

## *Wildlife Trust of Sri Lanka (WLTSL)* by Jinasiri Dadallage

### **I. History**

The Wildlife Trust of Sri Lanka (the Trust) was established in 1991 as a result of revisions to the Mahaweli Environment Project (MEP), a part of the main integrated irrigation project in Sri Lanka. With an initial endowment from USAID, the Trust was established to ensure the participation of the public and private sectors, NGOs, and others in environmental conservation and protection.

The need to continue activities of MEP in wider scope, as well as the capacity and resources of MEP, facilitated the establishment of the Trust.

### **II. Goals**

The goals of the Trust are:

- To conserve and enhance the environmental and economic values of Sri Lanka's natural heritage by facilitating partnerships between public, private and community organizations;
- To enhance wildlife and environmental education activities by supporting and encouraging the development of educational materials, programs and facilities;
- To support elephant conservation;
- To support programs that provide compensation for damages caused to human life and crops by wild animals;
- To develop and sustain environmental tourism policies and programs, information programs, and visitor facilities;
- To improve wildlife and protected area laws and regulations by providing technical assistance;

- To maximize public and international understanding and cooperation for conservation; and
- To carry out other activities necessary to achieve these objectives.

### **III. Legal Structure**

The Trust was established under regulations governing charitable trusts in Sri Lanka. Under Sri Lanka laws, donations to the Trust are not taxed, nor is the income from profit making activities undertaken by the Trust. However, interest income from the endowment is taxed.

### **IV. Governance/Administration**

The Trust is governed by a 10-member Board of Trustees composed of the Secretary to the Ministry responsible for the Department of Wildlife Conservation of Sri Lanka (DWLC); one representative each from the Department of Treasury; the Tourist Board of Sri Lanka; the Central Environmental Authority; the Director of DWLC; the Conservator of Forests; two representatives from NGOs; and two representatives from the public sector or business community. The Chairman of the Board is the Secretary to the Ministry.

The Chairman has general supervision over the business affairs of the Trust, presides at meetings of the Trustees, and performs such other duties as the Trustees determine.

Daily operation is conducted by an Executive Director with a secretary, Finance Manager with five support staff, and a Manager for Training, Research, Education, and Extension (T.R.E.E.) with one program officer and ten support staff.

The Executive Director is responsible for establishing programs that enhance the financial, technical, and other resources available to conserve and sustain the wildlife and the natural heritage of the country; identifying new avenues of investments; coordinating with other organizations; assisting the Trustees in the formulation of policies; monitoring the wildlife and environmental conditions of protected areas keeping in view their conservation and sustainability; initiating fundraising for the Trust; administration of staff and personnel; ensuring efficient functioning; and performance of duties as the secretary to the Board of Trustees and as custody of the official seal of the Trust.

The Trust has no separate technical advisory body but seeks technical assistance from related agencies including universities and NGOs.

#### **V. Funding**

USAID provided the initial grant of US\$500,000 in 1991. The Trust solicits grants from other international and domestic donors.

The Trust also maintains profit making facilities from tourism and from the T.R.E.E. The Trust owns a T.R.E.E center which can accommodate 100 people.

#### **VI. Fundraising**

Aside from the initial endowment, there has been no other source of international funding for the Trust. Domestic sources of income include interests from investments; T.R.E.E facilities; others (communication, expedition, etc.); sales of souvenirs, wildlife posters, stickers and similar items; and local donations.

The Trust work plan for 1996-1997 emphasizes increased fundraising through a master plan of ecotourism development, improvement of sales and renting out of T.R.E.E. facilities.

#### **VII. Investment Policy**

The Trust is empowered to:

- Receive income through sources such as grants, donations, sales, hire, rents, interests, dividends, and any other sources;
- Invest or reinvest in the purchase or mortgage of land or interest in land or of any movable or immovable property;
- Acquire by concession, grant, purchase or amalgamation, lease or license or otherwise either absolutely or conditionally any tract or tracts of country, land, houses, estates, firms, rights, privileges and hereditament and any movable property;
- Make, accept, endorse, execute, and issue promissory notes, bills of exchange, bills of lading, and all negotiable instruments;
- Buy, sell, invest, subscribe, deal in and dispose of stocks, shares, debentures, mortgages, bonds or securities issued by quoted public companies or granted by the government of Sri Lanka; and
- Engage in any trade or business or to promote or form any company to carry on or acquire any trade or business and to wind up such trade business or company.

