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**Caucasus Protected Areas Fund (CPAF)
Tourism Potential at Khosrov Forest State Reserve**

Dear Friends,

Earlier this month I hosted a field trip for about fifteen tourist policy makers and invited guests to Khosrov Forest State Reserve to highlight its tourist potential. The trip featured a presentation at the new visitor center at the “Garni” entrance to the reserve, a jeep caravan tour through two of the Reserve’s four districts, a walk through a juniper woodland forest, and a picnic lunch. Participants also considered the next steps that need to be taken to unlock this potential. WWF Armenia and the Transboundary Joint Secretariat for the Southern Caucasus (TJS) supported the program.

The trip served mainly to familiarize policy makers with the pristine nature that exists only an hour from Yerevan. Khosrov Forest is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna. Important mammal species found in the reserve include the threatened and endemic Caucasian leopard, the Eurasian lynx, Bezoar goat and Armenian mouflon. It is also an important bird area (IBA), according to Birdlife International, and hosts over 1800 vascular plants within its borders, including the endemic “Khosrov pear” tree.

A particular attraction is that the Garni entrance to the Reserve is only a short drive from the magnificent Garni Temple complex dating from the 3rd century BC, which offers the perfect opportunity to combine nature and cultural tourism.

As part of its support to the Reserve, the CPAF hopes to foster sustainable tourism so that our project serves the interests of the local community as well as broader nature conservation goals. We intend to follow-up with the Reserve and participants in the program to ensure that Khosrov Forest’s eco-tourism potential is realized.

I look forward to continuing the work of conserving nature in the Caucasus with you.

Sincerely,

David Morrison
Executive Director

P.S. I would like to thank the representatives of Armenia’s tourism policy sector who took part in this trip, including the Armenia Ecotourism Association, Competitiveness Armenian Private Sector Project, the National Competitiveness Foundation, Treasures of Armenia, and National Geographic Traveler Armenia. I would also like to thank USAID Armenia and HSBC Armenia for their participation and interest.



Photos courtesy of Inna Mkhitarian and Tigran Mangasarian. For more photos, go to <http://picasaweb.google.fr/lh/sreidir?uname=106026011981367766932&target=ALBUM&id=5484022309929105377&authkey=Gv1sRgCLvM4dvj0L7AeA&invite=CL6kulkC&feat=email>