



### **ATP Begins Fight to Save Vanadzor through Massive Reforestation in her Mountains**

Vanadzor, previously known as Kirovakan, is the third largest city in Armenia. Located about 80 miles north of Yerevan, the city of 175,000 was rapidly growing in size before a terrible earthquake hit the region in December 1988. This mountainous region now faces the looming threat of further natural disaster. The over-cutting of the forests on the hills that surround Vandazor has reached disaster proportions. Already most of the slopes facing the city are devoid of trees and landslides are imminent. The threat of floods grows daily. Armenia's delicate infrastructure stands to sustain a further tremendous blow if remedial steps are not taken immediately.

During its strategic planning session in January 2004, the Armenia Tree Project committed itself to addressing this issue in Vanadzor. Seeing that the deforestation of these mountains is destroying the forest ecosystem, eroding soil, and creating gullies along the slopes that lead down to the city, ATP has decided to commence with massive plantings of trees that forests require to ensure environmental stability and re-growth.

In partnership with Tsiatsan, a local NGO, ATP will start the reforestation process by constructing a nursery that will become a permanent source of saplings for planting in the forest. This nursery will have the capacity to produce 1 million seedlings a year by 2006. The 43 people working on this project will develop the 15 acre site and rejuvenate 125 acres on Vanadzor's denuded slopes.

In addition to combating the environmental devastation, this tree planting will provide many other benefits to the region, such as stabilizing the humidity and micro-climate, improving the sanitary and hygienic condition of air and water supplies, and reducing greenhouse gasses and global warming. Reforestation in Vanadzor will add to the natural beauty of the land and increase the overall quality of life, helping to restore Vanadzor to its former place as a center of recreation and tourism.