CFA Newsletter

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CFA Newsletter
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Forestry recruitment of Canada's Aboriginal people

Canadian Aboriginal people are an untapped source of skills and experience

As is the case with most employment sectors in Canada, the forestry sector is challenged to maintain a viable workforce due to an aging national population. This is not the only challenge facing those interested in recruiting qualified workers to the forest industry. Forestry in Canada has been labeled a "sunset" industry that is no longer sustainable. Negative publicity has shifted career choices of Canada's youth to other sectors. High paying employment opportunities in other sectors have also attracted potential employees away from forestry.

Recruiting Aboriginal people into the Canadian forest sector should be considered as a significant component to the solution of providing a viable workforce of forest professionals. There are several reasons why Aboriginal communities should be considered when facing this challenge.

1. Traditional Aboriginal land use values incorporate a respect for the land that supports principles of sustainability, protecting resources for future generations.
2. Aboriginal communities are often situated in areas where it is difficult to recruit forest professionals.
3. Community members, in many cases, prefer not to leave home, thus alleviating attrition due to a mobile work force.
4. Aboriginal peoples are intent on developing viable local economic opportunities to support healthy communities.
5. Growth in the number of Aboriginal youth is considerably higher than the Canadian average.

Canadian Aboriginal people represent a vast and relatively untapped source of skills and talent that can be utilized in the practice of forestry. For this to be realized, much needs to be done to provide required levels of skills, training and certification. The number of Aboriginals enrolled in post-secondary forestry studies in Canada is far below the Canadian average. This imbalance was recognized many years ago by the Nicola Tribal Association. As a result, in 1983, the Nicola Tribal Association invited BCIT's distance education department to deliver the first year of its Renewable Resources program to Nicola Valley First Nations students. This program marked the beginning of the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT).

The first program offered at this new institution, with the support of an accreditation agreement with the College of New Caledonia Forest Resource Technology, evolved into what is now known as the NVIT Natural Resource Technology program (NRT). As the institution developed and evolved, the

board of directors was determined to offer high-quality programs that would be externally accredited. As a result, the NRT program received Technologist Level Accreditation from the Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of British Columbia (ASTTBC) and, most recently, the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists (CCTT). With CCTT accreditation, NVIT graduates can pursue enrolment as a Trainee Forest Technologist (TFT) with the Association of British Columbia Forest Professionals (ABCFP).

One of the barriers to success in recruiting Aboriginal students into the forestry program at NVIT is that a significant portion of these students are unprepared for post-secondary education because of the impact of the residential school system, having English as a second language and/or being directed into non-academic programs while in high school. This barrier is, to some extent, mitigated at NVIT by the College Readiness Program. If students feel that the two year NRT completion schedule is too rigorous, they are encouraged to complete it in three years and incorporate the College Readiness Program into their schedule.

The public's negative opinion of the forest sector coupled with attractive employment opportunities in other sectors also represent significant challenges for convincing Aboriginal students to consider a career in forestry. The most effective means of recruitment has been the development of a program that meets the needs of the participant, resulting in graduates that obtain meaningful and rewarding employment and who are inclined to promote the program in their respective communities.

NVIT also employs a recruitment strategy that systematically communicates educational opportunities to communities. NVIT is a public institution and open to enrolment by the entire public sector; however, recruitment activities focus most heavily on Aboriginal communities throughout British Columbia. Representatives of the recruitment team attend career fairs throughout B.C. as well as promoting programs at conferences and community events.

Another key to successfully recruit Aboriginal students into the forest sector is to begin with a program that promotes a sustainable and integrated approach to managing natural resources. This includes the incorporation of respect for traditional Aboriginal values and knowledge. There must also be opportunity for meaningful participation by Aboriginals at all levels. The mission of NVIT is *to provide quality Aboriginal education and support services appropriate to student success and community development.*

Since 1983, NVIT has graduated approximately 400 Aboriginal students with diplomas in Natural Resource Technology. Many of these graduates are currently employed by First Nations Bands and Tribal Councils as well as by community businesses, the Ministry of Forests and Range, other government ministries, major forest licensees, forestry consultants and contractors. A significant number of graduates have furthered their post-secondary education and earned undergraduate degrees in science or applied degrees in conservation and enforcement. Many have also gone on to become enrolled and registered with the ABCFP as forest professionals. Much has been done at NVIT to increase the participation of Canadian Aboriginal people in the forestry sector; however, there is still a much more that needs to be accomplished.

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Paul Willms, RPF, has been a forest technology instructor for more than 30 years. Early in his career, he worked for the Ministry of Forests, Canadian Forest Products and BCIT. He began teaching at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in 1983 on the first day the doors opened, and he has worked there, as both instructor and department head, ever since.

Association News

New Youth Officer looks forward to representing young foresters

In February CFA's Youth Officer, Courtney Johnson stepped down and passed the baton to her successor, Celia Nalwadda, who currently works as a Plantation Officer with the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme in Uganda. Everyone at CFA is grateful to Courtney for the support and advice she gave us and we now look forward to working closely with Celia, in particular on issues that focus on young foresters (under 35 years). Celia is keen to hear from young foresters on any issues that affect them and she will represent the younger sector of our membership on the CFA Executive Committee. Celia has a web page on our website at www.cfa-international.org/youth.html and can be contacted on celia.nalwadda@cfa-international.org

Celia Nalwadda

CFA Young Forester returns from Guyana

One of last year's CFA Young Forester winners, Jenny Greaves, returned to the UK in January following three months working with local populations on harvesting and marketing of tropical rain forest timber in Guyana.

"I have had an interesting three months in Guyana," said Jenny. "It was a fascinating trip and I learnt a lot about tropical forestry and the challenges of working in developing countries. I've realised in particular the importance of ensuring good understanding throughout the harvesting team, from the bottom up, of the reasons and benefits behind environmental good practice. It's exciting to bring these personal insights and new skills back to my role in the UK".

Part of Jenny's three-month placement was spent working with, and shadowing, the harvesting teams at Iwokrama, a million ha sustainable forestry reserve. Jenny reported "The main commercial tree species in Guyana are Greenheart, Purpleheart, Crabwood, Kabukallai and Wamara and these are harvested from concessions that are monitored by the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC). The code of practice of timber harvesting sets a standard to which the logging companies are required to work to. This covers the operation from pre-harvest inventories to post harvesting remediation. Pre-harvest inventories involve recording the position of every harvestable tree over 40dbh in 100ha blocks. Using GIS, this data, along with base topographic information, is used to create both maps that include skids trail location, and felling schedules that form the basis for the financial planning.

"The felling operations are all motor manual felling with skidding extraction and follow the principles of Reduced Impact Map Logging (RIL) which is embraced wholeheartedly by the teams. RIL aims to reduce the damage caused to residual crop trees, soil and wildlife by adopting methods such as directional felling and liana cutting. The timber is skidded out to 'markets' where it is processed by mobile sawmills, staked and loaded (by hand) onto the lorries for the 14hour drive to the capital and ports at Georgetown.

Jenny, who lives in Oxfordshire, works for UPM Tilhill and is currently working and studying towards professional membership of the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

CFA complimentary memberships awarded to tree planters in Uganda

The Uganda Sawlog Production Grant Scheme recently awarded three flagship associations with complimentary subscriptions to the CFA, based on their enthusiasm and commitment with their tree planting and conservation efforts in Uganda over the last few years. Since they each represent many people in their respective organisations, SPGS are confident that they will diligently spread the word about the CFA.

If you would like to sponsor an individual or an organizations with CFA membership please contact us at cfa@cfa-international.org or +44 (0)1588 672868

Left to rt – Allan Amumpe (SPGS Project Manager); Celia Nalwadda (SPGS Plantation Officer and CFA Youth Officer); Augustine Kuratampora (Chairman of Rhowo Environmental Assoc.), William Tumusiime (Secretary of Kamusiime Assn.) and Margaret Bamukyawa (Coordinator of Luwero Environmental Management Assoc).

CFA AGM 2007 – a virtual experience

Our 2007 AGM was held in December but it was quite different from any in the history of the CFA. There was no meeting room, no sandwiches and no long speeches! The reason was that for the first time the AGM was held over the internet using an instant messenger programme. It might sound complicated, but it wasn't. It meant that any CFA member with a computer and fairly good internet connection could participate without leaving their office or home. The agenda and pre-meeting notes were circulated prior to the meeting, which was chaired by the CFA Chair, Jim Ball. The draft minutes of the meeting are available to view at the Members Only section of the website. If any members without internet access would like a copy sent to them please contact us.

We were very pleased with the way in which the AGM was conducted as we felt it enabled easy participation by members who would otherwise have been unlikely to have been able to travel a traditional-style meeting. As such we intend to incorporate an internet link to future AGMs, even where they are held in a specific location.

Obituary: A.L. (Lindsay) Poole 1908 –2008

It is with some sadness that I report the passing of Lindsay Poole at the great age of 99 years and 9 months. Lindsay was known in both New Zealand and international forestry circles over a long period as a forester, botanist, horticulturist, conservationist and an observer and commentator in all of these fields. He was honored in several of these fields recognising his very substantial contribution to forestry knowledge and the leadership he provided. Amongst Lindsay's distinctions was the fact that at 99 years of age he was possibly the oldest and longest serving member of the Commonwealth Forestry Association, which he joined in 1932 and later became a life member, serving on the Governing Council for a period.

Lindsay was also the oldest active member of the NZ Institute of Forestry, regularly attending annual conferences and participating in local section events until shortly before his death. Records indicate Lindsay joined the NZ Institute while a student in 1930, giving him a total of 77 years continuous membership.

Some key dates and events in Lindsay's life include;-

- 1908 Born in Gisborne. As a youth traveled to King's College, Auckland by steamer, as road access to this part of the country was non-existent
- 1925 First forestry experience in Whakarewarewa nursery, which at the time was central to the massive tree-planting programme of the central North Island volcanic plateau. Development of accurate seed collection and source records was an important focus at that time, replacing the more haphazard approach that had led to significant failures in the field.
- 1926 Awarded a Smith – Wylie Scholarship to study forestry at Auckland University.
- 1931 Graduated B [For] Science from Auckland. This was a time when it was very difficult to get jobs – due to the great recession ("The Depression") of the 1930s. During this period Lindsay worked in a number of aspects of forestry practice, including deer culling.
- 1937 Joined Botany Division of D.S.I.R.
- 1940 Served overseas during the Second World War with the 15th Forestry Company NZEF at Petersfield.
- 1941-45 Also served as NZ Scientific Liaison Officer for D.S.I.R. in London and worked widely around the UK during the war..
- 1945-46 Joined the British Military Govt. Timber Section in Germany working alongside members of the German Government Forest Service where he gained a useful insight into traditional European forestry practice. At the end of this period of service he returned to the Botany Division of D.S.I.R. in Wellington.
- 1948 Appointed Director of the Botany Division.
- 1949-50 Took part in Fiordland Study Expedition.
- 1951 Appointed Assistant Director General of the NZ Forest Service..
- 1956 Steered the establishment of national deer control operations under the direction of the Forest Service – his experience as a deer culler, a forest botanist and on survey in Fiordland all being relevant to this undertaking.
- 1961-71 Director General of NZ Forest Service.

