

Community Conservation Resilience Initiative

**Summary report on Preliminary Findings
For the Russian Far East Assessment**

**By NGO BROCC
September 2015**

BROC Organisation

Active since 1989 as an informal support group for Greenpeace. Legally registered in 1997. General Goals – Support and promote environmentally oriented initiatives in the Russian Far East through mass media campaigns, non-violent actions, advocacy work, resource use monitoring, collaboration with decision makers, supporting small business in remote towns, sustainable harvest practices, recovery of forest and marine resources, and promote traditional resource use by indigenous communities.



Anatoly Lebedev:
Chairman of the Board,
UN Forest Hero-2011
Indigenous communities

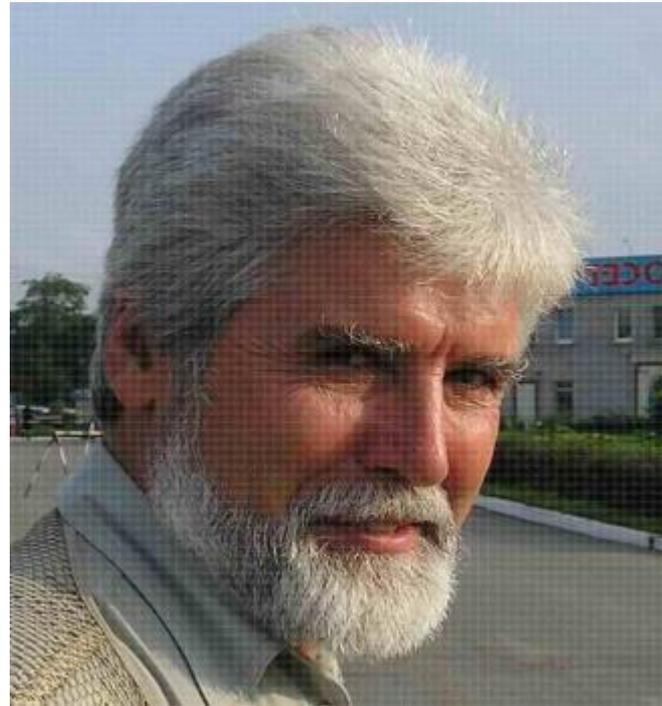


Marina
Razumova:
Board
Member,
Suburban
Forests
Campaign
Coordinator

Ruslan
Dochinets:
Forester,
Forestry
Expert,
BROC
Member



Liudmila Ginsar: BROCC Board member,
Expert in marine environment and
general conservation issues



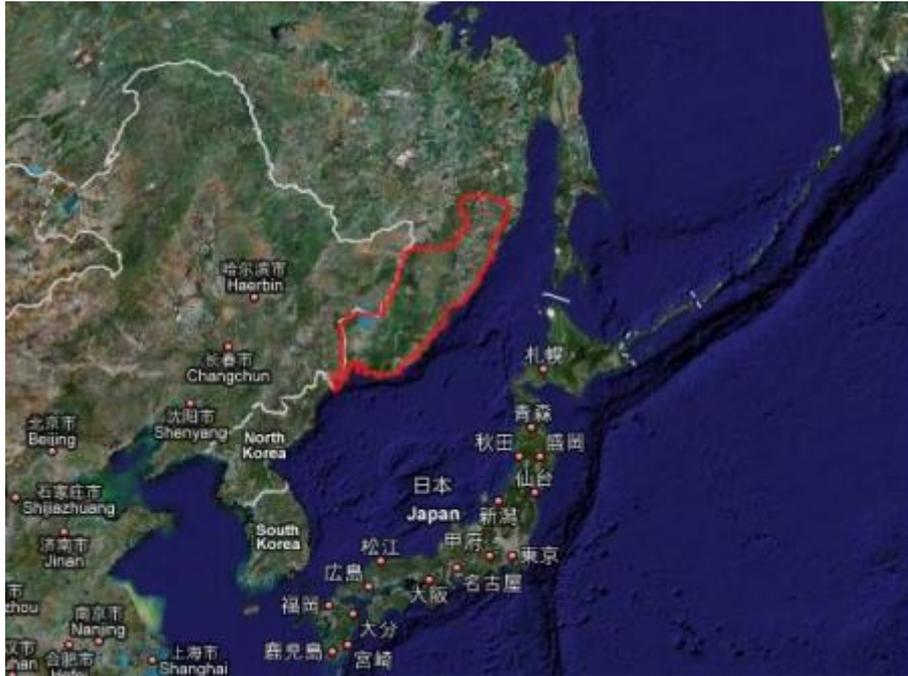
Fyodor Kronikovskiy: BROCC mem-
ber and initial director of national
park "Udege Legend", Chief of
local environmental group "Taiga"
in the Iman area

