

CFA Newsletter



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Around the World

Landgrabbers: when trees get in the way



Omot Ochan and his family discuss their future

I met Omot Ochan sitting in a remnant of forest in the remote province of Gambella in southwestern Ethiopia. Lean and tall, wearing only a pair of combat pants, he sat on an old waterbuck skin, eating corn from a calabash gourd. Behind him was a straw hut, where women were busy cooking fish on an open fire. A little way off were other huts, the remains of what was once a sizeable village.

Omot said he and his family, members of the Anuak tribe, had lived in this forest for ten generations. "This land belonged to our father. All round here is ours. For two days' walk." He described a distant tree that marked the boundary with the next village.

Life used to be good here, he said. "We sold honey. But two years ago, the company began chopping down our

forest, and the bees went away. We used to hunt, but after the farm came, the wild animals disappeared. Now we only have fish."

Our conversation was punctuated by the rumble of trucks passing on a dirt road just 20 metres away. Beyond the road huge earth-diggers were excavating a canal to drain the nearby wetland. So the fish would soon be gone too.

The company Omot was complaining about was called Saudi Star, owned by Saudi Arabia's second richest man, Sheikh Mohammed Al Amoudi, a friend and campaign financier of the late Ethiopian prime minister Meles Zenwai.

The company planned to grow rice and other food crops across its newly acquired 100,000 hectares, much of it for export to Saudi Arabia. Omot insisted the company had no right to be in his forest.

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The views expressed are not necessarily those of the CFA.



A canal ready to drain the adjacent wetland

“Nobody even came to tell us what was happening,” he said. He did remember officials from a government “villagization” programme dropping by to say the families should leave the forest and go to the new village across the River Alwedo from Saudi Star’s compound. That was all.

Omot had no doubt that the purpose of the new village was to make way for Saudi Star. But, he said as his children gathered round and grabbed the remaining corn, “in our culture, going to a different place is unusual. You get different people and there is quarrelling. When my father died, he said don’t leave the land. We made a promise. We can’t give it to the foreigners. We won’t go unless we are forced.” But in truth his children probably have no future here.

Gambella is the poorest province in one of the world’s poorest nations. Geographically and ethnically, the hot, swampy province feels like part of the new neighbouring state of South Sudan, rather than the cool highlands of the rest of Ethiopia. The government in Addis Ababa has ruled here, but it has invested little and cared even less for the Anuak, whose jet black skin and tall elegant physique mark them out from the lighter-skinned and shorter highlanders.

Nobody but the locals wanted this land until recently. Now, thanks to a global land rush to grow food and biofuels crops and cash in on a booming global market for agricultural commodities, the forests and wetlands of Gambella are hot property. Down the road from the Saudi Star farm, an Indian entrepreneur called Sai Ramakrishna Karuturi had obtained another 100,000 hectares from Zenawi.

I drove for hours through a landscape with burned trees smouldering by the roadside and bulldozers moving across the land, preparing for cultivation. Rice, sugar, palm oil and much more was planned. It was good land, said Karuturi’s project manager – some of the richest soil he had ever come across, with 5 per cent organic matter. And it had plenty of water. The fields were fed from the headwaters of the River Nile, which run through his territory.

Land and water grabbers like Karuturi and Al Amoudi are gobbling up the wide open spaces across the plains of Africa, the paddy fields of southeast Asia, the forests of South America, and the steppes of Russia. Oxfam estimates they have taken 220 million hectares in the past decade – that’s an area the size of Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and the Benelux countries put together.

All in the name of feeding the world. Or so the grabbers say. The problem is that the land is being taken from some of the world’s poorest and hungriest people. People like Omot, who need that land to stay fed, but whose power to prevent their governments selling their land from beneath them is very small.

The new land rush began in 2008, after the soaring price of food sent shock waves round the world. People began to fear that, after a couple of decades of cheap food supplies round the world, something was going wrong with world food production. The spectre of Malthusian famines returned. The British government chief scientist, John Beddington, claimed the world faced a “perfect storm”, in which a combination of climate change, rising world population, disintegrating ecosystems and land and water shortages was creating an escalating food crisis that could see hundreds of millions starve.

Fearing a backlash from their citizens over rising prices, many governments began encouraging corporations to buy up land to grow food. Commodity brokers and speculators joined in. They figured that if there were coming food shortages, then there were profits to be made. George Soros, one of the most famous investors, said: “I am convinced farmland is going to be one of the best investments of our time.”



The Saudi Star rice farm

Poor rural Africa is at the heart of this. It is one of the last great unfenced fertile areas of the planet. The World Bank has identified four million square kilometres of scrub, forest and savannah grasslands between the rainforests and the deserts as “the world’s last large reserve of underused land”. The trouble is that this “underused” land is home to half a billion Africans, peasant farmers, hunters and herders.

They badly need economic development. And of course that is what the land grabbers promise. African governments in particular believe that almost any foreign investment must be good. They feel guilty at their own past failure to invest in agriculture, and rarely discriminate between good investment and bad ret-rich-quick speculation.

It is not all bad. Some companies do intend to be there for the long-term, and do want to invest money in communities. In Liberia, I found a British palm oil company reviving an abandoned plantation, and offering to buy produce from local smallholders. It had built a clinic and a new school.

But, from what I have seen, too much of the investment is bad news for locals. They are being turfed off their land. Often, as in Gambella, the contracts signed by governments and land grabbers stipulate that the land contains no “impediments”, meaning people. And police and military are deployed to remove them.

Omot and millions of others are decreed non-people – “impediments” to the investment that is supposed to bring them development. It was perhaps no surprise that, weeks after my visit, some of the people I had met in Gambella launched an

armed rebellion that began at the Saudi Star camp. Nor that the government responded with brutal retaliation that saw many people flee. This is not development.

Fred Pearce is a science writer specialising in global environmental issues and is best known for his articles in *The Guardian* and *New Scientist*. He is also the author of *The Landgrabbers: The new fight over who owns the Earth*, Eden Project Books, £9.99

Association news

CFA Young Forester Award winners announced



Shimona Quazi and Tolulope Daramola carrying out fieldwork.

The CFA is pleased to announce that the latest CFA Young Forester Award winners are **Shimona Quazi** from Bangladesh, and **Tolulope Daramola** from Nigeria. They will both undertake a work placement in British Columbia, Canada later this year in collaboration with UBC and will post a daily diary on the CFA website at the time.

The CFA Young Forester Award is designed to support the professional development of foresters below 35 years of age through the provision of a short-term work placement in a country other than their own and consists of a designated placement combined with a bursary of between £1000 and £1500 to cover a stay of between three- and six-months (depending on the placement selected) with established and renowned forestry organisations in order to meet their professional interest. The hosts might be major timber companies, research organisations or NGOs but they all share the desire to support the development of the next generation of foresters. Visit our website for more details.