Some of his achievements during that time:-

- Changed its structure to Divisions.
- Beginning of export log sales
- Saw the future of the forestry sector as a significant export industry for N.Z.
- Development of the Forestry Encouragement Loan and Grant Schemes.
- Farm Forestry firmly established.
- East Coast soil erosion problems reviewed and initial erosion control plantings commenced.
- 1969 Forestry Development Conference set planting targets etc.
- School of Forestry re-established at Canterbury.

- 1971 – 78 Lindsay was Chairman of the NZ Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council.
- 1982 Elected an Hon Member of the UK Institute of Chartered Foresters
- 1982 Published "Catchment Control in New Zealand".

In recognition of his extensive experience Lindsay was also appointed as a Director of the Cawthron Institute, Baigents Forestry Limited, Tasman Forestry, Scollays Limited, and to other relevant posts from time to time.

Lindsay also wrote a number of recognized works on Botany and Forestry, of which the most familiar to botanists and foresters alike is probably his *Flora of New Zealand*, illustrated by Nancy Adams.

He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1962 and awarded the C.B.E. in 1971. In 1999 he was made an Honorary D.Sc. by Canterbury University.

As noted earlier Lindsay was a keen supporter of the NZ branch of the CFA, regularly attending local section meetings and participating actively. He attended and presented at a number of Commonwealth Forestry Conferences, and listed a total of more than 50 published paper's on forestry in a wide range of national and international technical and scientific publications.

His contribution to the N.Z. Institute of Forestry was also significant. He wrote many articles for the Journal after his return to New Zealand in 1946, from 1949 to 1950 he served on Council for the first time. In 1954-56 he was again elected to Council and for the next two years became President.

Lindsay is also well known for his love of golf which he continued to play regularly, and he remained the bane of more than a few of his younger opponents until well into his 90s – one of those rare people who managed to play a round in fewer strokes than his own age.

Peter Berg
CFA Governing Council

The role of civil society in the forestry sector in India

A workshop entitled **The Role of Civil Society in the Forestry Sector in India** organized jointly by Commonwealth Forestry Association, Forest Governance Learning Group, Ministry of Environment and Forests, ICFRE and FRI, was held at the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun, India on 10-11 October 2007.

Shri Jagdish Kishwan, DG, ICFRE, formally welcomed the gathering, and welcomed the Chief Guest for the inaugural function, **Shri. Namo Narain Meena**, Minister of State for Environment, MoEF, Govt. of India, who highlighted the role of civil society in collaboration with forestry organizations in the conservation of forests and the environment.

The CFA representative, **Mr Peter Wood** gave an introduction to workshop, followed by **Dr. M K Mutthoo**, President, Roman Forum, who delivered the key note address. He emphasized on the need of having an International Forest Policy and involvement of the rural community in the forestry sector.

Shri J P L Srivastava, DG Forests and Special Secretary, MoEF, stressed the idea that sound forestry is fundamental to sustainable development in an environmentally sound, economically viable, socially fair and acceptable manner. He expressed concerns over rapid deforestation, environmental degradation, possible threats to bio-diversity, and marginalization of forest dwellers, all of which require a fresh breed of foresters for resolving these complex and interrelated issues. He informed the audience that Central Government has been deliberating on modalities of public-private partnership in various sectors, and spoke of the concept of multi-stakeholder partnerships in the Forestry Sector based primarily on the grant of tenure on degraded forest lands to investors with benefit sharing on an administrative basis. He also stressed the need for committed intermediaries to bridge the gap and promote trust and understanding between public administration and people's organization.

The theme for Session I was **Linking Civil Society to Forestry** and included presentations from **Shri Chandi Prasad Bhatt** (People's Link with forestry in forest-rich regions), **Shri R. S. Tolia** (Government policy support for civil society's involvement in forestry), and **Shri Vincent Darlong** (Community's initiatives in forest conservation and management in North-east India).

Recommendations from Session I

1. Constitution of Indian Forest act 1927 regarding legal support for village forest to be explored.
2. Van Panchayat (Community forest panchayat) required to be made, giving all the legal support of conducting the election etc and making fund available.
3. Capacity building of villagers for management of forest is required.
4. Existing community forest policy should ensure adequate forest area to Van Panchayat, i.e. minimum 2.5 ha of forest to each family.
5. Opportunities for funding should be explored from Central Government, State Government, Banking organization to facilitate development of forest and the villages.
6. Various sectors should be involved in the formulation of a development programme for the improvement of villages.
7. Forest management should respect indigenous knowledge systems.

Session II was entitled **Participation of Village Communities in Forestry Programmes** and included presentations from **Shri A. K. Banerji** (Evolution of people's participatory approaches in forestry), **Shri Manoj Misra** (Participation of village communities in protected areas management), and **Shri B. M. S. Rathore** (Experience of village communities involvement in forest conservation programmes).

Recommendations from Session II

1. There should be some mechanism to evaluate the functioning of JFM committees.
2. Forest management through people participation should be a balanced approach between communities and the Forest Department bearing in mind social realities and the need for monitoring and evaluation.
3. Strategies should be evolved with regard to implementation of JFM to ensure effective involvement of forest dependent communities.
4. There should be regular review of JFM rules and provision for revising them in the light of experience.

Session III covered **Field Experiences in Community Participation in Forestry Programmes** and included presentations by **Shri R.K. Gupta** (Lessons from integrated watershed development programme in Himachal), **a representative of community- based organization,**

Tapobhumi Trust, MP (Tribal welfare activities and their conflicts), and **a representative of a community based organization, Maharashtra, Shri Devaji Topa** (Experiences of a tribal village development and their way of sustainable utilization of forest resources).

Recommendations from Session III

1. Opportunities for training and capacity building should be created for project implementation.
2. A multi-sectoral approach is the best for implementation of JFM forestry related programmes for watershed development projects.
3. Establishment of self help groups for forestry related activities works well as a tool for empowerment of women.
4. Participatory planning is good, particularly that which involves early participation involving one type of committee per village.
5. Strengthening of indigenous communities by scientific inputs, appropriate technologies and capacity building is essential.
6. Novel strategies for tribal village improvement and poverty alleviation such as biogas plant, potable water, fishponds, village development fund etc. have been found to be successful.
7. Involvement of local communities in preparation of working plans should also be taken.

Session IV focused on **Participation of Women in Forestry Programmes and consisted of presentations** by **Ms. Chayya** (Empowerment of women and their participation in forestry), **Dr. SuryaKumari** (Enhancing participation of women in village level organizations) and **Ms. Gopa Pandey** (Women in forest service to enhance rural women participation in forestry).

Recommendations from Session IV

1. SEWA presented a holistic approach to achieve organization strength, capacity building, social security and capital formation for any self reliance rural poor programme.
2. There should be sensitization regarding women's involvement, with proper awareness creation for 50% representation as per the GO 173 (AP Govt.).
3. Emphasis should be made for capacity building for both forester and rural women to overcome barrier issues such as security, participation, situational, dispositional and institutional.
4. Delegates suggested posting session papers on the web site for wide publicity.
5. The co-Chairman emphasized the need for a fixed time frame for any activity for which effective participation of women is a goal.
6. The Chairman recommended recognizing and supporting women's own initiative for forest protection.

Session V on **Forest Governance** included the speakers **Prof. P. Bhattacharya** (Introduction to FGLG-India and its programmes), **Dr. M. Gopinath Reddy** (Studies on NTFP-based micro-enterprise development and governance tactics in Andhra Pradesh), and **Shri Sanjoy Patnaik** (Studies on NTFP-based micro-enterprise development and governance tactics in Orissa), and **Prof. P. Bhattacharya** (Studies on NTFP-based micro-enterprise development and governance tactics in Madhya Pradesh).

Recommendations from Session V

1. There is a need for clear focus on ownership, access rights.
2. FD/FDC should follow a decentralized approach in a phased manner.
3. Geographical harmonization of current policy interventions on selected regional NTFPs is required.
4. Women's participation and involvement in decision making of JFMC's should be incorporated and sustained for livelihood development as policy.
5. Forest sector governance must be looked at from a larger perspective of production systems such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, etc.
6. The participation of industry in forest governance needs attention and execution as viable stake holder of future as PPP (Public Private Partnership) model.
7. More professionals to be involved in different facets of forest governance for technical input, transparency and healthy functioning.

Session VI on **Conservation, Management and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Livelihoods** comprised presentations by **Shri Ashish Kothari** (Participation of civil society in conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity), **Shri N. M. Velayutham** (Sustainable collection and use of biodiversity by women Sanghas in Tamil Nadu), and **Shri Darshan Shankar** (Involvement of people in Conservation and Sustainable use of medicinal plants).

Recommendations from Session VI

1. Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) such as community Reserves, Heritage sites, village forests, eco sensitive areas and community forests should be constituted as provided in different statutes/acts.
2. Conservation across the landscape and seascape by local communities should be encouraged.
3. Action should be taken for establishing legal entities such as Sanctuary Advisory Committees as per the Wildlife Protection Act.
4. Involvement of urban citizens in conservation of Biodiversity through developing parks, gardens and green belt in urban landscapes.
5. Linking of project mode to enterprise/business mode by involvement of local communities particularly women based self-help groups should be encouraged.
6. Utilize the strength of and initiative from the Forest Department in formulation of programmes for conservation, management and sustainable utilization of medicinal plants.

The final **Session VII** on **Development of Agroforestry: Potential Role of Civil Society** consisted of presentations by **Shri Jagdish Kishwan** (Potential of agroforestry in meeting national demands and in increasing tree cover), **Dr. R. C. Dhiman** (Farmers initiatives in agroforestry: potential and constraints) and **Shri Piarel Lal** (Private initiatives in production of quality planting stock to support Agroforestry).

Recommendations from Session VII

1. It is recommended that there should be an agro-forestry policy for the country, in order that the aim of 33 % forest cover is achieved
2. The rules and regulations for the species gown under agro-forestry need to be relaxed so that agro forestry produce can be marketed without problem.
3. The state forest departments and private farmers should ensure that only genetically improved seed or quality planting stock should be used for future plantations to improve productivity and quality of produce.
4. There should be a mechanism to regulate market prices keeping in view the farmer's interest, and the installation of a forest-based industry should be encouraged wherever the raw material is available in plenty.