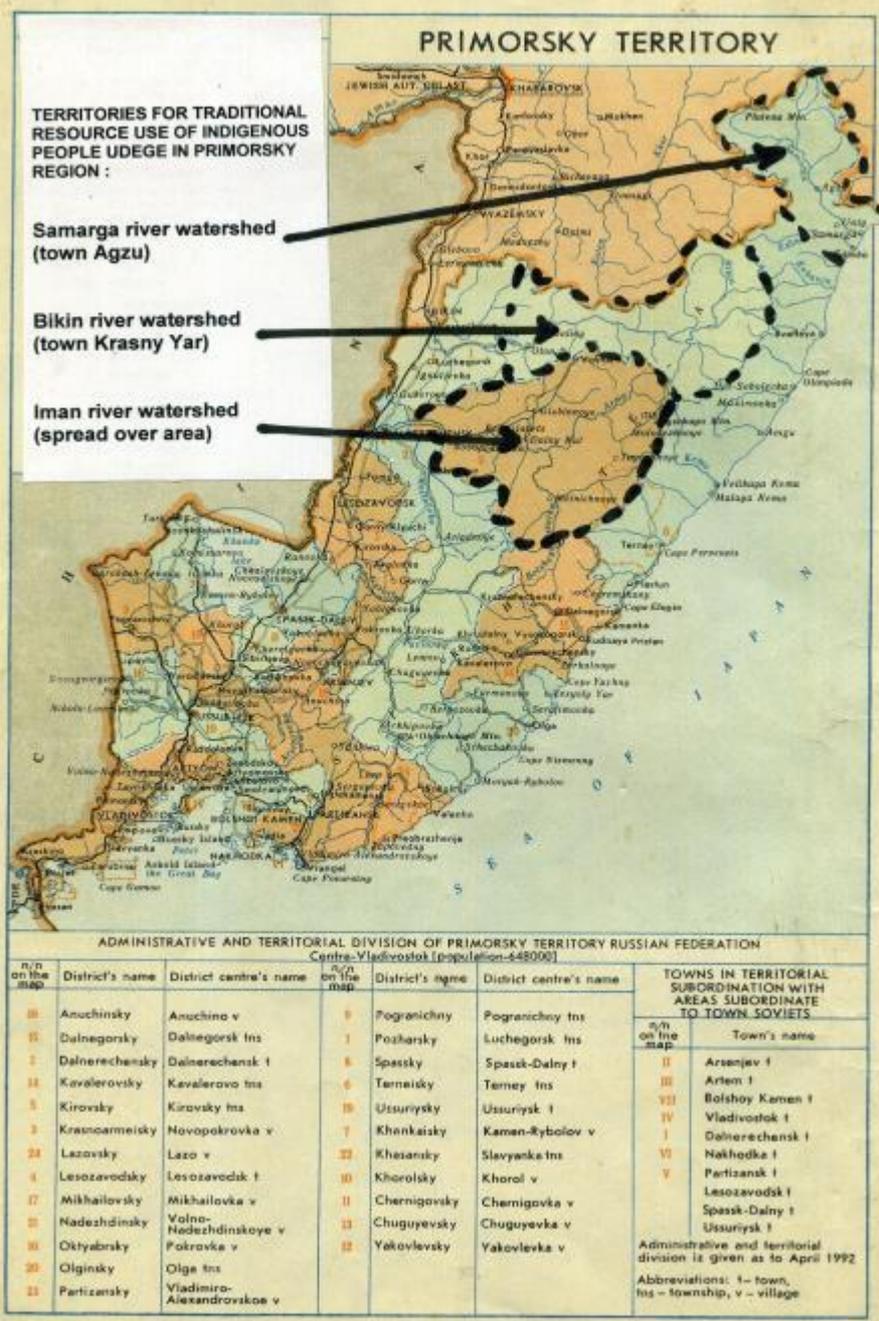


Yurii Kosti: BROCC member, far-
mer/bee keeper in the Iman area



Primorye Region





Location of 3 Udege Communities

Primorye region – Mixed temperate forests of the Sikhote-Alin mountains and Siberian tiger country, located **between the Sea of Japan and China**. Indigenous Udege hunters and fishermen inhabited the area for centuries. Udege communities are spread between 3 key river watersheds (the Bikin, Iman and Samarga rivers). The communities are separated by geographic and municipal borders with different infrastructures, but keep tribal junctions and communications under a regional association.

CCRI Process

Indigenous Udege communities inhabit areas around three main river watersheds in the Primorye region:

The Bikin River - 600km north of Vladivostok (480km by train + 120km by road). The Udege commune is concentrated in Krasny Yar. The territory was never logged and is partially leased by the commune for non-timber products harvesting. The area is partially protected as a landscape refuge.

