

IUCN Russia and CIS
3, bld. 3, Stoliamy Per.,
Moscow 123022, Russia
Tel./Fax: +7 (095) 609-3411

info@iucn.ru
www.iucn.ru
www.dary-lesa.com

2nd International NTFP Fair and Forum in Moscow, 24-28 September 2005 Opening Ceremony on 24th of September

IUCN – The World Conservation Union Office for Russia and CIS and its partners are organizing the 2nd International Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) Fair and Forum at the All-Russia Exhibition Center, in Moscow, 24-28 September 2005. The opening ceremony starts at 10h30 in the Pavilion “Culture” # 66 on Saturday 24th of September.

The name of the Fair – “Gifts of Forest – Culture of Use” – reflects on the principal idea of the event: to emphasize the sustainability of NTFP use and their importance for revival of many cultural and commercial traditions. Indeed, Russian boreal forests are threatened by illegal logging, overuse of economically accessible stands, forest fires, and pests. Sustainable harvest of NTFPs is one of the likely alternative ways of using forest ecosystems, without destroying them. NTFPs consist of any resources of the forest other than timber, pulpwood or firewood. They include not only food products, such as herbal teas, preserved and fresh wild berries, mushrooms and fruits, but also a wide range of health products, natural cosmetics, medicine and crafts. As well as being an important source of additional incomes for forest-based communities these products also have high cultural and spiritual value. Moreover, buying sustainably harvested NTFPs helps local communities to maintain traditional knowledge or to rediscover it.

The primary goal of the upcoming Fair and Forum is to provide small Russian businesses (crafters, Native people communities, community-based businesses) with opportunities to reach new markets with their NTFP products.

More than 80 diverse companies and people which work with NTFPs from Russia are participating in this event. The Fair’s participants are varying from big Siberian pine nut producing companies to an individual artist, creating pictures on the birch bark. However, the focus is on small community-based sustainable businesses. Moreover, there are also Native people co-operatives and groups such as Aleskam, Esso Native People Community and Kamchatka Herbal Tea, which are supported by the IUCN-CIDA project on Kamchatka and Sakhalin. They produce syrups, herbal teas, dried wild berries, birch bark crafts and other products of the taiga forest.

Beside the Fair, a Forum will be held surrounding the theme of NTFP sustainability, market opportunities as well as marketing and harvesting methods. Scientists, politicians, NGO leaders and businesses are invited to participate in this conference with the goal to share experiences, to find ways to overcome negative tendencies and to organize economic, social and ecological means for sustainable use of NTFPs.

The Fair and Forum is supported by the Small Grants Program of the Royal Netherlands Embassy and by the “Gifts of Mountain Shoria Forests” Initiative. DOEN Foundation supported participation of 30 representatives from Kemerovo Oblast.

We believe, the Fair and Forum will help to develop rural livelihood by creating opportunities for generation of new income for small producers.



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