R.V. Singh
CFA Regional Coordinator

Forest scenes

Mocambique: present dilemma, future choice?

Mocambique is always listed among the poorest and most disadvantaged countries of the world, and measured in economic terms, or in terms of gross domestic product, or in reserves of minerals then this is truly justified. A country sustained in the past by subsistence agriculture, and devastated by twenty years of ruinous civil war is unlikely to compete with more favoured nations. But Mocambique has its own special forms of blessing, advantages that could well stand it in good stead in a future where climate change threatens.

Montane rain forest - a small but rich natural habitat

First, it has an interesting situation. It has a long sea coast, and lies between the land-locked nations of Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe and the Indian Ocean. Its position at the Southern end of the Rift Valley gives rise to its spectacular granite mountain scenery, and the flaky nature of this bedrock produces red free-draining fertile soils. And it is not only the giant trucks which roll across Mocambique from the interior to the sea, but so do two major rivers, the Limpopo and the mighty Zambezi, and any number of lesser rivers which drain from West to East into the sea. Hydro power from these sources is also cheap. So there is a potential for growth, but a growth which must, it seems, come from the potential of this soil and this water. As the world continues to warm, the advantage of these two basic ingredients will, no doubt, continue to assume more importance.

Fire the principal tool of clearance of the miombo

Mocambique's natural vegetation is dominated by the dry, deciduous miombo woodland which is so typical of East Africa, but this is dominated not so much by Accacia but by Afzelia, Brachystegia and Oocarpus. Khaya and Pterocarpus also occur locally, usually along watercourses, but almost anything of economic value has been systematically pillaged by illegal fellings of one kind or another, leaving little timber value. In the mountains and the uplands especially along the border with Zimbabwe there are small areas of evergreen montane rainforest, but these are not extensive. Some of these are diverse and rich as is the natural grasslands which surround them. The remoteness of Nyassa and indeed of the Northern part of the country may have saved some of the natural miombo from too much interference from logging, but the infrastructure is the subject of a good deal of international aid, and where there are new roads, there is new settlement.

This brings with it one of the scourges of East Africa, fire. The miombo is accustomed to widespread burning during the dry season, whether from natural causes or from hunters and graziers seeking to promote a fresh bite for their animals as the rains green up the landscape. But one of the effects of the war was to make the countryside too unsafe, and villagers were driven into the larger towns where there was relative security and access to food supplies. The cease fire in 2004 resulted in a return to

the countryside, although many farmers continue to live in the settlements and only commute to their farms in the villages. As confidence continues to grow, this seems set to change, and pressure on the miombo will inevitably grow as the new population continues the traditional pattern of clearance, cultivation, then abandonment. The principal agent of this cycle is fire. Fire is used to clear smaller trees and to damage and ultimately fell larger trees. The effect of this is all too readily visible along roadsides especially. Some of the value is recovered in the form of charcoal, always in demand in the towns, and also in building crooks and poles; all these forms of forest produce line the main roads for truckers to pick up and transport to higher prices in the towns, along with their commercial loads. But damage to the forest is rife.

Khayaanthotheca trees in a 37-year old plot

This spotlights the dilemma of Mocambique. Undoubtedly one of the ways forward is the development of agribusiness of one kind or another, and this is now happening. Vegetables grown in Mocambique can be bought at your local Sainsbury's or Waitrose, as access to markets in the developed nations develops. Maize growing is encouraged by centralised bulk marketing; the result is more maize, more rural income but forest clearance to grow maize. There are legal systems to prevent illegal felling. The montane rain forest is protected by legislation, but it is felled and cleared for banana plantations. Although legal protection exists, the resources to implement prosecutions, even if the will were there, are just not there. The people view the forest as limitless, and therefore invulnerable.

This is not in any way a criticism of a country still slowly recovering from twenty years' devastating war. There are other priorities; malaria and AIDS for example, education and infrastructure, the list is seemingly endless. Mocambique is on the receiving end of vast sums of international aid, and new schools and road projects are now appearing. Communications improve; the telephone system by-passed the 20th Century and moved right on into the era of mobiles. But the new roads are largely empty of even the most basic vehicles. Bicycles and oxcarts remain the staple form of transport, apart that is from the huge modern long distance trucks that ply the main roads.

There have been sporadic attempts to introduce commercial forestry, with plantations of eucalypts and tropical pines. There is a booming market for forest products in the Republic of South Africa. Logistics remain problematical. How will timber from a major afforestation scheme currently being launched in Nyassa province, in the far North, find a market? The State owned IFLOMA company which carried out a large afforestation programme with US aid in the nineteen eighties has recently been privatised, but even in a large, relatively sparsely populated country, land availability is still a problem. Land is owned by the Government, and licensed to potential farmers and foresters. But there is also a complicated web of traditional ownerships vested in local communities and individuals.

It remains to be seen how successful Mocambique will be in breaking the vicious circle of rural poverty, but it is to be hoped that forestry will play a major part. Apart from plantation forestry, the miombo can be enriched by reintroduction of Khaya and panga-panga, and local species grown in the villages for their suitability for charcoal or firewood. Its natural resources are basic but vital; it is to be hoped that the enlightened and integrated use of these blessings can come about in the next twenty years of peace.

David Taylor
Forestry Consultant UK

Concessions to poverty

At present, nearly all the governments in the Congo Basin region are following a policy of managing their tropical forests by dividing the forest estate into three main zones: industrial logging concessions, protected areas and areas for community use. Proportionately, logging concessions occupy a far greater area than all other forest uses in the region: in Cameroon, for example, industrial concessions occupy about 60% of forest lands.

In the region, the last decade has also seen a wave of forest reforms. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a new forest code was passed in 2002 and the government is currently in the process of developing the application norms for this law. In Gabon, donors are developing a new forest sector support programme. Throughout the Congo Basin, with the signature of the COMIFAC treaty in February 2005, increasing emphasis is being placed on convergence between forest legislation and approaches to forest management in the region. The Congo Basin Forest Partnership, launched in 2002, is acting as an additional engine for the large scale zoning of forests into protected areas, concessions and community use areas.

It is in this context that the report "Concessions to Poverty" has been produced by the Rainforest Foundation and Forests Monitor. The function of the report is to take a critical look at this system of forest management and to reflect on whether it is an effective way to manage Africa's forests.

Industrial logging robs indigenous forest communities of their homes, livelihoods, culture and health.
Photo - Filip Verbelen/Greenpeace

The report examines the sustainability of forest management using the logging concession system, looking at all aspects of sustainability: social, economic, environmental and political. The editors argue that the forest concessions system has so far failed to deliver sustainable conservation and management. The evidence presented, from a range of countries with tropical forests, indicates that opening up forests to industrial logging frequently produces wide ranging negative environmental and social benefits and extremely limited economic benefits, the actual amount of these also questionable.

The report starts by examining the governance situation in the Congo Basin region: the legislation and international agreements that have an impact on forest management in Central Africa, the degree to which these take into account the customary rights of forest communities, in particular forest hunter gatherer peoples and how, in reality, these laws are or are not applied, particularly in the context of conflict, as the DRC is still witnessing. In summary, the governance situation in the Congo Basin is extremely weak and often the system of industrial logging concessions has contributed substantially to poor governance and the institutionalisation of corruption. Management structures are weak and staff are poorly trained and there is little capacity for ensuring the rule of law. The recognition of the rights of forest communities to their resources is limited only to user rights in all but a few cases and frequently these rights are extinguished, (in the case of the declaration of strict conservation areas). The understanding of traditional land rights systems is very limited and is not reflected in the existing legislation. Overall, it appears that in the region, the management of forests through industrial concessions exacerbates the problem of poor governance and does not contribute to the recognition of indigenous and community rights, obligations which all states have committed to through international agreements and, frequently, their own legislation.

In the specific case of conflict, examples from Liberia and the DRC are examined in some detail. The research shows that money from the timber trade has supported armed rebel groups and that, just as has been documented with other natural resources, timber exploitation can fuel or exacerbate conflict:

- Concession agreements allow logging companies to continue working, even in areas of conflict and areas beyond government control. This happened in Liberia and in parts of the DRC.
- Both corrupt governments and their armed opponents allow companies to ignore forestry laws in return for financial and logistical support during wars.
- Support by logging companies for any one group (either government or rebels) creates enemies, which can increase conflict between groups.
- Some logging companies support groups that commit

atrocities against local people or rival groups. This can be considered as complicity to these crimes on the part of logging companies.

In relation to the poor governance and conflict situations outlined above, the current examples of reform in tropical forest areas do not offer positive models. International support for reform processes to legislation have served rather to reinforce the concentration of power in the hands of elites and to exclude communities further from access to forests and forest resources. The reforms have all had a tendency to prioritise the exploitation of timber over other forest uses, and the focus on timber extraction results in reduced access by communities to other forest benefits.

One argument often made for the concession system is the economic and social benefits it may bring. However, the research shows that these benefits are doubtful and the accompanying health, environmental and social conflict impacts may well overwhelm any marginal benefit from industrial scale exploitation. Models of forest management adopted to reduce environmental impacts, (such as reduced impact logging), have proved to be ineffective: the political, economic and governance context is such that technical solutions to environmental degradation will not succeed without substantial change in other areas.

Based on this analysis, the recommendations of the report are as follows:

In terms of the development and implementation of policy and legislation:

- The rights and concerns of local communities to land and forest resources need to be recognised in law, and these rights respected.
- Further capacity building among local communities is required, aimed at ensuring their effective participation in negotiations over forest rights and improving the generation and communication of information about forest rights and uses.
- Existing environmental and social provisions in laws and regulations relating to forestry need to be enforced.
- Responsibility for forest management should be separated from that for timber extraction activities.
- A definition of 'conflict timber' is needed, and this used to apply trade sanctions in appropriate circumstances.

In terms of further research:

- A critical analysis of the structural economic problems of industrial logging on tropical rainforests should be undertaken.
- Alternatives to industrial logging in tropical rainforests need to be explored, with greater focus on local forest benefits and values.

