

IPM IL Trip Report

Country(s) Visited: Nepal

Dates of Travel: January 6 to 14, 2017

Travelers' Names and Affiliations: Dr. Wondi Mersie, Virginia State University (VSU)

Purpose of Trip: to make a presentation at a Conference on Biodiversity, Climate Change Assessment and Impacts on Livelihood at Kathmandu, Nepal on January 11, 2017.

Specific objectives of the trip were to:

- (i) To make an oral presentation entitled, “The invasive plant *Parthenium* (*Parthenium hysterophorus* L.) is adversely affecting the biodiversity of the above ground vegetation and soil seed bank of rangelands in Ethiopia.”
- (ii) To confer with scientists who conduct research on parthenium.

Sites Visited: Kathmandu

Description of Activities/Observations:

Itinerary:

January 6: Traveled to northern Virginia to spend the night there for the morning flight.

January 7: Left U.S.A. for Kathmandu, Nepal via the city of Dubai.

January 8: Arrived at Kathmandu, Nepal from Dubai. Met Dr. Rangaswamy Muniappan, Director of IPM Innovation Lab (IPM IL) at Virginia Tech, Ms. Stephanie Parker, Communications Coordinator, IPM IL and Dr. Jaspreet Sidhu, Research Associate at IPM IL in the evening and discussed the progress of the Parthenium Project.

January 9: Spent the day preparing my presentation.

January 10: Attended the opening session and presentations for the rest of the day. The three day conference addressed agriculture and livestock, climate change status and impacts, biodiversity and ecosystem services, water management, gender and livelihood issues. Three hundred thirty abstracts were received from twenty five countries involving around six hundred authors. The chief guest of the conference was the President of Nepal, Ms. Bidhya Devi Bhandari. The morning keynote address

covered topics on climate change, agriculture, and food security; creation and adoption of smart agriculture innovations to cope with climatic uncertainty; and threats from invasive alien species and national response capacity. Among the presentations I attended in the afternoon included a special symposium on *Tuta absoluta*.

January 11: Attended oral presentations in the morning. The keynote address in the morning was on incentivizing mountain communities for ecosystem services at the time of changing climate. In the afternoon at 2:15 p.m., I made an oral presentation on the impact of parthenium on the above ground vegetation and seed bank of rangelands in eastern Ethiopia. Following my presentation, I chaired a symposium on biological invasion.

January 12: On the third day of the conference I attended a session on integrated pest management. In the afternoon I met Ms. Seerjana Maharjan, a Ph.D. candidate at Central Department of Botany, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur. We discussed about her Ph.D. dissertation research that deals with the spread of parthenium from the lower to the higher altitudes in Nepal. I gave her some pointers on how to go about setting up her experiments and promised to assist her in any way possible.

January 13: Visited Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur and met Dr. Bharat Babu Shrestha, at the Central Dept. of Botany. I was accompanied by Ms. Seerjana Maharjan the Ph.D. candidate working on the spread of parthenium. I saw various fields with dry parthenium plants. It appears parthenium is moving from the lowlands to Kathmandu area. I was informed that the beetle that feeds on parthenium, *Zygogramma bicolorata* is also found in the area.

Departed Kathmandu, Nepal for USA via Dubai.

January 14: Arrived at Dulles Airport in northern Virginia from Dubai and drove home to Chester.

List of Contacts Made:

Name	Title/Organization	Contact Info (address, phone, email)
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