The CFA Queen's Award for Forestry 2013 launches

Nominations can now be made for the **CFA Queen's Award for Forestry**, the CFA's premier award and widely recognised as one of the most prestigious awards in forestry. The purpose of the Award, which comprises a cash prize and a travel grant to the combined value of £2000, is both to recognise the achievements and support the future work of an outstanding mid-career forester. The recipient will be the individual who the Selection Committee considers combines exceptional contributions to forestry with an innovative approach to his or her work.

The Association, which has responsibility for selecting and evaluating candidates, will agree a travel programme in conjunction with the winner that will maximise the benefits to the winner, the hosts and the Association. The successful candidate will be expected to deliver a lecture upon return describing his or her experiences and lessons learned.

Nominations

Consideration for the Queen's Award for Forestry follows nomination by two proposers, i.e. not application by the individual. These nominations must be sent to the relevant CFA Regional Coordinator (see below) and must include name, age, position of the nominee, plus a short statement of up to 200 words outlining why the individual has been nominated.

Regional Coordinators

The Regional Coordinators are – Europe: Adrian Whiteman – Adrian.Whiteman@fao.org Africa: Ben Chikamai – benchikamai@ngara.org South Asia: R.V. Singh – ranvir@nde.vsnl.net.in South East Asia and Pacific: Michael Bleby – Bleby.Michael@forestrysa.sa.gov.au Americas and Caribbean: Shashi Kant – shashi.kant@utoronto.ca

Previous winners of the Award

John Turnbull (Australia)
SN Rai (India)
Yemi Katerere (Zimbabwe)
Thang Hooi Chiew (Malaysia)
VK Bahuguna (India)
Jerry Vanclay (Australia)
Steve Bass (UK)
Bentval Ravindra Prabhu (India)

Shashi Kant (Canada)
Jolanda Roux (South Africa)

Eligibility

The Award is open to all citizens of Commonwealth countries, although in the event of a tie priority will be given to a member of the Association.

We look forward to your nominations.

Gary Morgan receives CFA Regional Award in Australia



Bob Newman (CFA Vice-President), Gary Morgan and Michael Bleby (CFA Regional Coordinator)

The presentation of a CFA Regional Award took place at the Institute of Foresters Australia Conference Dinner in Canberra on 9th April 2013. The recipient of the Award, Gary Morgan, received a framed certificate and engraved medal that was presented by the guest speaker at the dinner, the Honorable John Kerin AM, a former Australian Federal Minister of Forests.

The assembled company of 200 people comprised foresters, politicians, industry representatives and guests.

In his acceptance speech Gary said he was very pleased that the Commonwealth Forestry Association recognised fire management and fire research as mainstream forestry and was "Grateful that my forestry profession had led me to have friends

and colleagues in every continent." He also thanked CFA Vice-President Bob Newman and CFA Regional Coordinator Michael Bleby.

The full citation read as follows:

2013 Regional Award of Excellence, South East Asia and the Pacific Region.

Awarded to Gary Morgan, Dip For (Cres), B.Sc For (Melb), MIFA, AFSM

Gary Morgan has played an exceptional role as a leader and a catalyst for cooperation in the area of wildland fire management and control. He displayed valued leadership during his role as Chief Fire Officer in the forest land management agency in the State of Victoria, with its high fire risk for forests, parks and reserves. This included his leadership of the very large fires that occurred in the Victorian alps in both 2003 and 2006. His guidance has extended to peak bodies such as the Australasian Fire Authorities Council, and other International fire management cooperation arrangements, notably the relationship with the North American fire agencies. His distinguished service to the sector was recognised in 2002 when he was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM).

In the area of Bushfire research, through his leadership of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre, he has been instrumental in ensuring National coordination of multidisciplinary programs. His liaison with Universities and Research providers, Emergency Service and Land Management agencies, has resulted in collaboration and publication of research findings which embrace all aspects of fire management.

His endeavours have extended to building Australia's significant position in the realm of International Fire cooperation. He is responsible for the development of formal agreements with overseas organizations in the USA, France, Canada, Greece, Germany, Portugal and Chile. These arrangements encompass such areas as fire fighting support, staff exchanges, and joint research. His vision and leadership has resulted in Australia playing a pivotal role in forging lasting links with the most fire prone regions of the world.

The Commonwealth Forestry Association congratulates Gary Morgan on this award, in the knowledge that his work and career has made an outstanding contribution to this aspect of Forestry in the Region.

Institute of Chartered Foresters welcomes new President



Professor Julian Evans, CFA Vice-President and new President of the ICF

The Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) is pleased to announce that Professor Julian Evans OBE, BSc, PhD, DSc, FICFor, formerly its Vice President, has been elected President by members at their recent AGM and national conference in Glasgow.

A Fellow of the Institute, Julian graduated with a degree in Forestry from Bangor University in 1968, eventually going on to become a Professor of Forestry himself, at Imperial College London. Another career highlight includes the role Chief Research Officer (S) for the Forestry Commission at Alice Holt. He is the author of many technical books, was a principal editor of the *Encyclopedia of Forest Science* (Elsevier 2004), and a past editor of the Institute's journal, *Forestry*. Julian chaired two UN Intersessional conferences on the Future of Planted Forests (Chile 1999 and Wellington, NZ 2003). He is a **Vice-President of the Commonwealth Forestry Association** and, in 1997, he was appointed OBE for services to 'Forestry and the Third World'. Julian has a long-term research interest in plantation sustainability in Swaziland and silviculture of broadleaved woodland in UK and is a woodland owner, with a 12 hectare site in Hampshire.

Commenting on his election success Julian said, "These are times of great change for forestry and arboriculture in Britain. We face biological threats to trees and forests and changes in governance and policy, especially in the public forest sector, not neglecting the increasing role of wood and timber in the economy. The Institute's outgoing president, Fenning Welstead, had a clear grasp of this and, in thanking Fenning for the great success of his presidency, I anticipate these issues remaining centre stage. As forestry and arboriculture professionals, we are best placed to tackle and guide change for the greater good of the nation's tree and forest resource. The challenge the Institute faces is to remain centre-stage. This has been ably achieved with, for example, our Executive and Technical Director Shireen Chambers' invitation to join the government's Independent Panel on Forestry. This is also why the Institute created the new position of Deputy Director, appointing Russell Horsey last year, and also expanded, with a new office-base in southern England. "I believe the ICF has a crucial role to play, working with our partners in the sector, to ensure the well-being of our trees and woodlands; which are not only our business but are so evidently valued across the nation at large. The nation looks to the professional forester and arboriculturist as custodians of this remarkable resource and long may this continue."

charteredforesters.org

New Charter for the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth has launched its new Charter. The Charter of the Commonwealth sets out the values of the Commonwealth of Nations as well as the commitment of its 54 member states to equal rights, democracy and so on. It was adopted on 19 December 2012 and was officially signed by Queen Elizabeth II at Marlborough House, London, on the Commonwealth Day on 11 March 2013.