Source: 'Concessions to Poverty. The environmental, social and economic impacts of industrial logging concessions in Africa's rainforests' edited by Simon Counsell, Cath Long and Stuart Wilson, The Rainforests Foundation: London and Forests Monitor: Cambridge, 2007 (PDF) Full document. **Funded by**: The Netherlands Committee of the World Conservation Union (IUCN); Oxfam NOVIB

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MegaFlorestais: Informal discussions on global forest issues

The second MegaFlorestais meeting was held in October 2007 in St. Petersburg, hosted by the Federal Forestry Agency of the Russian Federation. MegaFlorestais is an informal gathering of leaders of public forest agencies from the 12 largest forested countries of the world, which together represent 60% of the world's forests. The countries that were represented at the second MegaFlorestais included: Russian Federation; USA; Canada; Brazil; Cameroon; Australia; China; Indonesia; and Finland. The meeting was facilitated by the international NGO, Rights and Resources Initiative, with financial support from the UK Department for International Development.

MegaFlorestais is a forum where forestry leaders can discuss issues and share information outside of the constraints of normal intergovernmental negotiations. It operates under the "Chatham House Rule" whereby participants are free to use the information but the identity or affiliations of the participants can not be revealed. The aim of MegaFlorestais is to assist forest agency leaders build relationships, share experiences and learning all towards advancing improved forest governance and sustainable management. As a participant of many different global forestry meetings, I found the MegaFlorestais meeting quite unique and very useful and productive. The discussions were very informative, open and quite frank. Although the meeting is not designed to generate conclusions or actions, it provides good prospects for enhanced co-operation between the major forested countries.

The discussions at the meeting focussed on four themes:

- *Understanding the Forest Industry in the Changing Global Marketplace*
- *Designing and Implementing Forest Land Tenure Reforms*
- *Designing Rational and more Equitable Regulations*
- *Identifying Initiatives to Tackle Climate Change*

Two very useful presentations (not constrained by Chatham House rule) on global markets were made to the participants. Mr Don Roberts from CIBC World Markets gave a presentation on the "Convergence of the Fuel, Food and Fibre Markets: a Forest Sector Perspective". Mr Sten Nilsson from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Austria on "When Will the Global Forest Sector Reallocate from the South to the North?" These presentations, as well as others given at the St. Petersburg meeting, and the previous meeting at Grey Towers in the USA are available on the MegaFlorestais page on the Rights and Resources website (www.rightsandresources.org).

Some key insights from the MegaFlorestais meeting:

- Increasing scarcity of wood supplies on a global basis is likely to result in increasing prices over the next few years, but plantations increasingly will need compete for land with bioenergy and agriculture.
- Investments in agricultural and woody biofuels are increasing significantly.
- By 2020 there may be 440 million ha of plantations, and if only 50% of these are commercial the total global industrial wood needs (excluding biofuels) could be met from plantations.
- The predicted growth in food calorie intake due to rising affluence in developing countries would require an additional 3 billion ha of agricultural land by 2050 if nothing changes in current production techniques. At the same time, climate change may reduce the area of land suitable for agriculture.
- The introduction of increased log export taxes by Russia will impact on global wood flows to China, Japan and Finland. Russia is currently the largest exporter of logs and China is the largest importer of logs.
- There is increasing recognition by many governments, particularly in the large forested developing countries, for forest land tenure reforms to legitimise long term use rights and management by indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities. Significant forest land tenure reforms are being undertaken in China, Indonesia and Russia.
- It was widely agreed that the sustainable forest management voice needs to be strengthened at the climate change negotiations. SFM needs to be part of the solution and there are very significant threats (pests, drought and fire) to forests from climate change.
- Need to meet challenge of including sustainable forest management and wood products within the UNFCCC obligations in the post 2012 climate change agreement.
- It was generally agreed that better outcomes can be achieved by moving from a system of formal government forest regulation to systems that encourages improved practice and compliance, such as forest certification and voluntary codes of practice.
- Brazil intends doubling its area of plantations to 11 million ha by 2020 and has reduced deforestation from 5 million ha/yr to 1 million ha/yr. It is seeking to market its avoided deforestation credits to finance enhanced action.
- Indonesia intends doubling its area of plantations to 9 million ha by 2009, with 60% of the new plantations being owned by small farmers, and from 2009 all pulp and paper will be produced from plantations.
- Russia is decentralising its forest management and introducing significant new log export taxes in order to encourage private investment in forest management and forest industries. It estimates that 19 million m^3 was illegally logged last year. It has recently achieved 17 million ha of FSC certified forest.
- China has 53 million ha of plantations and is expanding this at about 5 million ha/yr by subsidizing loans to small land owners. China is working with other countries and the FLEG processes to ensure that its log imports come from legal sources.

Tony Bartlett
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Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Australia

Mountain Pine Beetle in British Colombia

Few sights are more depressing than the widespread death of trees in a landscape; I well remember in the 1960s the yellowing stands of *Pinus radiata* in East Africa which had been killed by *Dothistroma*, and then in the 1970s the stark silhouettes of dead elms in English hedgerows, victims of Dutch Elm Disease. But even the preparatory reading on forestry in British Columbia that I'd done before travelling there recently had not prepared me for the ugly appearance of so many fine mountain vistas marred by dead and dying Lodgepole pine. Indeed, so bad is the situation that it is forecast that *At the current rate of spread, 50 per cent of the mature pine* [in British Columbia] *will be dead by 2008 and 80 per cent by 2013*. Furthermore *The consequences of the epidemic will be felt for decades*. (Natural Resources Canada website mpb.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/index_e.html).

The Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) or *Dendroctonus ponderosae* is endemic the forests of North America, with a range from Mexico to British Columbia. It lives in the phloem layer under the bark of Lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), Ponderosa pine (*P. ponderosa*) and Western White Pine (*P. monticola*) among others. A blue stain fungus carried by the beetle damages the phloem layer and ultimately kills the tree. Usually the beetles attack old (80 plus years) or stressed trees and normally play an essential role in the natural cycle of the ecosystems in which the pines occur, but recent mild winters combined with management practices that have led to a large number of mature trees, have caused an epidemic outbreak in BC which started about ten years ago. The infestation has now spread to the Jasper National Park, east of the Rockies, and the fear is that it will spread into the pines in other forests in Alberta and even into the boreal forest. The prolonged cold winters of the boreal forests have prevented widespread outbreaks in the past, but if mild winters persist then the beetles could have a disastrous impact on ecosystems which are ill-equipped to cope with their attack.

The devastation caused by the beetle is spreading fast; an earlier report, in October 2003, found that 4.2 mn ha of forest had been affected to some degree but that figure had grown to 13 mn ha in 2007. Lodgepole pine is BC's most abundant commercial tree species; it makes up over half the Province's annual timber harvest and is thus is critical to the economic and social life of the Province. A headline in a Vancouver newspaper while I was there brought the message home starkly: *Pine beetle will reshape our economy*. Other forest values which can be affected by mountain pine beetle outbreaks include impacts on landscape aesthetics and water quality, changes in wildlife habitats, the social and economic effects of future reduction of Allowable Annual Cuts, possible decline in property values, and potentially higher-intensity forest fires and loss of investments.

Faced with this threat there have been responses at both national and provincial level:

- *The Mountain Pine Beetle Programme* of Natural Resources Canada – see http://mpb.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/index_e.html). The Government of Canada has committed $Can200 million over three years to the Canada – British Columbia Mountain Pine Beetle Program to reduce the consequences of the beetle infestation through recovering economic value and protecting forest resources and forest-dependent communities, and assist in efforts to slow the infestation's eastward spread.
- *Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan 2006-11* of the BC Ministry of Forests and Range – see http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/mountain_pine_beetle/ The Action Plan is the cornerstone of the Province's coordinated response to the MPB infestation. It guides the provincial response and helps coordinate all levels of government, communities, industries and stakeholders working to mitigate the impact of the pine beetle. It addresses forestry and environmental issues as well as economic, social and cultural sustainability. It describes the increases in allowable annual cuts to recover economic value from mountain pine beetle-attacked timber and to speed regeneration of affected areas
- The impact of the enormous volumes of timber becoming available from short-term increases in the annual allowable cut, followed by decline, are reviewed in *Timber Supply and the Mountain Pine Beetle Infestation* from BC Ministry of Forests 2007 Update www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle The projected fall in the annual cut, possibly within four or five years, will require economic, social and cultural adjustments as well as the development of less conventional forestry-based income sources in the concerned regions.

Normally the timber of Lodgepole pine is used for sawtimber, but the bluestain fungus introduced by the beetles not only kills the trees but also discolours the sapwood of the trees and devalues the wood. Furthermore, not only must the trees be harvested within two or three years after the attack if they are to retain any economic value but the strong Canadian dollar, the housing slump in the USA and the recent softwood lumber deal with the USA could restrict the market for sawtimber. Some recently reported research in BC aims to make blue timber more attractive to users, while the BC Action Plan and the review of Timber Supply both recognise that sawlogs will remain the highest value product from harvested stands, but that beetle-killed timber can be used for other purposes such as bio-energy and alternative wood products such as engineered beams.

But there are other factors to be considered besides maximizing the conversion of dead pine. Some infested stands must not be harvested, in order to protect the advance growth developing underneath, and other areas must be reserved to protect forest values such as water quality and quantity, biological diversity, wildlife habitat, and cultural and social values. Furthermore, there remains considerable uncertainty about the progress of the infestation; will one very cold winter noticeably slow its spread? But this might be a temporary lull, which has happened before and then, in 1999, the beetles returned in greater force. There is also uncertainty about the development of technology to deal with the challenges posed. If the harvest of the dead stands, for example, could be deferred even for two or three years longer than the assumption of 4-5 years at present, then the impact of the "mountain of wood" waiting to hit the markets – and forest-dependent rural communities - could be much reduced. Further work will thus focus on refining the assumptions on which the timber supply forecasts are based, assessing more fully the effect of juvenile stand mortality on timber supply and further investigating management options to balance timber and non-timber values in the mid-term.

British Columbia's experience has lessons for other countries, including the effect of global warming in allowing over-wintering beetle populations to survive, the dangers of management practices that have led to a large number of mature trees, and above all the need to diversify away from reliance on one industry which in turn depends on one species.

Jim Ball
Chair, CFA

SIDR batters Bangladesh Sundarbans mangroves

Due to its geomorphic condition and geographic location, the coastal zone of Bangladesh is vulnerable to natural hazards and climate change impact. Recently, the southwest part of it has been hit by a tropical cyclone named 'SIDR'. On 15th November 2007, SIDR, with a wind speed of over 220 kilometres per hour, hit the coast (Figure 1). Around 8.9 million people of 30 districts have been affected by it (Box 1). The impact of SIDR on Bangladesh mangroves has been severe.

