



**Trip Members:**  
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○ December | ○ 2013



Additional CBS Team Members:  
 PJ, Alicia, Sita, Thinley, Tashi, Aiden,  
 Paul & Rebecca.

**Geographic Location:**  
 Ulaanbaatar and Horhorin, Mongolia.



# Gobi Bear 2013

THE MONGOLIAN PEOPLE CONSIDER THE MAZAALI (GOBI BEAR)  
 TO BE A NATIONAL TREASURE.

**Gobi Bear Status:** Only 25-35 Gobi bears may survive, but even this estimate is uncertain. They are known to persist only in the Great Gobi Strictly Protected Area of southwestern Mongolia. Because of their present low population size, restricted range and limited available habitat and food, further declines may be imminent. The Gobi bear is listed in the Mongolian Red Book of Endangered Species, a categorization that was validated by the bear's designation as Critically Endangered (C2a(i)&D1) in the November 2005 Mongolian Biodiversity Databank Assessment Workshop.

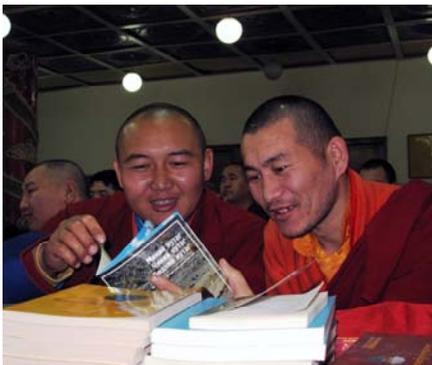
## Education Trip

**Background:** Prior to the trip, Craighead Beringia South (CBS) had written, translated into Mongolian and printed an educational syllabus on the ecology of the critically endangered Gobi bear, *Ursus arctos gobiensis*. The syllabus consisted of a student booklet, a teachers' guide and resource material.

The Gobi bear syllabus was first introduced to educational leaders at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conservation and Compassion Conference for Conservation Leadership, Gandantegchenling Monastery, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia May 16 and 17, 2013. In collaboration with The Tributary Fund (Bozeman, MT), Rebecca Watters and Chimga Luvsandash represented CBS at the conference.

20 IBM Think Pads were equipped with ESRI (GIS) software and a custom designed collared Gobi bears and to develop computer and mapping skills. These computers will be used in both the execution of the curriculum as well as providing the means to establish and communicate with sister schools in the United States.

Biological and ecological data investigated by Gobi bear researchers were paired with the developing outreach and education program. This has the potential to positively affect the progress of the Gobi bear management initiative as well as Mongolia as a whole. Success of the species and this project in particular depends on local involvement.



## TRIP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Gobi bear curriculum was created to bring ownership of the Gobi bear recovery to local communities, introduce students to basic ecological principles and a conservation ethic; essential tools to good decision making. Implementation of the program curriculum needed the approval of the Mongolian government to ensure that it complied with the national standards. Further, we had to win the approval of educators in the Gobi region and the public schools in Ulaanbaatar. Conservation efforts for the Gobi bear is futile without the support, understanding and collaboration of the local communities. Establishing an educational program and outreach plan in connection with the science-based management plan is critical to the success of the Gobi bear conservation project.

The education/outreach program unites the ideas of culturally and environmentally aware decision-making with science-based conservation of the Gobi bear. CBS is sensitive to the inevitable effects that our research has on the local communities in the Gobi region, positive and negative. The intent of the Gobi Bear Project educational outreach program is to involve the local community such that the conservation of the Gobi bear is our shared responsibility and thus a shared success.

Goals of the curriculum are to enhance the students' knowledge of ecology and identify the relationship of habitat changes to plant and animal populations. It is our hope for the students to feel connected to their habitat and subsequently the habitat of the Gobi bear.



# Results to date:

*Outcome of the Trip– Continuing and future objectives:*

- 1) CBS to provide resources, made available on our website (educational and scientific).
- 2) CBS must develop ways to continue to incorporate new data into the educational program.
- 3) The 20 computers await distribution to various schools in Mongolia. Transport of the computers to the Gobi region, installation, continued maintenance and internet service still need to be addressed.
- 4) Added program objectives are to include: Sister School programs, teacher workshops, plan for continuation of lessons in years to come for additional species worldwide.
- 5) A detailed program evaluation.
- 6) Development and servicing regional partnerships will be a continued focus.

Derek and Marilyn's trip agenda was arranged by Sue Higgins and Chimga Luvsandash (*The Tributary Fund*) to

include a total of 8 various meetings with top officials and 6 presentations for the public schools, the Monastic schools and a University class. They were hosted by the Gandan Monastery and had meetings with the lama for International Affairs, the Da lama and Head lama for environmental affairs. They had the pleasure of having sweet biscuits and Mongolian tea with the Abbot of the Har Horin Monastery who expressed grave concerns for the Gobi bear and offered the Gobi bear his Monastery's prayers. State meetings included one with the Advisor to the President of Mongolia and the other State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Green Development. Additionally, they met with the head of the Lifetime Education Center, The Snow Leopard Conservation Fund, and the Citizens Education Center.

## MAJOR CONCERNS & NEEDS:



Funding is the major concern at this time. Beringia South is fortunate to have the support and participation of the Mongolian Buddhist Community, Mongolian Academy of Science, The Ministry of Education and Science, and The Ministry of Environmental and Green Development.

## GOBI BEAR ECOLOGY BOOK & TEACHING GUIDE

The lesson sequences incorporate an understanding of habitats, mapping, GIS, individual village habitats, the Gobi bears' habitat and the Gobi Bear Project's research findings. Lessons are student centered and designed to integrate all disciplines: art, math, science, music and writing. Extra consideration has been given to include family and citizen cooperation with the hope to enhance conservation stewardship.