#### **VIII. Relation to National Environmental Plans**

The Trust supports national government goals on environmental policies and issues. It works with the Department of Wildlife Conservation on joint activities such as the development of a network of community based organizations for wildlife conservation; collection and dissemination of information on wildlife resources; organizing fora on wildlife conservation; enhancement of T.R.E.E. activities with universities and research agencies.

## **IX. Criteria for Grants**

Grantmaking criteria include relevance to the Trust objectives; requirement of followup reports and publications; preliminary discussions with individuals and organizations; reports on expected socioenvironmental benefits; assurance of beneficiary roles; estimate of collective efforts and responsibilities; people participation; and gender equity.

## **X. Disbursements to Date**

Disbursements for the past two fiscal years have been made on participatory community oriented projects; school level biodiversity education and extension; environmental awareness for community organizations/general public; research and extension activities; ecotourism improvements and facilities; administration, and others. Beneficiary groups include school children, youth clubs, and community based organizations.

## **XI. Monitoring and Evaluation System**

Continuous evaluation of community based programs and projects is conducted. Project quality evaluation is conducted using an evaluation questionnaire after every project.

The strength of the M&E system is largely influenced by the close attention the board renders, cooperative decisionmaking and evaluation and participation of related sectors and organizations.

The limitations/weaknesses are instability of civil security, dependency attitudes of some beneficiary groups, particularly of low income groups, and overlapping and conflicting interests of similar types of organizations and NGOs.

## **XII. Auditing Requirements**

A monthly financial summary is evaluated by the board at its monthly meeting.

Although there is no internal audit unit, internal audits are conducted by various committees appointed according to the board requirements. An annual audit is done by a reputable auditing firm.

## **XIII. Perceived Needs**

- Public awareness programs need a mobile film unit and vehicles, video/films on nature, relevant library books and other materials;
- Ecotourism development needs additional personnel and improved communication facilities in wildlife/park management;
- Community participation programs need additional funding for resource persons and training of volunteers;
- Additional funds to purchase the Trust premises, light vehicles and computer resources.

## **XIV. Computer Resources and Capabilities**

The Trust has no computer facilities due to limited funds. Even day-to-day correspondence is done by manual typing. Computer facilities, therefore, have become a top priority. Initially, three personal computers would be required to improve database management on the Trust activities. The Internet facilities, if arranged, would also enhance the capacity of the Trust, having access to wider experience in biodiversity issues.

## **XV. Notable Accomplishments**

The T.R.E.E. Center is the main integrated facilitating center for Training, Research, Education and Extension programs. It provides food and lodging for park visitors, conferences, workshops and training programs, nature appreciation programs and various community awareness programs, expedition programs, etc.

## **XVI. Other Challenges**

Terrorist movements within the national parks have been the greatest problem for wildlife conservation. Two large national parks have already been abandoned due to these activities, badly affecting the park management and improvements including visitor facilities.

Due to uncoordinated development programs and haphazard human settlement schemes, illegal encroachment has accelerated. Human conflicts with wildlife, particularly elephants, have increased, exacerbated by increasing political interventions frequently favoring humans.

## **Contact Persons**

### **Mr. R. S. Jayarathna**

Chairperson,  
Board of Trustees and Minister  
Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs,  
Plantation Industries and Parliamentary Affairs  
Tel: (94-1) 695-738/695-279 (office)  
(94-1) 692-902 (residence)  
Fax: (94-1) 695-279

### **Mr. Jinasiri Dadallage**

Executive Director  
Wildlife Trust of Sri Lanka  
18 Gregory's Road, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka  
Tel: (94-1) 696-050 (office)  
(94-1) 925-701 (residence)  
Fax: (94-1) 698-556