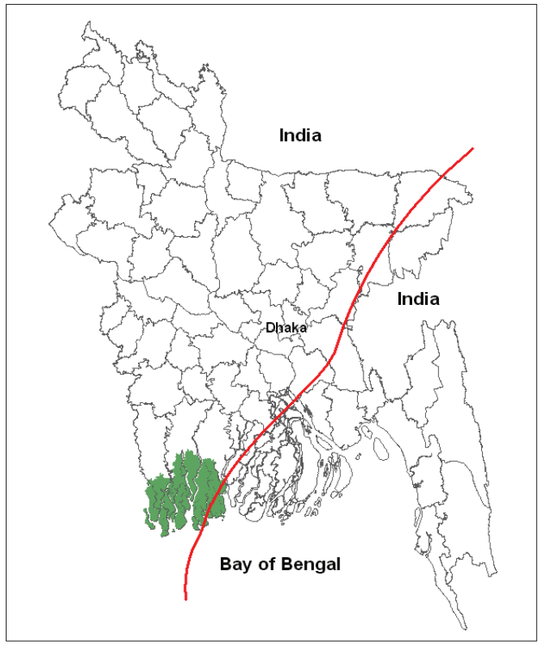
The Sundarbans, the world's single largest mangrove expanse shared with India, has born the burnt of the cyclone. Around 1,900 sq km areas (31%) of the Sundarbans have been damaged at varying extent. The eastern part of the forest, which is the most biodiversity enriched zone, has suffered mostly. Vegetations along the channels and creeks, dominated by *Sonneratia apetala* and *Excoecaria agallocha*, were exposed to the first thrust of cyclone and surges and have been severely affected, though *Heritiera fomes* and other backswamp species suffered no less. The cyclone and associated tidal surges have caused uprooting, trunk breaking, branch twisting, leaf shedding, and damage of natural regeneration. The wildlife of the forest has also been affected. Many of them have either been washed away or trapped under broken trees. Dead bodies of endangered Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*), deer, wild boars, snakes, wild birds, and monkeys have been found. The surviving animals are facing shortage of water due to pollution and salinization of water sources. The disrupted vegetations restrict the movement of wildlife. Moreover, it is feared that displacement and death of occupants can instigate territorial fights among tigers, causing further damage. Immediately after SIDR the fish catch was very low in the vicinity of the forest, which suggests large-scale displacement (at least temporary) of aquatic animals.

Box – 1: Select statistics on damages caused by SIDR in Bangladesh

Damages	Estimate (as of 29/12/2007)
Affected district	30
Total death	3,363
People missing	871
Family Affected	2 million
People Affected	8.9 million
Houses Damaged	1.5 million
Crops Damaged	765,000 ha
Trees Destroyed	4.1 million

Source: Ministry of Food and Disaster Management website (http://www.dmb.gov.bd)

Figure – 1: Path of SIDR over Bangladesh



The cyclone has also caused a major disruption in the Sundarbans-based livelihood activities. Around 1 million people depend on the forest. Although there is no permanent settlement inside the forest, around 10,000 people seasonally (mostly in winter) migrate to establish fishing villages in the eastern part of the forest. All these settlements have been destroyed due to SIDR. Moreover, the budding eco-tourism industry has suffered a jolt. Each year around 50 thousand people visit Sundarbans during the winter season, which have come to a halt this season. The Forest Department has lost almost all the forest stations, watercrafts, jetties, observation towers and communication systems in the affected areas. According to a preliminary estimate of the Forest Department the direct cost of physical damage to Sundarbans and coastal forests has been around 150 million US dollar. However, this is a very conservative estimate as it has not included indirect ecological and socioeconomic impacts. Moreover, lack of baseline information has made it difficult to assess the extent of ecological damage and biodiversity loss.

The Sundarbans, which is a World Heritage and Ramsar Site, requires immediate attention. The Bangladesh government has already banned all kinds of resource exploitation activities from the forest for a year, though it may affect local livelihood. The Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) has planned a project for the SIDR affected areas with special emphasis on the Sundarbans. Rehabilitation of infrastructure, assisted natural regeneration, assessment of habitat and wildlife in the Sundarbans; afforestation to increase green coverage, rehabilitation of village forest and nurseries in other affected areas are some key activities of the planned project. However, the Bangladesh Government will need international support to implement the project.

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Foresters 1, Tax Collectors 0

Italy's *Corpo Forestale*, one of six national uniformed civil forces, are no more politically powerful than any other forest service in the world. But recently they won a notable battle against the *Guardia di Finanza*, the body which is responsible for the collection of taxes, customs duties and other revenue.

The dispute arose four years ago, when the *Guardia* complained to the *Consiglio di Stato*, the Council of State or the country's highest body, that the foresters' uniform, a shade of dove-grey, was very similar to their own. Everybody expected that, if for no other reason than economy, the foresters would be ordered to change their uniform – they number only 8,000 while there are 64,000 tax collectors. But against the odds the *Consiglio di Stato* ruled that the foresters had precedence: they were founded in 1822, against 1881 for the *Guardia*.

The *Guardia* has put on a brave face, saying that the change will be at zero cost, since there will now be one style of uniform for both summer and winter, and that it will be phased in gradually. And indeed sharp-eyed viewers of *Il Capitano*, a popular soap on Italian television, may already have noticed the new uniforms, whose colour is described as "anthracite", which have been worn by the actors since last November.

So on 25th January, when the *Corpo Forestale* parades before the President to mark its 185th anniversary, we may expect a spring in their step and a special swagger, to celebrate the victory of the values of the environment over mere money.

If you want to know more, and can read Italian, see the website www.corpoforestale.it

Jim Ball
Chair, CFA

Book Review

Wildwood A Journey Through Trees
Roger Deakin (2007)

Published by Hamish Hamilton, the Penguin Group
ISBN: 978-0-241-14184-7

Roger Deakin, who died in August 2006, may need no introduction to many readers of this newsletter. For those who do, Oliver Rackham (in his review of *Wildwood* in the Spectator) provides a concise insight into the man, "Roger Deakin was a swimmer, old fashioned socialist, carpenter, broadcaster, tree-planter, chair-bodger, 'quasi-hippi', art critic, naturalist, Cambridge graduate traveller, north-east Suffolk man, champion of local individuality, anti-globaliser and explorer of links between nature and culture". All these qualities (except perhaps the swimming, which was a focus of a previous book, *Waterlog*) are evident in *Wildwood*. It is an eclectic book, divided – not very convincingly – into four parts, "Roots", "Sapwood", "Driftwood" and "Heartwood". I wondered if these sections were Deakin's own construct, or that of his editor(s); he died shortly after completing the manuscript. I personally found that the "Heartwood", in particular, fitted slightly uncomfortably into the whole. This should not, however, dissuade the reader from reading from end to end a book that is full of interest and insights about trees and woods, and the people who live close to them.

Each chapter is an essay on its own, some linked to others. We begin rooted in England – in Suffolk and in the New Forest, where Deakin had the good fortune to undertake numerous school expeditions with an enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable teacher cum amateur botanist, Barry Goater. Another pupil was the future woodland ecologist George Peterken, who also features in a later chapter. I happened to read *Wildwood* while on holiday in India, and it engendered huge feelings of nostalgia for English woodland in general (especially bluebell woods), English wildlife (there is a lovely chapter on rooks, and another on moths), English history linked to trees (sacred Devon groves and the ancient tradition of Grovely Woods; willow-based livelihoods; coppicing) and English wood-based art (David Nash, Mary Newcombe). The bulk of the book is indeed focused on in Southern English woodlands and people whose lives are linked to them.

That said, it was the chapters in part three, Driftwood, that particularly excited my interest. These are the products of Deakin's wanderings in France, Greece, Ukraine and Poland, Australia, Kazakhstan and Kygryzstan. In Australia we meet members of an Aboriginal community on a bush-plum hunt, and are treated to a discourse on the importance of fire – as wielded by the Aboriginal peoples – in shaping the entire ecology of the continent, as well as how the colonialists tried to rewrite the story. The descriptions of the Australian bush are highly evocative. Deakin's dark and foreboding Ukraine, however, is not one that I recognise as a traveller to that rapidly evolving country now; clearly his visit was made some years ago, not long after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This indeed is another small weakness of the book – we are not told dates. Neither are we given maps or pictures. For a hardback book that is otherwise beautifully presented, this is a pity.

Deakin travels to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan having been inspired (at least partially by Oxford botanist Barrie Juniper) to visit the genetic origins of the apple and walnut. Although he does not mention it, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has a long-standing project of support to the forest sector in Kyrgyzstan. This project gave me the opportunity to visit the country's walnut-fruit forests regularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s. There is inevitably a particular thrill to read descriptions of places in which one has stayed, people one knows personally, situations one has experienced - and indeed full justice is done to the warm and abundant Central Asian hospitality, and the beauty of the landscape in its golden autumn colours. Yet somehow Deakin misses what to my mind is the main story: the dilemma over the management of the Kyrgyz forests after independence, this having previously been heavily subsidised by the Soviets. He rightly points out that the forest administration has virtually no funds (perceptive readers might then wonder how the vehicles and infrastructure mentioned are funded – the answer is by Swiss taxpayers), but does not explore what is being done, including the trial of forest leasing under a mechanism of collaborative forest management (the subject of the doctoral research of my colleague Kaspar Schmidt, then the Swiss student whom Deakin meets). I would have so liked to ask Deakin why he did not write on this topic.

To conclude, this is a book likely to appeal to many readers of this newsletter, but perhaps most likely to be enjoyed by those who recognise part of themselves in English woodland, and/or tree-enthusiastic armchair travellers. It is a book to treasure, as well as a book to gift to others.

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Conference notification

International Conference: Adaptation of Forests and Forest Management to Changing Climate with Emphasis on Forest Health: A Review of Science, Policies, and Practices; Umeå, Sweden, August 25-28, 2008

The Conference will focus on the current state of knowledge of ongoing changes in climatic conditions in different regions of the world, and the implications of these changes for forest health, forest management and conservation. Presentations and discussions will emphasise research, policies and practices that are needed to enable us to plan for and manage healthy, productive forests to meet future societal needs for forest products and the full range of forest goods and services. Ongoing research in various fields of forest and forest related sciences will be presented in parallel sessions of the conference.

The Conference will be co-hosted by FAO, IUFRO and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) with support from the U.S. Forest Service, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea and The Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry

The Conference Topics will include:

Impacts of Climate Change on Forest Health and Ecosystem Services

- ☐ Physiological responses of trees to climate change including wood properties;
- ☐ Climate induced changes in forest ecosystem composition, processes and geographic extent;
- ☐ Invasive species - increasing establishments in previously hostile environments;
- ☐ Altered incidence, severity, and geographic range of insect pests and disease outbreaks; and
- ☐ Impacts on forest ecosystems of altered frequency, intensity and timing of extreme
- ☐ events including fire, wind, and ice storms.