A total of sixteen core beliefs are drawn up in the charter, namely, democracy, human rights, international peace and security, tolerance, respect and understanding, freedom of

expression, separation of powers, rule of law, good governance, sustainable development, protecting the environment, access to health, education, food and shelter, gender equality, importance of young people in the Commonwealth, recognition of the needs of the small states, recognition of the needs of the vulnerable states, and lastly, the role of civil society.

The section of most relevance to us, Protecting the Environment, states "We recognise the importance of the protection and conservation of our natural ecosystems and affirm that sustainable management of the natural environment is the key

to sustained human development. We recognise the importance of multilateral cooperation, sustained commitment and collective action, in particular by addressing the adaptation and mitigation challenges of climate change and facilitating the development, diffusion and deployment of affordable environmentally friendly technologies and renewable energy, and the

prevention of illicit dumping of toxic and hazardous waste as well as the prevention and mitigation of erosion and desertification.”

The full Charter can be downloaded at www.thecommonwealth.org/files/252053/FileName/CharteroftheCommonwealth.pdf

CFA publications valued throughout the developing world

The CFA has been participating with International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP¹) since 2005 to offer discounted access to the *International Forestry Review* to researchers in developing countries. INASP is a development charity with the goal of contributing to sustainable social and economic development by strengthening the research communication cycle (availability, access, use, creation and uptake). INASP's work helps address some of the challenges developing countries face around the availability of international online books and journals, the writing and publication of locally-produced work and the communication and uptake of research to inform policy and practice. INASP is perhaps best known for the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI).²

Enabling researchers to have access to timely and accurate research so that they can help find the solutions to some of the pressing development challenges faced is crucial. As the Commission for Africa report stated:

“Scientific skills and knowledge enable countries to find their own solutions to their own problems, and bring about step-changes in areas from health, water supply, sanitation and energy to the new challenges of urbanisation and climate change. And, critically, they unlock the potential of innovation and technology to accelerate economic growth, and enter the global economy.”³

Access to peer reviewed journals like *International Forestry Review* has enabled researchers, who otherwise would not have had access to international journals, to use and apply research available to their colleagues in more developed countries. This is vital in areas which directly affect livelihoods, such as forestry, and INASP has seen the use of *International Forestry Review* in various research projects such as a dissertation in Bangladesh on “Bridging Livelihoods and Forest Conservation in Protected Areas: Exploring the role and scope of non-timber forest products”.

During an evaluation of PERI at the end of 2012, the evaluation interviews confirmed that most universities in the consortium would not be able to afford this access without PERI and the cooperation of publishers in offering discounted access.

Through participation in PERI, publishers have been able to reach a new and wider audience of researchers and currently

there are 49 institutions from 7 different countries are registered to use *International Forestry Review*.

Many universities in PERI have schemes in place to increase usage including INASP supported training for all new students. Libraries consulted in the PERI evaluation commented on their efforts to promote usage through marketing and were appreciative of the marketing training provided through INASP and its potential to increase use. As an example, Onan Mulumba, College Librarian at College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, Makerere University wrote:



Onan Mulumba, Librarian at Makerere

“After conducting trainings to students of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, at the beginning of last year, the usability especially from students tremendously improved.

Students have always accessed literature from IFR journals to do their class assignments, course works and research. Most of the students and some faculty members have always consulted me, as the School and College librarian, to acquire knowledge on how to access the database. The significance of the database is improving day by day and we believe it is an essential tool to successful research and academic output. The College comprises 3 schools: 1. School of Forestry, Environmental and Geographical Sciences, 2. The School of Agricultural Sciences, and 3. The School of Food Technology, Nutrition and Bio-Engineering. The usage of this database is more common in schools 1 & 2.”

¹ <http://www.inasp.info>

² <http://www.inasp.info/perii>

³ The Commission for Africa, Our Common Interest, Report of the Commission for Africa, 2005, London

Resource availability can only fulfil its potential if it is supported by trained information professionals and researchers who can successfully find and use what is available to them. This means that capacity-development activities, including building a cadre of trainers who can go on to train others in their own country and beyond, and other forms of outreach have become central to INASP's activities. Library training includes information literacy and "working together to support research" workshops for librarians and researchers; library management and use of

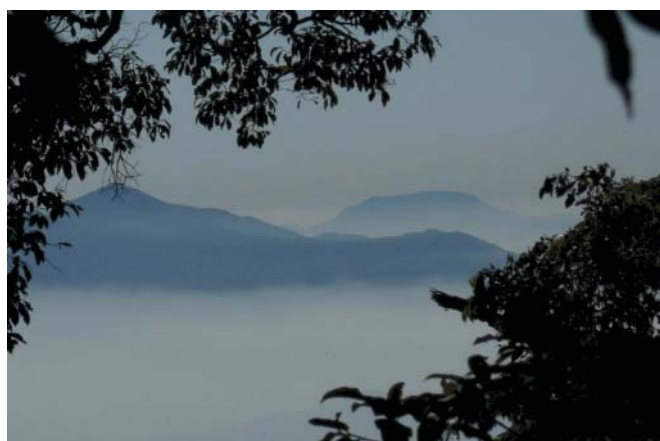
online journals and books; library consortium development and establishing institutional repositories.

This combination of activities in PERI, and the assistance of the publishers of research materials, contributes significant support to researchers in developing countries.

Anne Powell, Programme Officer, Information Delivery
International Network for the Availability of Scientific
Publications (INASP)
60 St Aldates, Oxford OX1 1ST

Forest Scenes

The 'lost' forest of Mt Mabu, Mozambique



View over Mabu forests – Photo: Jonathan Timberlake

As one of the most recent countries to join the Commonwealth, Mozambique is not that well known in the English-speaking world. However, since its long and damaging civil war the country has gained some prominence owing to its fast economic growth rate and the recent discoveries of large deposits of gas and coal, but less is known about its forests and woodland resources. Indeed, it is only recently that some of Mozambique's conservation significance has become more widely known, as the story of Mt Mabu's discovery illustrates.

We often assume all significant natural forest areas are already known and that they are documented somewhere. But this is not always the case as shown a few years ago in the discovery of almost 8000 hectares of indigenous moist forest on the massif of Mt Mabu in north-central Mozambique. This forest is now sometimes colloquially termed "the Google Forest" as it was first noted using Google Earth imagery, most recently when it featured on the BBC's Africa natural history series. Or, as David Attenborough also called it, the "Butterfly Forest", from the "hill-topping" butterfly mating behaviour the BBC filmed on its summit.



Mabu campsite – Photo: Julian Bayliss

The discovery of the forest and subsequent trips to it were made under a project implemented by the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the Instituto de Investigação Agrária de Moçambique (IIAM, the national institute that houses the Forestry Research Department as well as the National Herbarium) and the Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust in Malawi, and was funded through the UK Government's Darwin Initiative. This project began by looking at the biodiversity of a range of mountains or inselbergs in northern Mozambique (see <http://www.kew.org/science-research-data/directory/projects/DarwinMozambique.htm>), including Mts Namuli and Chipirone, and attempted to determine the conservation significance of these little-known areas. It is hoped that this would lead to the initiation of conservation programmes similar to those on nearby Mt Mulanje in Malawi.

