



April 28, 2004

Ambassador Ordway, Armenia Tree Project, and Jinishian Memorial Foundation Celebrated Earth Day in Dzoravank

YEREVAN—On April 23, US Ambassador to Armenia John Ordway marked Earth Day in a joint Armenia Tree Project (ATP)/Jinishian Memorial Foundation tree planting to establish a fruit and nut orchard for the community of Dzoravank. This year is the second that Ambassador Ordway celebrated Earth Day in the Getik River valley with ATP.

Dzoravank is a small village about eight kilometers from Aygut situated along the Getik River in the Gegharkounik region. Less than 1,000 residents live in the village, which is considered to be the sixth poorest in the region. The village's only orchard, which is being rejuvenated through an ATP-initiative, is 8,000 square meters in size, equivalent to one hectare.

Dzoravank is the second village in the area where ATP is implementing a combined long-term reforestation-poverty reduction program. The program was initiated in 2002 in Aygut, situated approximately eight kilometers distance from Dzoravank. ATP intends to expand to all 13 villages located in the picturesque Getik River valley.

In this program of sustainable mountainous development, ATP partners with the villagers and with other international and local organizations to combat the linked problems of poverty and natural resource degradation. Among the contributors are USDA/MAP, World Food Program, Heifer International, Project Harmony, Orran Benevolent NGO, Boghosian Education Center, and Satsil.

The Earth Day celebration was made possible by the efforts of the Armenia Tree Project and a donation by Jinishian Memorial Foundation. In cooperation with the US Embassy in Armenia, IREX, and ACTR/ACCELS, 20 alumni from US government exchange programs traveled as volunteers to Dzoravank to help with the tree planting. ATP Founder Carolyn Mugar, Executive Director Jeff Masarjian, and Country Director Susan Yacubian Klein were in Dzoravank for this important event.

The Armenia Tree Project was founded in 1994 during Armenia's darkest and coldest years with a vision of securing the new Republic's future by planting trees and protecting the environment. ATP has a full-time staff of 53 (47 in Armenia), and since 1994 it has planted and restored over 531,000 trees at more than 450 community sites from Gyumri to Goris. ATP is funded by thousands of Diasporan Armenians worldwide.