Adaptation Implications for Science, Policies, and Practices

- ☐ Silviculture and production of wood and non-wood forest goods;
- ☐ Forest biodiversity, endangered species, and nature conservation;
- ☐ Protective functions of forest resources, including water and soil issues;
- ☐ Socio-economic functions, livelihoods and poverty – integrated natural resources management;
- ☐ Forest genetics and tree breeding;
- ☐ Phytosanitary regulations, including trade; and
- ☐ Role of innovative management approaches including precision forestry, ecosystem management, and multi-stakeholder participation.

Enhancing Knowledge of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Measures

- ☐ Scenarios and modelling for forest management planning;
- ☐ Monitoring, assessments and early warning;
- ☐ Roles of traditional forest knowledge in climate change adaptation;
- ☐ Opportunities for combining adaptation and mitigation (carbon sequestration) objectives
- ☐ Quality and comprehensiveness of the existing scientific evidence base, further research needs

Conclusions and Options for Science, Policies and Practices

The first announcement for the Conference can be viewed on: www.forestadaptation2008.net; www.forestadaptation2008.org; www.forestadaptation2008.com

Around the world

REDD brainstorm shows how much further discussions have to go

In Gland, 25 January 2008, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), Swiss Development Co-operation and the World Bank hosted a meeting to develop a common approach to processes such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) and Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG), by focusing on forest governance reform.

According to reports received, differences of opinion were shared, for example some even questioned whether the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) even had the mandate to deal with issues of concern to forest peoples. There seemed to be some consensus however that forest governance arrangements which include consultation with forest dependent communities are the most fundamental pre-requisite for REDD, especially in connection with the Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). A dissenting voice came from the Bank who questioned whether the FCPF could resolve broader governance problems and if this was strictly necessary for the success of projects. The Bank did recognise though that it was essential to implement safeguard polices to ensure that finance was delivered to the right people and to continue to explore REDD/FLEG synergies. They also made it clear that FCPF funds will not be available to industrial-scale logging companies, though this is yet to be backed up in writing.

The FCPF sought $300 million of pledges, but received only $165 million in Bali. FERN hopes that the Bank uses this money to show that it has learnt from past failures by setting up a mechanism that tackles the underlying causes of deforestation. FERN calls on governments to delay further pledges to the FCPF until the Bank can prove they are able to do this.

fern.org

Uganda: Kampala timber dealers already facing shortages

Just a week after reports emerged that Uganda would run out of timber in five to eight years thereby endangering the booming construction industry, dealers in Kampala say there is already a shortage of timber in the country. "We are already finding problems getting good and mature round wood for timber," a dealer in Ndeeba on the southern outskirts of Kampala said.

"Most of the timber you get in the market today is from immature trees but because most people do not know what they are buying they take the seller's word because the sellers control the market anyway."

The dealer, who declined to reveal his name, said the effect of using immature timber especially from eucalyptus trees, warping when there is sudden drying and others end up being eaten by weevils such that after only 10 years, one can no longer step on the roof or you fall down. He said timber from pine trees in the market is still good but it is also running out. "We are lucky that we are still trading with DR Congo, otherwise we would be under much more [timber] pressure than now."

Sunday Monitor reported this week that Water and Environment Minister Maria Mutagamba had warned that if the current rate of encroachment on forest reserves continues unchecked, Uganda would run out of timber in the next five to eight years thus badly affecting the construction industry. Uganda would therefore be reduced to a net importer of timber. The construction industry grew at nearly 12 per cent in 2006/07 and is expected to grow by 17 per cent in 2008, making it one of the fastest growing sectors of the Ugandan economy. Any hits it takes as result of expensive timber due to scarcity is therefore likely to affect the overall economy.

Ms Mutagamba wants the government to give her ministry Shs28 billion to draw boundaries of all central forest reserves and resolve associated conflicts. She wants another Shs10.8 billion to educate encroachers on the need to voluntarily leave the reserves. She also wants a special fund run from the Office of the Prime Minister for resettlement of the landless amongst the voluntary evacuees.

A lot of timber comes from the forest reserves, but tree harvesting for timber has to be controlled. Degraded reserves cannot be a continuous source of timber in the long run. Mr Emmanuel Jemba, another timber dealer in Ndeeba, said there is already an acute shortage of timber from the mahogany tree species.

The vice chairman of the Natural Resources Committee of Parliament, Mr John Kigyagi, said after the ongoing quantitative survey of the amount of timber available in the country versus demand, the legislators will make recommendations which may include controlled harvesting of timber in central forest reserves. The public relations manager of the National Forestry Authority, Mr Moses Watasa, said the government is encouraging everybody, including private individuals, to plant trees.

allafrica.com

Big mammals key to tree-ant team

At first it may seem counter-intuitive: that preventing large African herbivores from browsing Acacia trees decreases their growth. This, however, is precisely what researchers report in *Science* magazine. It is all because of the Acacia's mutually beneficial relationship with a biting ant. Together they fend off Africa's big grazing mammals; but it is these very antagonists that are needed to keep the plant-insect team working in concert. "Simulating large mammal extinction, by experimentally excluding them from eating the trees, causes the ant-plant mutualism to break down," said co-author Robert Pringle from Stanford University, US.

The whistling thorn tree (*Acacia drepanolobium*) and the biting ant (*Crematogaster*) that lives on it form a relationship, evolved over many millennia, in which both species co-operate and in turn benefit from each other. When this "mutualism" is working well, Acacia trees provide ants with swollen thorns, which serve as nesting sites; and nectar, which the ants collect from the bases of Acacia leaves. In return for this investment, ants protect the tree from browsing mammals by aggressively swarming against anything that disturbs the tree. Mr Pringle explains: "It is as if the tree hires bodyguards, in the form of ants, to protect it from being eaten."

The researchers disrupted this relationship by fencing off six plots of savanna land in Kenya by an 8,000-volt electric fence for 10 years. Herbivores, such as giraffes and elephants, were no longer able to feed on the trees, causing a change in plant-ant dynamics. "[The trees] diminish the rewards that they produce for the ant bodyguards, decreasing both the amount of housing and the amount of sugar-rich nectar they produce," lead-author Dr Todd Palmer at the University of Florida, US, told the BBC News website. He continued: "In essence, the trees begin to default on the co-operative bargain that they've made with the ants, because the trees no longer have need for protection from large browsing mammals like giraffes and elephants." It would seem that now the trees are better off, as they do not need to use their resources to support the ants - but the researchers have revealed that this is not the case.

Due to lack of housing and food, the mutualistic ant species becomes less aggressive, its colony size decreases and it loses its competitive edge. "The net result is a community-wide replacement of the 'good' mutualist ant by a decidedly 'bad' ant species that does not protect the trees from herbivores, and actually helps a wood-boring beetle to create tunnels throughout the main stem and branches of the acacia trees, which the bad ant then uses as nesting space," Dr Palmer explains. Trees occupied by this antagonist ant grow more slowly and experience double the death rate compared with trees occupied by the mutalistic ant.

At present, the researchers do not fully understand the mechanisms that allow the tree to sense it is no longer being browsed and to turn off its investment in mutualistic ants, but they suggest it takes place over a 5-10-year period. Dr Palmer said there were two important conservation implications of this research: "The first is that the decline of these charismatic [large animals] can have complex and cascading effects on entire ecosystems, with unanticipated results. "The second is that classical conservation approaches talk about conserving species, but perhaps equally important is the conservation of 'interactions'."

The researchers suggest that the loss of large herbivores throughout Africa, due to ongoing human activity, may have strong and unanticipated consequences on the broader community. Mr Pringle adds: "It is a cautionary tale."

news.bbc.co.uk

USA: State forest owners looking for more than pines to plant

Fifty years ago, what Alabama landowners called a forest often was land lined with rows of identical pines, planted for profit and clear-cut every three decades. Today, many of those tree farms are being replaced by a variety of forest types. While most owners still consider the land an investment, they are more likely to build cabins or ponds, or plant for hunting or bird-watching. Some make a hobby of growing ecologically correct forests.

A 2007 U.S. Forest Service study showed that growing trees for timber is only the sixth-most popular use of non-industrial forest land in the Southeast, ranking just above firewood. Two trends have crossed paths in the Southern forest: The price of timber has dropped, and the price of land has risen. "The tracts have gotten smaller. The urban growth has really expanded," said Walter Cartwright of the Alabama Forestry Commission. "People in the cities are really looking for ways to get away from the hustle and bustle and out in the woods."

The average wooded tract of land in Alabama is half the size it was a decade ago, said Cartwright: about 55 acres. Across the South, only 6 percent of forest land now is owned by farmers, according to the Forest Service. That's a precipitous drop -- two-thirds of forest land was in the hands of farmers 50 years ago. "They used to say, 'Can I go buy 40 acres and plant it in trees and make money?'" said Jim Jeter, forester for northeastern Alabama. "Now they say, 'Well, I bought this piece of property, and I want to grow deer on it, and I want to build a pond.'" An Alabama landowner would not even make enough money from a clear-cut to replant it in seedlings, foresters say. Cartwright said hunting is a popular use of land for companies or families seeking a profit. At $10 to $40 an acre for a season of hunting, the land is far more valuable than it would be to harvest and spend years bringing up seedlings, Cartwright said.

Most paper company timber land in Alabama has been sold to investment firms or other private landowners. Since 1996, more than 20 million acres of Southern forest has been sold by industry, according to the Forest Service. As a result, a lot of land is available for the weekender who wants a cabin in the woods with songbirds outside.

www.montgomeryadvertiser.com

Malaysia: RM25m boost for forest rehabilitation

The rehabilitation of 250,000ha Ulu Segama Forest Reserve received a major boost with plantation giant Sime Darby committing RM25mil for conservation work. This makes Sime Darby the single largest private contributor to the project that encompasses the rehabilitation of the forest, one of the largest orangutan conservation areas in the world.

Sabah Forestry Department director Datuk Sam Mannan the contribution as a dream come true for the department. "Ulu Segama has the highest concentration of orangutans in Borneo, numbering 5,000. They are often referred to as an umbrella species, meaning that if you look after them all the other species in the forest -- like the pygmy elephants and chimpanzees -- will be taken care of," he said.

Sime Darby president and group chief executive Datuk Seri Ahmad Zubir Murshid said that the contribution would be spread over 10 years. "This is a long-term partnership and a 10-year commitment. Basically, we are contributing to 50% of the Sabah Forestry Department's budget for the restoration. "We will second people to work on the project so this will raise awareness of the need to conserve and protect the environment," he said.

thestar.com.my

Brazil: Ministers attacked on destruction of forest

Brazil's government is unwilling and unable to halt destruction in the Amazon rainforest, despite emergency measures, environmental experts say. High commodity prices and increased land use elsewhere are driving ranchers and farmers deeper into the Amazon in search of cheap land.