Suitable mountains for the field expeditions were initially selected using Google Earth imagery with its ready ability to depict altitude, relative elevation and the presence of dense vegetation. Team members were surprised to notice a large expanse of such vegetation covering much of one little-known mountain, hardly even named on most maps and surrounded on two sides by overgrown tea estates abandoned during Mozambique's civil war. This was Mt Mabu. A reconnaissance of

the mountain in 2005 showed that forest was indeed present on the south-eastern slopes, but its extent and whether it was actually forest or just dense woodland was not certain. It was only during the main expedition in late 2008 that the extent of forest became clear, now estimated at 7880 ha with 5270 ha of this being at medium altitude (1000–1400 m), a type characterised by large trees up to 50 m high with mixed dominance. Such forests are not extensive elsewhere in southern Africa as most were cleared around 100 years ago for commercial agriculture and estates. It was a quite remarkable finding. Although people knew of the mountain, few apart from local hunters had traversed it, possibly as a result of the slopes of the mountain being very steep and not easily climbed.

Owing to a set of serendipitous circumstances, an article on the discovery of Mabu's forests and the associated finds of a range of new reptile, butterfly, bat and plant species was published in *The Observer*, a UK Sunday newspaper. The publication of this article created a mass of media interest worldwide, which helped put Mozambique's until then rather neglected biodiversity and conservation importance on the map. It also, of course, helped raise the profile of biodiversity other than large charismatic mammals within the country, and showed that even relatively small areas can be hugely significant, as well as eliciting public interest. A report outlining the biodiversity findings is available on Kew's website at http://www.kew.org/ucm/groups/public/documents/document/kppcont_067897.



Looking over Mabu forests – Photo: Tom Timberlake

pdf. At present an ecotourism-orientated conservation project is being developed with Fauna & Flora International (UK) and Justiça Ambiental (a Mozambican NGO) that will result in a management plan for the mountain with the involvement of a number of the communities living around it.

Jonathan Timberlake
Royal Botanic Gardens
Kew, UK

Helping restore forests

Concerned with the state of the world's forests, anthropogenically caused climate change, rural poverty, violence and other wicked environmental/social problems? All of these problems are connected to the



Students from The University of Toronto and Université Laval work with members from the Canadian Institute of Forestry to make 600 samosas for a new fundraising initiative by FwB.



state of natural environments where many people directly obtain their everyday needs. Canadian forest professionals decided that they can use their knowledge to combat these environmental and connected social ills; so in 2008 members of the Canadian Institute of Forestry formed a registered Canadian charity called Forests without Borders / Forêts sans Frontières (FwB).

The objectives of FwB are to help people restore forests and to raise awareness in sustainable forestry. All of FwB's work to raise funds, develop and manage projects, oversee the implementation of projects and evaluate results is solely accomplished by our extraordinary volunteers base. It currently has projects in Zambia, Haiti, Nepal and Cameroon and has held many fund-raising events in Canada to raise both funds and awareness. Events in Canada have helped Canadian forest professionals speak to their fellow citizens about forests and forestry and increase awareness of local forests and forestry practices.

FwB's first project established an orchard of *Moringa oleifera* in Zambia. The orchard has now been turned over to a local women's group to manage and train others to grow, harvest, process and market Moringa products. Other projects in Zambia and Nepal focus on working with schools to help raise awareness of forests, enable schools to obtain durable educational resources they would not otherwise acquire and restore trees in the surrounding area. By working with schools in developing



Garry Brooks, long time CIF member, and founder of the African Community Project, in front of a Moringa tree nursery in Zambia. With an incredibly high nutritional value, this species is particularly important for the health of humans and farm animals.

countries, FwB provides skills to all involved in the schools on the value of trees and how to manage human activity to ensure the restored trees are used sustainably. In Cameroon, FwB is

working with a community group to establish a community-based forest that contains threatened local tree species in addition to tree species that will supply products to be used by local people.

FwB is undergoing rapid growth both within Canada to help raise funds and demand overseas to help restore forests. The Canadian Institute of Forestry members have developed a couple of exciting social enterprises to help raise funds so as to not just depend on donations. Specially packaged tree seedlings in attractive containers are available in one region of Canada to help celebrate life events such as weddings. We are looking to expand this enterprise to other regions of Canada. For example, the Canadian Institute of Forestry members have come together to make food items that are presold; recently students from three Canadian forestry universities, after a day snow shoeing through the forests north of Algonquin Provincial Park, spent an evening making samosas (an Indian appetizer). The hope is that the students go back to their home cities and hold their own fund raising event, and have fun doing so.

You can find out more about Forests without Borders by visiting our website: <http://www.fwb-fsf.org/index.php/en/> and liking our Facebook site: https://www.facebook.com/#!/forests-withoutborders2?hc_location=stream

Fred Pinto, R.P.F. Chair, Board of Trustees
Forests without Borders / Forêts sans Frontières

Reflections on Organizing the Urban Forests & Political Ecologies Conference 2013



The Urban Forests & Political Ecologies (UFPE) Conference took place from April 18-20th, 2013, at the University of Toronto, 7 Hart House Circle, in the Great Hall. The overall vision for the UFPE Conference was to showcase the important work and creativity of groups and individuals working in urban forestry issues across disciplines. The main objective was to increase communication and research collaboration and to create a focal point that brought together the knowledge, creativity and intellect of local and international participants and speakers. The idea for the conference was inspired from a combination of my synergetic experiences in urban forestry and graduate work conducted at both the Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto, and more recently, at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University.

In November 2011, two of my colleagues, Sadia Butt, a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto, studying urban forestry, and Amalia Veneziano, Assistant to the Dean, also at the Faculty of Forestry, and I were sitting in a coffee shop discussing the lack of collaboration among various groups in integrating new content in urban forestry issues. From this came the first brainstorming and planning our conference: Urban Forests & Political Ecologies: Celebrating Transdisciplinarity.



Trees in and urban setting in Quebec City, Canada

The conference included speakers from the urban forest and political ecology fields that represented artists, academia, practitioners and students, all of which are at different stages of

their careers. The panel topics, in their design, directly addressed the current issues of urban forest culture, identities and material realities, social and environmental justice, politics, education and the risks and vulnerabilities in the framework of growth and change. The conference panels examined, embraced and celebrated transdisciplinary work in urban forestry. These included:

- Historical Narratives
- Urban Tree Cultures: Identities and Perspectives
- Social Inclusion in the Urban Forest: Scalar Injustices and Community Connections
- From Government to Governance: Redefining Politics
- Urban Ecology Education: Innovative Approaches
- Adaptation and Vulnerability in the Urban Forest
- Rouge Park: The Future of Canada's Premier Urban Wilderness

Opportunities for networking were integrated into each day of the conference, with poster sessions, an ice breaker, an art exhibit, an evening networking event and field tours to the Humber Arboretum & Centre for Urban Ecology and the Alternative Campus Tour at York University. These events allowed participants to engage in meaningful conversations and share diverse perspectives.