The Samarga River - 700 km north of Vladivostok (400 km by the road, the rest accessible by helicopter only). Leased for logging since 2004, with a part of the area designated for conservation and granted with indigenous rights for hunting and fishing.

The Iman river - 400 km north from Vladivostok. The area is mostly leased by timber businesses and by Udege communes for hunting. The national park “Udege Legend” was created in 2007 and has a zone where Udege can hunt. Conservation activity is weak in the area.

Challenges



Hunting, fishing, and natural resource regulations are too complicated and are different for communities and families. They are often changed without informing the communities. Some licenses are free while others need to be paid for. Community members do not have the capacity to understand and follow the rules which often puts them in the situation where they are breaking the law and persecuted by inspectors.

Challenges



The increased mobility of citizens and popularity of **illegal fishing and hunting** in remote forests has increased the risk of environmental degradation of indigenous forests and rivers.



Challenges

Through the process of indigenous assimilation it is often hard to identify only Indigenous Peoples as having granted privileges. This causes problems and conflicts within local communities and discrimination against families of mixed race where some family members are indigenous but the family as a whole is not recognized as indigenous.



Community Conservation Practices

Indigenous practices of wildlife and fish use are environmentally sustainable and respect their forests which contain the highest biodiversity in Russia. However, official attitudes towards indigenous culture are skeptical, often ignorant, and unreasonable. Therefore, under the CCRI, Udege leaders have increased their activities in learning about and correcting current regulations on fishing and hunting. They help government agencies properly recognize and respect indigenous privileges and the social and economic capacity of each family.



Common Threats to All Communities

Internal:

- Lack of awareness regarding hunting/fishing regulations.
- Traditional habits to hunt/fish when, where, and what they want instead of following government prescriptions.
- Competition between indigenous clans and families.
- Growing numbers of ethnically mixed families causes problematic access to privileges.
- Soviet habit to get government solicitude and care.

External

- Inspectors punishing uneducated and ignorant indigenous hunters and fishermen versus equipped and competent poachers.
- Absence of land rights for indigenous communes on traditional areas.
- Complex and unsustainable wildlife and fishing regulations.
- Bureaucratic barriers to implement indigenous privileges.
- Conditions of basic wildlife and fish resources in accessible areas.

Specific Threats for Different Communities

Difficult accessibility, transport and communication in the Samarga territory (Agzu);



Little attention to Samarga and Iman communities from regional indigenous associations;

Bad road to the Bikin community (Krasny Yar)

Little respect for the National Park Model in Bikin and Iman communities



Lack of local salmon resources for Bikin and Iman communities



High level of illegal logging and poaching in Iman and Bikin areas



Failure of the regional industry of non timber forest products' processing and marketing



CCRI Workshop

The last joint workshop of 20 representatives from all **3 main indigenous communities of Primorye**, organized in in Novopokrovka, the administrative center of the Iman river municipality, drafted and summarized previous efforts and findings of all groups under the CCRI project.

Leaders of the communities, with the help of respectable local ethnographers, identified their common needs and problems, evaluated their own capacity and drafted a strategy to protect the biodiversity of their forests and rivers.

The workshop took place in collaboration with responsible resource concerned officials from municipal, regional and national levels.



Strategy

For all communes, drafted at the joint workshop in the Iman area

- To provide prioritized access to established salmon fishing plots and hunting areas for indigenous people
- To monitor environmental conditions regularly on indigenous territories
- To maintain and market indigenous souvenirs production in communities
- To solve social problems for all communities (schools, medical services, power supply, higher education etc.)
- To support self-governance of communities by creating Indigenous Councils under regional and municipal governments and national parks
- To create a special governmental body in the Regional Administration to deal with indigenous commercial, legal, cultural and infrastructural issues.



Preliminary recommendations of the joint workshop (Novopokrovka, July 26-28)

- Insert indigenous representatives into working groups on fish and wildlife quoting
- Increase the number of fishing plots for indigenous communes
- Simplify licensing procedure for indigenous hunting and fishing
- Create special rules to cut restricted Korean pine for Udege traditional boats
- Provide privileged training for indigenous people to get car and boat driver's licenses
- Repair Bikin road to Krasny Yar and provide internet in the Samarga and Bikin areas
- Organize regular flights from Agzu to mainland (Samarga)
- Support the creation of "Bikin" National park and recreate indigenous divisions in "Udege Legend" National park (Iman).

Example



Significant examples of community conservation activities and defending indigenous rights on wealthy environments is demonstrated by **Nadezhda Seliuk**, deputy Chair of Primorye Association. Born in the Bikin community, she started fighting to protect Bikin forests and rivers from logging since 1989. She became well known in other communities and was active in the creation of a regional Indigenous Association and continued the battle against logging plans on Bikin and Samarga. Thanks to her activity, in collaboration with the environmental community, Bikin forests have been saved and now run under National Park status, fully controlled by a special Udege Council.