Between August and December last year, 2,703 square miles of forest were chopped down – two-thirds the area generally lost in a year. In response, the government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva banned logging and cut farm credits in 36 municipalities where deforestation is fastest. It also said it would ban farm products from illegally deforested areas and register property deeds to prevent land theft. "If we play all our cards we can reduce deforestation in 2008," Marina Silva, the environment minister, said.

In the two years to July 2007, the rate of forest loss had slowed by 50 per cent. But environmentalists said the measures were half-hearted and some could even increase deforestation. Paulo Moutinho, co-ordinator at the Environmental Research Institute of the Amazon, said: "It's a positive first step, but only a drop in the ocean."

Applying restrictions where deforestation already occurred would force loggers and ranchers to neighbouring municipalities, said Roberto Smeraldi, head of Friends of the Earth in Brazil. "The government is following, not anticipating, deforestation – these measures could fan the fire," he warned. "Loggers are celebrating in towns left off the hook – the government has a terrible enforcement track record."

Mr Smeraldi argued that, while the government sent more troops and cartographers to curb logging, it was promoting deforestation through large infrastructure and mining projects, roads and settlements. A proposed hydroelectric plant on the Rio Madeira could attract 100,000 settlers. "The government raises a red flag with the left hand and then chops trees with the right," Mr Smeraldi said.

The president, the military and other nationalists often complain about foreigners meddling in the Amazon. "Those (foreign] NGOs (nongovernmental organisations] should go plant trees in their own countries," Mr Lula said yesterday.

news.scotsman.com

USA: Bush opens 3m acres of Alaskan forest to logging

The US government has announced plans to open more than 3m acres (about 5,000 square miles) of Alaskan wilderness to logging, mining and road building, angering environmental campaigners who say it will devastate the region. Supporters say the plan for the Tongass National Forest, a refuge for grizzly and black bears, wolves, eagles and wild salmon, will revive the state's timber industry.

The Bush administration plan for the forest, the largest in the US at nearly 17m acres, would open 3.4m acres to logging, road building and other development, including about 2.4m acres that are currently remote and without roads. About 663,000 acres are in areas considered most valuable for timber production.

The move, the latest in a long-running saga over the Tongass forest, effectively reverses the "Roadless Rule" protection given to the area by President Clinton.

Denny Bschor, Alaska regional forester who approved the Tongass plan, said it would sustain the diversity and health of the forest, provide livelihoods and subsistence for Alaska residents and ensure a source of recreation and solitude for forest visitors. "What is significant in the amended plan is our commitment to the state of Alaska to provide an economic timber sale programme which will allow the current industry to stabilise, and for an integrated timber industry to become established," he said.

Environmentalists said the plan continues a Bush policy of catering to the timber industry. Robert Vandermark, manager of the Pew environment group's heritage forests campaign, said: "In its final months, the Bush administration is attempting to give logging and mining industries the keys to the Tongass National Forest, the world's largest intact temperate rainforest. Wild areas like the Tongass contain watersheds that provide clean drinking water, wildlife habitat and outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities that should be kept safe for generations to come."

The Alaska Wilderness League said logging made up only 1% of the region's economy, much less than commercial fishing and tourism, which could be damaged by increased development.

But the Alaska Forest Association, an industry group, said the plan, which will not increase the timber take allowed from the forest, fell short of its needs. Owen Graham, the group's executive director, said: "It is critical that the final plan allows our industry to survive. Survival means returning to a realistic timber supply level in south-east Alaska, not a continuation of the starvation level we have been struggling with for the last few years." Both sides could challenge the decision, announced last Friday, in court.

The new plan stems from lawsuits filed by environmental groups in 2003 that have since shifted the Forest Service's timber sale programme away from roadless areas to land that can be reached by roads that meander for 3,700 miles through the forest. The plan does offer some protection: it puts aside 90,000 acres of old-growth reserve as off-limits to the loggers, and protects 47,000 acres of vulnerable limestone formations called karst lands. The Forest Service said it would consult with Indian tribes to protect and maintain sacred sites in the forest.

www.guardian.co.uk

India has lost forest cover to tsunami and dams

India has lost 728 square kilometres or 0.11 per cent of rich forest between 2002 and 2004, primarily because of the destruction caused by tsunami and due to the construction of dams in several States.

The latest State of Forest Report, released here on Tuesday, also said that shifting cultivation and bamboo flowering in Nagaland and Manipur had resulted in depleting forest cover. However, Arunachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Jharkhand have shown an increase by plantation and better protection. Andaman and Nicobar Islands lost forest due to tsunami and forests in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh were cleared to pave the way for large dams, including the controversial Narmada dam.

The forest cover in India is 20.60 per cent or 67.71 million hectares of the total geographic area of the country. Of this 1.66 per cent is very dense forest, 10.12 per cent is moderately dense, and the rest 8.82 per cent is open.

Madhya Pradesh has the largest area under forest cover — 7.6 million hectares which is 11.22 per cent of the country's forest cover, followed by Arunachal Pradesh (10.01 per cent), Chhattisgarh (8.25 per cent), Orissa (7.15 per cent) and Maharashtra (7.01 per cent). The seven northeast States have 25.11 per cent of the country's forest cover while the hilly districts of the country have 38.85 per cent and tribal districts 36.81 per cent of geographic area under forest cover.

www.hindu.com

Madagascar: Giant palm tree puzzles botanists

Botanists have discovered a new species of giant self-destructing palm on the island of Madagascar. The tree, described as the nation's largest palm species, is unlike anything else ever found on the island before, say scientists.

Although villagers knew of its existence, none had witnessed the tree in flower. When this finally happened last year, botanists found that the tree spent so much energy flowering that it died.

The palm is 20m (60ft) high with leaves 5m (16ft) long, the tallest tree of its type in the country; but for most of its life - around 100 years - it appears fairly unremarkable apart from its size. It was only when botanists from Kew Gardens in London, UK, were told of its extraordinary flowering pattern that they began to be interested. "It's spectacular," says Mijoro Rakotoarinivo, who works with Kew and has seen the tree.

"At first there's only a very long shoot like asparagus from the top of the tree and then, a few weeks later, this unique shoot starts to spread. "At the end of this process you can have something like a Christmas tree." The branches then become covered with hundreds of tiny flowers, which are pollinated and turn into fruit; but the tree expends so much energy on flowering that it eventually collapses and dies.

The tree has been named *Tahina spectabilis*, which is Malagasy for "blessed" or "to be protected". It is also one of the given names of Anne-Tahina Metz, the daughter of Xavier Metz, who discovered the palm two years ago.

Scientists have identified 92 individual trees, all confined to the same remote area. Dr John Dransfield, who announced the name of the tree in the Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society, is baffled as to how it came to be in the country. It bears a resemblance to a species of palm found in regions of Asia, 6,000km away. It is possible that the palm has quietly gone through a remarkable evolution since Madagascar split with India some 80 million years ago.

It is now hoped that the plant will be conserved and that selling seeds can generate revenue for people living nearby, as well as allowing gardeners across the world to own their very own self-destructing Malagasy palm tree.

Madagascar is home to more than 10,000 plant species, 90% of which occur nowhere else in the world. These include 170 known species of palm.

news.bbc.co.uk

Overfishing may hurt Amazon forest trees

Overfishing is reducing the effectiveness of seed dispersal by fish in the Brazilian Pantanal, reports *Nature*. The research suggests that fishing practices can affect forest health. In the Pantanal, a giant wetland bordering the Amazon rainforest, many fish species feed on fallen fruit during the flood season. As waters recede and fish return to their low water habitats, seeds are dispersed over a large area.

While scientists have long known that fish disperse seeds in the Amazon, the new research examined the importance of seed dispersal by pacu (Piaractus mesopotamicus), a common freshwater fish, for the tucum palm. The study, led by Mauro Galetti of Sao Paulo State University in Brazil, found that the tucum palm relies almost entirely on pacu services for seed dispersal.

"[It is] amazing that for some plant species, pacu appear to be the main dispersers," Galetti told *Nature*. Larger fish appear to disperse more seeds than smaller fish. The findings hold ecological significance because populations of large paca are declining in the Pantanal due to a fisheries policy that protects pacu under 40 centimeters, but allows fishing of larger individuals.

"Fishery management like this is probably detrimental to forests since large fruit-eating fish are the best dispersers," Galetti told *Nature*. "I think the Amazon and African jungles need to be extensively studied for ecosystems like this. Fish seed distribution is probably a lot more common than we realize."

mongabay.com

EU Renewables Directive includes 'irresponsible' targets for agrofuel

The European Commission's proposal for a EU Renewable Energy Directive, published 23 January 2008, was met with widespread NGO criticism, particularly about the proposed targets for agrofuels. Research released in the run up to the launch from organisations including the Royal Society - the Joint Research Centre, the European Commission's in-house science and research group, the UK Parliament Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) and a number of NGOs showed that, in the absence of Commission plans to significantly reduce overall transport volumes, the Directive's target of increasing the amount of sustainable fuel used in the transport sector to ten per cent by 2020 could only be met by a massive boost in use of agrofuels. The research went on to show that this would be likely to lead to an increase, rather than a decrease in carbon emissions.

This series of reports confirmed NGO findings that had led to major concerns about increasing the use of agrofuels. Findings included that there is no way of monitoring the wider impacts of such fuels on food and greenhouse gases and that there are no social, and only vague and patchy environmental safeguards in place. There are also, several other major flaws with the draft Directive's approach to replacing fossil fuels in the transport sector. For example, all agrofuels production that was operational in January 2008 will be exempt until 2013 from the few 'sustainability' criteria that the Commission proposes. The Directive is also limited in its scope, it covers 'biofuels' and 'bioliquids' but not solid biomass such as wood or palm kernel.

None of these concerns have yet been dealt with, but they must be tackled if the Council hopes to meet its own condition of meeting the ten per cent target sustainably. A coalition of civil society groups are calling for the target to be scrapped and for the EU to implement a moratorium on targets and other incentives for agrofuel expansion.

fern.org

Global warming is not to blame for delayed autumn colouring after all

That leaves are turning brown later each autumn is caused by raising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and not global warming, British scientists have discovered.

Over the past 30 years autumnal senescence, the process of plant ageing by which leaves discolour then fall, has been delayed in Europe by between 1.3 and 1.8 days a decade. Trees have also been growing leaves earlier. During this time atmospheric CO_2 has risen by 13.5 percent.