The inclusion of the art exhibit was inspired from when I had the opportunity to speak at the McMichael Art Gallery in March, 2012. The Art History Department of York University was having a student symposium entitled, 'New Growth: Dialogues on the Tree', in conjunction with the gallery's art exhibit. Mr Vincenzo Pietropaolo's work was being showcased and I was one of few speakers who addressed actual tree places such as arboreta, rather than historical and contemporary representations of the tree in art and architecture. I quickly discovered that these insights were very new and generated a lot of excitement, so I wanted to widen and strengthen this with my fellow urban forestry professionals. Overall, our hope was that the UFPE Conference would influence and result in beneficial returns over time in not only areas of policy for urban forestry, but also in cultural and social introspection.



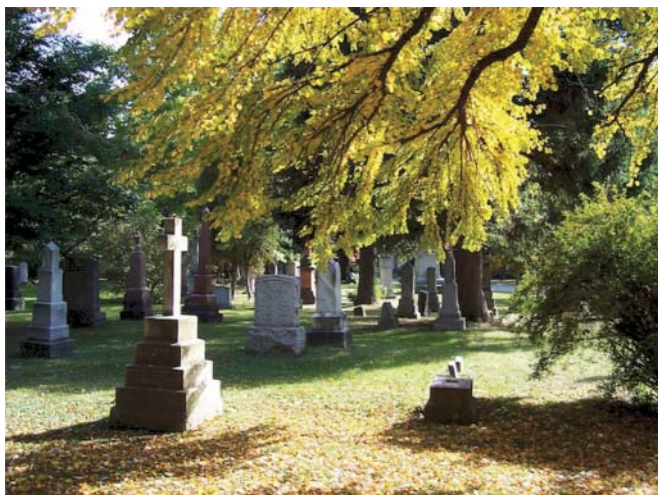
Trees on York University campus, Toronto, Canada

It became clear to me in August 2012, after engaging one of our keynotes for the UFPE Conference, and then having an extensive conversation with our organizing committee, that the nature of our conference was, in its own way, evolving into a wild thing. The conversations that we wanted to inspire with such a conference invoked a sense of anticipation; the kind that brings you to the edge of your seat or keeps you up at 2 a.m. debating whether to get out of bed and turn on your computer. And yet, it occurred to me through these exchanges that we might have to engage some of our own speakers in the language of urban forestry and others in the language of political ecology; some being familiar with both, but not inclusively. This was not to be a conference about terminology or definitions of urban forestry or even celebrating value; this conference was intended to problematize the very notion of language and constructs – that's what we had hoped for. We loved the conference we were designing. A conference that we, ourselves, would want to attend to learn new things, to inspire new ideas and wrestle with unfamiliar truths.

Organizing this event was a unique experience because we were trying to bridge not just the content but the 'feel' of an academic conference, a trade show and an art exhibit. Details, like the trees, donated by Trees Ontario for the centre pieces, mattered to us. Several months in and we were drawing up the panels, designing, organizing weekly meetings and strategic communications with speakers and potential sponsors. One of the most challenging aspects of this process was strategically managing activities at appropriate times. Timing communications and promotions and media probes was key in effectively marketing this event.

Since transdisciplinarity was the theme of the conference, it was paramount to engage various disciplines and explore their debates. Thus, it seemed intuitive that we integrate our professional networks and partners by strategically connecting forces. We were confident from the beginning that people would be interested. Our confidence was validated when each keynote speaker we approached shared our enthusiasm and agreed to participate. At one point some of our own committee members expressed surprise that all international speakers had confirmed their participation. As sponsors signed on, we felt a surge of optimism that this event would be a unique contribution to celebrate urban forestry. At the Canadian Urban Forest Conference in London (CUFC10, October 2012), Dr. Faisal Moola also confirmed his involvement and announced our event. We helped integrate the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Ontario Urban Forest Council by including their ceremonial tree planting. We asked the International Society of Arboriculture to offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for arborists to attend the conference.

One and half years later, after working tirelessly to realize this vision, we succeeded. Our goal was to bring together diverse interest groups to share insights about urban forestry through political ecology perspectives and celebrate existing and encourage future interdisciplinary work. The keynote speakers served to frame the talks theoretically and to contextualize the broader narratives of each panel. The panellists offered stories and cases, and threaded evocative personal narratives through their talks.



Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Toronto, Canada

I was pleased that the interdisciplinary structure of the panels was well received by all delegates. It was a proud moment to have many of our mentors whom we respect and admire, commend us on a job well done? and congratulate us on the visioning and execution of the conference. Years ago, a friend of mine said to me, “Things taste better shared.” I never forgot that. And so my response to those who approached us and said, “Well done”, was “Well inspired!” – because without those inspirations, this event would not have materialized.

The first time I heard the term ‘urban forestry’ was in 2003 from Dr. Andy Kenney, my MFC supervisor, and the first time I heard the term ‘political ecology’ was in 2008, from Dr. L. Anders Sandberg, my PhD supervisor. Being at FES taught me to think critically and more creatively about my field of urban forestry, and the opportunity to meet many of the people whose writings I have read over the past several years was invaluable.

And so, my personal journey through the process of organizing this event allowed me to explore my passions and revisit my motivations for getting into the urban forestry field. Helping to

design, strategize and operationalize this conference was an invaluable experience that also provided me with the opportunity to connect and collaborate with scholars, artists, practitioners and students from all over the world who care about urban forestry, effectively growing an international network of people to share knowledge. I am confident that many tendrils have grown from this event. Already some of us are speaking about crafting writers’ workshops and designing collaborative research projects.

But the work does not end here. In many ways, this is the beginning. As Dr. Roger Keil so eloquently put in his closing keynote address, we now need to digest the conference in our own disciplinary languages. Together, we all made the unlikely, likely. As organizers, Sadia and I were inspired by many of the participants in our work; and as a result we wanted to design a conference that we really wanted to attend, to stimulate dialogue between scholars, practitioners, students and artists. Our hope is that this becomes a model to empower our (inter)disciplines with opportunities to collaborate and celebrate; and so I hope we can have more of these gatherings in the future. If not, then I propose a new language for the interdisciplinarity that is currently growing.

