscape from glaciers to sub/tropical lowland forests. The retreat of glaciers is causing extreme water shortages in both. In Nepal, progressive legislation allows landless poor to organize locally to develop and profit directly by sustainably managing community forests on government lands. Peru lacks such political incentive. School supplies, much needed boots and machetes given, make it economically possible for them to replant. The help of the eco-tourists also supported our program. They also serve our outreach aims as they learn of the wonderful biodiversity of the region, the social, economic and ecological problems there, and learn of solutions. Strip harvesting that allows regeneration with the choice species we plant is a way to further enriches the new growth. SeedTree calls for harvesting to be at least sustainable through replanting — and at best, expanding the forests and/or enriching their diversity and life supporting productivity. We have succeeded in doing this in Chitwan, where forest cover has increased and nearly all Community Forest User Groups consider tree-planting a required and regular activity. This transformation has been deemed largely a result of SeedTree's efforts.

Waterways linking our Peru project sites sustain rare species like the freshwater blue dolphins right.



Campers share sugar maple & apple trees at 4th of July parade.

Wearing his Maine hat, Adam runs Camp Forest leading children in outdoor learning and living.

(cont. from p. 1 paragraph 1)

We can and must at least **aim** to capture or **grow our own renewable energy** and phase out **fossil fuels: Let the fossils rest in peace!** The phrase "carbon capture and storage," is being used euphemistically for techno-dreams that permit expansion of coal or worse: shale & tar sands, while creating toxic CO^2 waste dumps. This would precipitate disaster according to leading climate scientist, NASA's Dr. James Hansen.* Imagine if the financial, intellectual, and social capital, presently aimed at further exploiting fossil fuels (the energy plants have stored over the eons while they made our planet hospitable for us) were invested in restoring forests integrated with organic agriculture and horticulture, soaking up the *carbon* which is ***already excessive in our atmosphere.*** The biosphere is incomparably elegant in its productivity. Solar electric cells emulate the grace of photosynthesis which captures and transforms solar energy into a world of benefit. Such an aim would increase real wealth and value, starting with healthy, productive employment creating stores of renewable energy, clean air, recharged water tables, wildlife habitat, social cooperation and security, food, fruits, medicines, timber, and a host of non-timber forest products.

*http://www.democracynow.org/2009/12/22/leading_climate_scientist_james_hansen_on

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The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference underscored our need not to wait for leaders constrained by financial interests, but lead as best we can. Though the conference failed to solve the problem, neither did it lock us into a policy that has already failed under Kyoto Protocol: "Cap & Trade." In lieu of a better alternative to "cap & trade," SeedTree has been working—reluctantly— to avoid some of its many pitfalls should it become law. In 2009 for example, we secured initial agreements for a funding chain to be ***transparently negotiated at every stage*** from the carbon credit purchasers to the actual community forest, farmers' or women's group members actually putting the trees in the soil. Adoption of cap & trade could result even in more clearing of natural forests for monoculture plantations. The policy has only exacerbated global emissions under Kyoto Protocol, and will as long as fossil fuels are our cheapest option. For example, last year I could get a restaurant owner to make biodiesel from his waste fry oil, but with the oil price drop, no longer. At Copenhagen, even Al Gore agreed that a price on carbon is a better solution to reduce emissions.

The Conference also showed us that the next critical decisions will come at the national level where we can yet hope to influence the process.

We must not merely seek to adapt to climate change, but solve the problem! SeedTree favors the proposal of Dr. James Hansen* to do so.

*http://www.democracynow.org/2009/12/22/leading_climate_scientist_james_hansen_on

- Set a gradually **escalating price on carbon at ground level** to be paid by companies taking the fossil fuels, oil or coal, from the ground. (No tar-sands or shale oils as they are far too carbon intensive.)
- Direct this money to the public so that they can purchase emissions-saving technologies, renewable energy sources, insulation, etc.

Value comes from money only when the money follows good ideas. Money given to countries just to help them adapt will not halt climate change. We must halt global warming. We approach irreversible tipping points with unimaginable consequences. Recently they have found that when the permafrost thaws, methane will be released, with 20 times the heat-retaining property of carbon. Species pivotal to the healthy functioning ecosystems and agriculture, like pollinators, are at stake. Let's do what it takes, for Life!

We are thankful that our sources of funding so clearly concur with our aims and processes. **Credo / Working Assets'** gave major support to our tree-planting program totaling $14,844 in 2009, donated by:

- planting 17 trees for every ton of paper used
- planting a tree for new Credo Facebook fan*
- planting a tree through SeedTree for every purchase of fuel with their **Fueling the Future** credit card.

We thank our other business partners and encourage others to join Earth Routes, Holland & Foley Architecture, Nirvana Safe Haven, Natural Investment Services and Maine Guide & Naturalist Cloe Chunn, in making SeedTree program part of the way you do business. We thank Kate Kinley Gregg, for her generous challenge grant, Anderson Rogers Foundation and Debley, Inc., along with individual supporters for enabling us so to integrate reforestation with communities' related human ecology. We see this complementary work uplifting families and communities, while transforming cultural attitudes for enduring change.

Thank you for your consideration and participation.

Sincerely, Carol Kamala Kinsey: Executive Director

PS: Remember, you can contribute by searching through GoodSearch.com or by shopping at your favorite online stores for SeedTree *at no added cost to you.*

SeedTree Outcomes Summary:		
	1995-'09	2009
trees planted	**3,556,612**	129,507
wells / pumps	**79**	5
5 mo. Eco-Ed Classes	97	10
Environ. Trust Funds	18	2
improved cook stoves	732	150
outhouses / latrines	358	49
biogas -stove - latrines	155	6
kitchen & veg. garden	291	39
scholar-ships	70	8
Also Trusts & Classes did:		
organic agriculture & eco-income projects		30
recycle & improved waste disposal		138
savings groups formed		17
made & used bio-briquettes		30
hygiene / sanitation		125

Soap nut trees are popular as their fruit is used for washing dishes, hair and clothing in villages.