Scientists at the University of Southampton have found that although there is a connection between an increase in temperature and earlier spring leaves, the delay in autumn left colour changes in 14 European countries is caused by a rise in levels of CO_2.

The researchers undertook two forest experiments in which poplar trees in separate plots were exposed to either ambient or elevated levels of CO_2 from planting to maturity. The trees in the latter category retained their leaves for longer.

Professor Gail Taylor said "A key question now is whether we should be selecting trees which are better adapted to coping with increasing levels of CO_2, perhaps considering different varieties and species to plant".

The Times

China's snow storms destroy forests

China's unusually strong winter snow storms damaged 10 percent of the country's forests, leading to huge economic losses and widespread environmental destruction. Economic losses for the forest industry reached $8 billion, Vice Minister of the State Forestry Administration Zhu Lieke told a news conference. The storms hit some of China's best forest areas, and vital supplies for the timber industry, in southern China, he said. "There's no doubt this natural disaster has caused great losses to the forestry resources in the southern part of China, but nationwide China's timber production capacity has not been fundamentally affected," he said.

Heavy ice and snow storms during January and through the Lunar New Year this month toppled trees, paralyzed much of China's rail and road transport, froze power grids and stranded hundreds of thousands of people heading home for the holiday. Zhu said 46 million acres of forest from 19 provinces in southern China suffered from the snow disaster. Forests in Fujian, Jiangxi and Zhejiang provinces were hit the worst. The timber production capacity of the disaster-struck areas will be "seriously affected" for three to five years, Zhu said.

Some companies that rely on bamboo and timber for raw materials will likely have to close, he said. But the government will use timber from damaged forests to meet the market demand this year to ensure stable supply, he said. The destruction will also alter the local ecology, causing landslides, forest fires, forest pests and diseases, he said.

The storm caused trees to fall over, increasing the risk of forest fires, he said, especially as dry weather normally comes after a storm. About 30,000 nationally protected wild animals were injured and froze to death during the storms, Zhu said.

Associated Press

Sierra Leone: Minister warns against illegal mining, logging

Resident Minister East Honorable William Juana Smith warned people of Nomo Faama Chiefdom in the Kenema District to deviate from illegal mining and logging because the acts will destroy the habitat of wildlife conservation. The minister was addressing elders and traditional authorities on the importance of the Gola forest programme and its benefits to the host communities, when he disclosed that it illicit mining and logging was punishable by law.

He said government was seriously concerned over the misuse of the reserve forest by certain individuals for selfish reasons. "President Koroma takes the Gola forest programme seriously. He officially lunched the programme at the British council in Freetown. It was an occasion that involved all the paramount chiefs in this area." The benefit of forest conversation is that it serves as tourist attraction which will bring a lot of benefit to the host community.

It will improve on the road network and other basic amenities like schools and hospitals. "Most countries today do not have diamonds but tourism has improved them a lot" he said and maintained that diamonds destroyed the land. He further stated that government has raised concerns over the deforestation of farmland logging.

"People have been prospecting without taken licenses from government. We have put a ban on logging and illegal mining. If any body goes against it I will ensure that the law takes it course," he warned. He concluded that the Gola forest programme was not only for the people of Sierra Leone but also other international organizations support it.

allafrica.com

Cameroon: Britain pledges FCFA 8 Billion for Congo Basin forest management

The British government has pledged FCFA 8 billion as support fund for the sustainable management of the Congo Basin forest. The money would be used in the conservation of forest resources within the basin.

Barry Gardiner, special envoy of the British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, told the press in Yaounde, that his country's choice of Cameroon is largely due to the leading role it plays with a more advanced forest management sector. Barry said his government expects that the money be given out to support partnerships between the civil society, government and NGOs and the private sector. To benefit from it, an organisation would have forwarded a proposal and show proof of effectively carrying out the project in any of the areas of climate change, sustainable forest management, poverty reduction among people who depend on the forest within the region.

The envoy decried the stagnation by the Cameroon Government of some FCFA 9 billion the British government disbursed to assist in the programme for the improvement of the region's environment and forests. It was disclosed that the money, which is still in the account of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife if not immediately disbursed for use, the present donation would obviously not be made available to Cameroon. Prime Minister, Ephraim Inoni, however, said he has put in place the necessary disposition to ensure that the money is deployed for use. It should be recalled that the British Government established the Congo Basin Forest Partnership with a colossal FCFA 50 billion to combat poverty and encourage its sustainable management.

allafrica.com

Uganda: Kiboga Forest residents face eviction

At least 2,500 residents who have illegally been living in forest reserves in Kiboga District are panicing after receiving eviction orders from the National Forest Authority. Kiboga Resident District Commissioner (RDC) James Sserunjogi said the affected residents are those living in Kibaale Forest Reserve in Kibiga Sub-county and Sirimula forest reserve in Ntwetwe Sub-county.

He said the residents had already petitioned President Yoweri Museveni, through their area MPs; Ndawula Kawesa for Kiboga West and Ruth Nankabirwa, district Woman MP calling for his urgent intervention. Ms Nankabirwa is also State Minister for Defence. "NFA officials have already destroyed crops belonging to people who are living in the forest reserves without informing us area leaders. This is totally wrong because NFA is there to ensure the well being of Ugandans. Why do they evict them without our knowledge," Mr Sserunjogi asked.

Some of the affected residents who Daily Monitor found at the RDC's office claimed that they had lived on the land since 1975 and that "it was wrong for NFA to evict them without first getting them alternative land. "We should be given somewhere to go. We shall not just go away because we have nowhere to go with our families and cattle," an elderly man who identified himself as Mr William Butera said.

Mr Sserunjogi said he would meet NFA officials so that the affected residents are given time to harvest their crops before being evicted. "I am not against the eviction but I am opposed to the manner in which it is being done," he said.

A NFA official in Kiboga, who refused to be named, said they had given the residents enough time to leave the forest reserves but that they refused to comply.

"What can we do now because the land in question was given to a company called New Forest Company to plant pine trees? The company wants to start work," he said.

The district chairman, Mr Kizito Nkugwa, said over 4,000 residents in Kiboga District are landless due to evictions. Mr Nkugwa said the issue is likely to result into insecurity in the district.

allafrica.com

India: Satellite can supervise Polo forest

Forest officials believe that satellite images may prove to be their saving grace from the precarious situation created by rebellious tribals, who have stormed the Polo forest, cut over 1,000 thousands and built bamboo huts to prove their ownership of forest land.

"Tribals in Maharashtra had claimed ownership of forest land in the Borivalli National Park in a similar fashion, but recently the forest department won the case in court with the help of satellite images taken by ISRO, which proved that there were no tribal settlements in the forest till some years back before the tribals illegally laid claim," a senior forest official told TOI.

The situation has recently been tense in Polo Forest in Sabarkantha district as SRP personnel guarded the forest while the rebellious tribals moved backwards into the forests. There was fear that the tribals on a rebellious rampage inflamed by activists with communal leanings, may strike again at night.

The ISRO has satellite images of forests of the state dating back 30-40 years which will prove that most of the claims are illegal. "Most of the tribals cutting trees and building make-shift huts and those who have been evicted from the forest as part of a special anti-encroachment drive between 2003-2006. These people, if they lay claim now, can be easily proved wrong with the help of satellite images," said another forest official.

Officials in a spot: The forest officials are disturbed over the current uprising of tribals in the Polo forest area in Sabarkantha. On stake, they say, is the Rs 700 crore grant by the Japanese Bank of International Co-operation to promote afforestation activity, capacity building and local institutional building activity in the forests of Gujarat, which may be jeopardised if the unrest is not stemmed in the early stages itself.

timesofindia.indiatimes.com

Scotland: Timber industry on a high

Unprecedented levels of new investment and the ability of wood processors to fight off fierce global competition is a "major success story" for the timber industry in Scotland says Environment Minister Michael Russell.

In the last two years alone, investment in new wood processing projects has amounted to £250 million which is helping to develop a number of new sawmills and major biomass energy projects around the country. Over 40,000 jobs are now supported by the forestry sector in Scotland and the industry generates around £760 million each year to the economy.

Speaking at a forestry debate in the Scottish Parliament, Mr Russell highlighted that Scottish Government support for the forestry sector was also at record levels. He said: "Confidence in the industry is high and new investment is happening right across Scotland from the Borders and Dumfries to Irvine and Fort William. "The unprecedented levels of investment in the processing and wood utilisation sector can only be described as a major success story. Our processors have fought off fierce global competition and managed to remain profitable through a period of historically low timber prices. This is testament to the industry's business acumen and its ability to adapt and innovate.

"In fact, our forests currently produce some 6.6 million cubic metres of softwood round timber each year and this is set to rise to nearly 9 million cubic metres by 2016. An interesting analysis of statistics suggest that timber consumption is now running at 6.5 million cubic metres a year which could demonstrate that Scotland is currently self sufficient in wood related material. However, it is also important to realise that Scotland makes a key contribution to the UK's timber needs, helping it to reduce its global carbon footprint.

"The Scottish Government is providing strong support for the sector with £269 million being allocated to forestry measures through the Scottish Rural Development Programme. This funding will act as a catalyst for new planting, enabling the sector to plant around 10,000 hectares each year. This growth in planting will also help our aspiration of expanding woodland cover to 25 per cent of Scotland's land area this century.

"The emergence of the bioenergy sector also represents a huge opportunity for Scotland's forests and woodlands. The Scottish Biomass Support Scheme has been well subscribed, and 67 new projects worth £17 million will come on stream this year, assisted by £7.5 million of Scottish Government funding.

"Forestry is an integral part of sustainable rural development. It creates employment, makes great use of a natural renewable resource, contributes to the local and national economy and supports community cohesion. This is why the Scottish Government is committed to helping this sector realise its full potential, firmly establishing Scotland at the heart of UK forestry."

Forestry Commission Scotland

The CFA

The Commonwealth Forestry Association

The Commonwealth Forestry Association (CFA) is the world's longest established international forestry organization, tracing its history back to 1921. Today it unites foresters, scientists, students, NGOs and policy makers throughout the world in a unique international network that provides professional support to its members and forms a key element of civil society.

The CFA supports the professional development of those working with trees and forests by promoting the conservation and sustainable management of the world's forests and the contribution they make to peoples' livelihoods.

The CFA is managed on behalf of the membership by the Governing Council, which is composed of representatives from all countries who have members. It is run on a day-to-day basis by a small UK-based Secretariat consisting of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Technical Director, Membership Secretary and Finance Manager. The Secretariat is advised by committees for Finance and General Purposes, and Publications. The Governing Council appoints one member from each region, the Regional Coordinators, to work closely with the Secretariat in the Executive Committee to implement the plans of the CFA in accordance with the overall objectives.

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