On behalf of our Conference Organizing Committee, I want to thank all our participants for contributing to this exciting event. We received very positive feedback through the post-conference survey. I also want to thank our conference sponsors for making this event possible: I especially want to thank our main conference sponsor, TD Friends of the Environment for their generous support. Lastly, I want to thank our Conference Committee members, who spent many many hours organizing this event over the past year and a half as well as our volunteers and Hart House staff for their dedication to this unique event. For a list of our sponsors and conference photos, please visit: www.ufpe.ca

Adrina Bardekjian

PhD Candidate, Faculty of Environmental Studies
York University, Toronto

(All photo credits: A. Bardekjian)

‘Project South East Asia’ – Forestry to feature in a new initiative at The University of Oxford

The University of Oxford, in common with many other internationally reputed universities has established a number of specialized Centres which act as focal points for academic and research activity – examples include African and Latin American studies and tropical medicine as well as the Oxford Centre for Tropical Forests. Yet, although South-East Asia has been studied at Oxford since 1682, this increasingly important region (population over 600 million) has not yet been the subject of a specific centre at the University. At Oxford’s second Annual South East Asian Studies Symposium held from 9-10 March 2013 a new initiative – “Project South East Asia” was proposed and discussed. The Project’s ultimate aim is the creation of a Centre in Southeast Asian Studies at Oxford University – briefly described as “a home for Southeast Asia in the heart of one of the world’s premier universities.”

Two hundred delegates attended the Symposium which was opened by the organisers, Dr Xin Hui Chan and Dr Pingtjin Thum, who outlined its objectives and introduced the keynote speaker, Mr Mark Pritchard MP, chair of the All-Party Group for ASEAN in the UK parliament. Mr Pritchard outlined the international importance and political context of all 11 countries of Southeast Asia. This set the scene for individual Panel Discussion Groups to review the many different fields of expertise available in Oxford, notably natural resources, politics/international relations, history, anthropology and development studies which could benefit from shared resources and collaboration. Particular strengths of Oxford include the Bodleian, Departmental and faculty libraries and the Pitt Rivers and Ashmolean museums. In all 100 papers were presented, in 30 sessions comprising 22 panels.

The Panel on *Natural Resources and the Environment* was chaired by Dr Jeffery Burley, Emeritus Professor of Forestry at Green Templeton College, Oxford, Vice President of the CFA, and former Director of the Oxford Forestry Institute. Panel objectives were to highlight the great range of institutional and individual experience in and near Oxford, the amount of on-going interdisciplinary research, the range of academic and professional education and the extent of existing collaborations with institutions in the Southeast Asian region. The papers presented gave a taste of some of the existing forest and environmental research activity at Oxford which would fit well with the programme of any future Centre in Southeast Asian Studies at the University. Abstracts of all the papers (listed below) are posted on the Project's website: www.projectsoutheastasia.com.

"Deforestation, oil palm and environmental impacts in Southeast Asia" Yadvinder Mahli, Professor of Ecosystem Science, Oxford University and Founding Director of the Oxford Centre for Tropical Forests.

Plenary papers (forests only):

"REDD+ and the prospects for improved forest governance in Southeast Asia" Andrew Mitchell, founding Director of the Global Canopy Programme, Oxford.

"Sustaining Southeast Asia's Forests: Community, Institution and Forest Governance in Thailand" Satiyapria Rout, London School of Economics and University of Hyderabad, India.

"An investigation into the resilience and sustainable management of tropical peat swamp forests" Lydia Cole, Dept of Zoology, University of Oxford.

"Policy networks in the development of Indonesia's National Strategy for Reducing from Deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+)" Mari Mulyani, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford.

The meeting was completed by a round table discussion on "Natural Resource Governance in Southeast Asia: Prospects and Research Needs".

Certainly there is some way to go before a Southeast Asia Centre is fully funded and established at Oxford but it has made an impressive start. To those of us who have been concerned with forests for decades it is thrilling to see the subject embedded so effectively in the programmes of "Project Southeast Asia". We wish the initiative well.

Peter Wood

CFA Vice President

News from Guyana



A signboard erected in front of the Mabura field office of Demerara Timbers Limited in mid-2007, and announcing the takeover of DTL's concession licence by Bai Shan Lin.

Some semi-good news coming out of Guyana in this quarter. In mid-March 2013, HTSPE (the UK-based consultancy derived from Hunting Technical Services) delivered a draft national land use plan to the Ministry for Natural Resources and the Environment. This work was funded by the European Union. No copy of this draft is in the public domain, but a presentation by Jeffrey King of HTSPE can be accessed; see <http://www.nre.gov.gy/Guyana%20National%20Land%20Use%20Plan.pdf>. Integrated land use planning (ILUP) was demonstrated by a project funded by German GTZ (now GIZ) in 1995-7, including a pilot project in one of the administrative regions of Guyana. Although ILUP was prescribed in the National Development Strategy, inter-agency and intra-Party rivalries in 1997 closed all ILUP efforts in mid-1997 for the next

15 years, resulting in persistent conflicts over land use priorities between timber loggers, gold miners and indigenous Amerindians, and between the government agencies which have overlapping responsibilities. The HTSPE presentation is useful in showing small-scale whole-country resource maps which are otherwise difficult to access. However, as so often in reports by external consultants who lack understanding of the political context in which they are working, the maps fail to show the areas under traditional, ancestral, customary occupation and usage by Amerindians. This erasure reflects the Government preference for not acknowledging those rights, which were built into the Independence agreement of 1965. Only about one-third of the customary areas have since been put under *ex-gratia* communal land title. It is unclear what will happen next. The Minister said that 'the Plan was not final because there was need for further discussions ... consultations were held with [unnamed] stakeholders and they would be having further reviews and additional consultations if necessary to ensure national buy in' ('Framework for National Land Use Plan completed', Demerara Waves internet radio 15 March 2013; see <http://www.demerarawaves.com/index.php/201303155672/Latest/natl-land-use-plan-drafted.html>).

A few days later, on 19 March, the same Minister presided over the launch of a draft strategic framework for his Ministry for the period 2013-2018 ('Legislative framework for natural resources sector to be reviewed', Stabroek News, 30 March 2013; see <http://www.stabroeknews.com/2013/news/stories/03/30/legislative-framework-for-natural-resources-sector-to-be-reviewed/>). This document was open for review for a scant two week period before being removed from the Ministry's website, so hardly a model for open consultation. The draft of some 200 pages was

compiled by Strategic Environmental Advice (SEA), a consultancy without its own website. As with the HTSPE consultancy, it appears that SEA was provided with a less than complete set of information about the Government's administration of the natural resources of Guyana. Fortunately, SEA was able to access another consultancy report, the legislative review for the Development of Land Use Planning project; the HTSPE project mentioned above. Fortunately also, the legislative review was conducted in 2011 by the Trinidadian lawyer Christine Toppin-Allahar who had prepared a revision of the Forests Act 1953 in 1995/6, a revision which was widely consulted until 2004 but then dropped by the Government.

The SEA draft reports fairly if incompletely on the rise and fall of coordinating and advisory committees of the quasi-autonomous government agencies and the gatekeepers of access to the Cabinet and Central Committee of the ruling political Parties in the period since 1989. Weakness in the office of the Attorney-General and failures to harmonise laws have left different agencies claiming rights of precedence in land use decisions. Even with all Toppin-Allahar's local knowledge, she did not detect that the unconsulted and technically dreadful 2007 revision of the Forests Act 1953/1997, although enacted by the National Assembly (Parliament) in early 2009 and receiving Presidential assent an extraordinary 628 days later, is still not operational because a Ministerial commencement order has not been issued.

It is unclear if these consultancy reports will help Guyana to get out of the chaos in administration of natural resources. There

are many indications that the ruling political Party is quite happy for incoming investors to write their own arrangements for foreign direct investment, including extraordinary tax concessions and huge rates of financial returns, with only feeble attempts to capture revenue through resource access taxes for the Consolidated Fund in the Ministry of Finance; see for example the recent case of Bai Shan Lin, now a conglomerate owned partly by the Government of China and certainly not complying with guidelines issued by the State Forestry Administration and Ministry of Commerce in Beijing (see <http://www.cnwood.org/congress/pdf/cwz-en.pdf> and REDD-Monitor commentary at <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2013/04/23/above-the-law-how-chinese-logging-firm-bai-shan-lin-operates-in-guyana-with-the-support-of-bharrat-jagdeo/>). The Government of Guyana appears to lack the political will to enforce compliance with promises of inward investment by transnational loggers from China and India, so allowing continued export of hard, heavy, dark-coloured timbers for processing in Asia into high-value flooring and furniture, some of which is then exported to European and North America. There are few technical reasons why this processing could not be carried out in Guyana itself. Meanwhile Bai Shan Lin has declared that it is going to consume an additional 300,000 m³ of timber per year. This will massively exceed the threshold set for log production in the Norway-Guyana MoU of November 2009 and will test the seriousness of both Governments in implementing this MoU.

Janette Bulkan

CFA Governing Council

Forests of Hope: Conserving forests for birds and people



Sokoke Scops-Owl (Otus ireneae) one of five bird species inhabiting Arabuko-Sokoke forest listed as 'rare' in the Red Data Book (Photo: Krzysztof Blachowiak)

In 1983 the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) conducted a study at Arabuko-Sokoke, the largest remnant of the forests that once dominated Kenya's coastal fringe. Arabuko-Sokoke is surrounded by 53 villages and at least 110 000 people. An interim report by ICBP found that while the forest area had been only slightly reduced, continual removal of timber and charcoal burning by local communities had led to considerable degradation in forest quality. Although Arabuko-Sokoke was a national Forest Reserve, there were insufficient funds and staff to protect it.

Following the study, ICBP/BirdLife ranked Arabuko-Sokoke as the second most important forest for conservation of threatened birds on mainland Africa. Of more than 230 bird species recorded, nine are globally threatened.

It was clear to ICBP that the conservation problems could not be addressed without tackling the problems of the community, which primarily stemmed from extreme poverty. The unmanaged and illegal extraction of timber and firewood, and hunting of wildlife for bushmeat, continually undermined the very resources that local people depended on. Early proposals included a suggestion that local people should be excluded from part of the site, but neither ICBP nor Kenya's then-President favoured this approach, believing instead that the forests should be protected for the benefit of local people as well as birds and biodiversity.

The Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Management and Conservation Project, which ran from 1996 to 2002, was coordinated by the BirdLife Secretariat, and funded by the EU. BirdLife Partner nature Kenya became increasingly involved, and since April 2002 has played the leading role, with support from other partners.

A combination of community participation with strengthened law enforcement systems has been at the heart of the project, along with development of forest based income generating activities such as beekeeping, butterfly farming, ecotourism and education, backed by monitoring to assess the effectiveness of all these activities.

The 25-year Strategic Forest Management Plan for Arabuko-Sokoke was developed in a participatory way, with over 150 people representing every 'stakeholder' group. Arabuko-Sokoke was the first state owned forest in Kenya where community

involvement in forest management was allowed; equally, the highest levels of government have endorsed the plan. The continuing survival of the forest and its fauna during an era of forest loss in most of the country is the clearest sign of the project's success.

Beginning with the work of ICBP, the BirdLife Partnership has been involved in forest conservation work in 50 countries in Africa, Asia, South America and the Pacific. Since 2004, BirdLife's Forest of Hope programme has been bringing together and building on these many success. Its aim is the prevention of deforestation and the restoration of natural forest covering at least five million hectares of tropical forest worldwide by 2020.

Forest of Hope began with Harapan Forest in Sumatra, Indonesia, where many forest IBAs are in areas zoned by the government as commercial logging concessions. BirdLife Partner Burung Indonesia, with the support of the BirdLife Secretariat and several partners, worked with Indonesia's

Ministry of Forestry to enable logging concessions to be managed in the interest of nature conservation. This became law in 2007. By 2009 the Ministry was receiving as many applications for forest restoration licences as for logging concessions; by the end of 2011, there were 40 applications for forest restorations, totalling a further 3.9 million hectares.

Harapan Rainforest is the first restoration forest of its kind in Indonesia – and the world. This ambitious project provides a model for forest ecosystem restoration, carbon sequestration and sustainable management throughout Indonesia, with lessons that can be shared with other tropical countries.



Birdlife International
www.birdlife.org

Publications

Forest Grove

David Hodgson, Kindle edition

The laughing trees of Forest Grove have a surprise visitor tickling their roots. Can you guess who? Join Oak, Hazel and Silver Birch in a



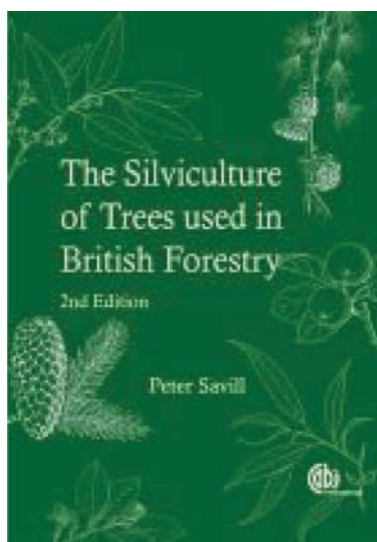
simple and timeless story that children will love to read again and again.

Forest Grove is beautifully illustrated story for children and adults to read aloud together. Designed from scratch as an ebook and optimised for Kindle Fire and Fire HD.

The Silviculture of Trees used in British Forestry (2nd Edition)

Peter Savill, CABI

Fully updated throughout, this new edition describes the silvicultural characteristics of trees commonly grown in the UK, including all important native species and a selection of some of the most significant exotics. With details of climatic zones, soils, productivity, pests and diseases, this book provides concise but detailed information regarding the establishment and management of forests. Detailed drawings of leaves and fruits are



also provided to aid with identification, making this a useful resource for students and forestry professionals.

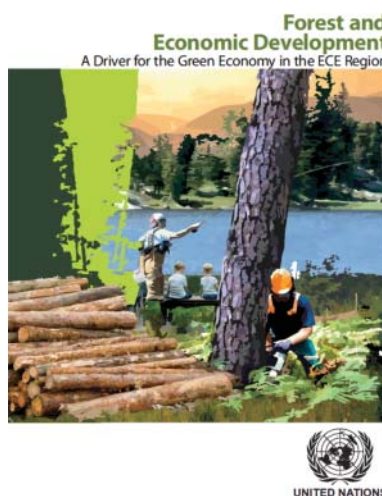
OFFER TO CFA MEMBERS – we have two free copies of *The Silviculture of Trees used in British Forestry* to give to two CFA members who send in the best photos depicting 'Trees in British Forestry'. Please send photos to cfa@cfa-international.org

Forests and Economic Development: A Driver for the Green Economy in the ECE Region

UNECE and FAO

The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) released a study, titled “Forests and Economic Development: A Driver for the Green Economy in the ECE Region,” which highlights the challenges to forestry in the region and outlines a way forward based on the integration of forestry and forest-related goods and services into the green economy.

The report highlights the contribution of forests to wealth and income generation, employment and livelihoods, and the provision of raw material and fuel. The publication also raises and addresses a number of



questions including the extent of the contribution of forests to renewable energy, the ability of forests in the ECE to provide a sustainable supply of timber, the creation of a sustainable workforce, a system for payments for ecosystem services, and innovative forest products and services.

Finally, the report relays an action plan for forests and the green economy in the region based on five pillars: sustainable production and consumption of forest products; a low carbon forest sector; decent green jobs in the forest sector; valuation of and payment for forest ecosystem services; and monitoring and governance of the forest sector in the green economy. Free download at www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/publications/SP-31WebSmall.pdf

Trees on-farm: removing the obstacles to enterprise – A review of current climate-smart tree-based experiences in Malawi

IIED

Malawi faces a precarious future. Challenges include: rapid growth among rural populations; entrenched rural poverty, lack of food security; biomass use – especially for energy – that now exceeds productive capacity in some areas; widespread resource degradation including deforestation at about 100,000 hectares per year; and an increasingly unpredictable climate. An urgent response is required to this situation in which restoration of tree cover is a central component. Trees are crucial for soil conservation and food security, local energy supply, construction materials and medicines. But

iiED **Trees on-farm: removing the obstacles to enterprise**
A review of current climate-smart tree-based experiences in Malawi
Bright Shaba
Robert Kulakumba
Abel Shaba
Duncan MacQueen



they are also critical or diversifying income generation. The Government of Malawi has laid out important policies that should help incentivise the use of tree products in local forest enterprises for income generation through agroforestry, on-farm tree planting and woodlot establishment. But so far these policies have failed to deliver entrepreneurial activity based on trees at any significant scale – either through lack of resources for implementation or through entrenched views that discourage such activities at field level. This report reviews some of the main enterprise developments around on-farm tree crops, assesses their operational challenges, and suggests ways to strengthen their future prospects. Free download at <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/13566IIED.pdf>

William Fiennes, Kindle edition

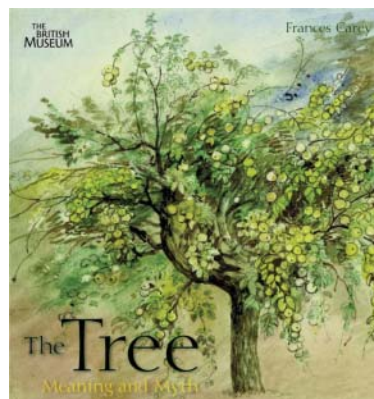
A beautiful short story that captures the magic of the ash tree, one of Britain's best-loved trees. It was originally published in *Why Willows Weep*, an anthology of short, contemporary tales on woods and trees edited by Tracey Chevalier and with contributions from Blake Morrison, Joanne Harris and more. It has been republished on Kindle to help raise funds for the Woodland Trust to combat diseases threatening the ash and other native trees.



Download from Amazon the Kindle version of the woodland fable *Why the Ash Tree Has Black Buds* by William Fiennes, originally published in *Why Willows Weep*. It costs £1.53 and is being sold in aid of the ash tree: £1 from every purchase will go towards helping fight tree diseases. For more information visit <http://www.regdesign.co.uk/why-the-ash-tree-has-black-buds>

Frances Carey, The British Museum

A beautifully illustrated book celebrating the significance of trees throughout history and across the globe, looking at their place in nature, fiction, belief and art. Trees – actual, mythical and metaphorical – are at the heart of mankind's relationship with the natural and supernatural world, a relationship that serves as a powerful index of both ecological and spiritual well-being. *The Tree: Meaning and Myth* is beautifully illustrated with an incredible range of art and artefacts offering a wide-ranging cross-cultural approach to the subject. We encounter the Egyptian tree goddess Hathor dispensing sustenance in the afterlife; the mighty oak sacred to Zeus; Adam



and Eve alongside the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the Buddha under the bodhi tree of enlightenment; Rembrandt's celebrated etching *The Three Trees*; and trees in modern art. Profiles of twenty-five trees arranged alphabetically are complemented by a wonderfully diverse selection of images. A sample of the trees featured include Baobab, Birch, Eucalyptus, Olive, Poplar, Oak, and Cocoa. 200 colour illustrations showcase an incredible range of art and artefacts, from Egyptian wall paintings, to ancient Greek vases and jewellery, Indian temple sculptures, Japanese woodcuts, Indonesian shadow puppets, British watercolours and a twenty-first-century tree of life from Mozambique.

Around the World

Japan: Thinning Japanese plantations to alleviate allergies

The Japanese cedar, or *Sugi* (*Cryptomeria japonica*) emits pollen that can cause sneezing, eye irritation and enormous medical bills from late February until May every year to those of the 20 million Japanese people susceptible to this allergy – or roughly one sixth of the whole population.

The species was widely planted after the Second World War to provide the raw material to rebuild devastated Japanese cities, but with the reduction of tariffs on imported wood the Japanese people preferred to export their deforestation and imported most of their timber requirements. Now the cedar plantations have grown to maturity and magnificent they are, towering and

straight, but, like the other 40% of Japan's forest cover completely abandoned. Now, the taller the *sugi* grow the more pollen they emit and the more people suffer, although it is believed that thinning the untended plantations could afford at least some relief.

Unfortunately the *sugi* is Japan's national tree, often grown near temples and shrines and there is thus strong cultural pressure not to interfere with it. Furthermore, in the absence of markets for the produce there is strong reluctance on the part of

(very conservative) forest owners to carry out thinning, and since much public money is presently devoted to reconstruction after the 2011 tsunami, there is little money or political will to pay for a government subsidy to support a forestry thinning programme. So it looks as if those allergic to *sugi* pollen will have to continue to suffer.

www.economist.com

Nigeria: Alliance to deliver 10 million clean cook stoves to Nigerians by 2020

The Nigerian Alliance for Clean CookStoves has promised to deliver 10 million stoves to Nigerian homes by 2020 as part of efforts to halt the rising mortality associated with the use of fire wood. Mr Ewah Eleri, Coordinator, Nigerian Alliance for Clean CookStoves said that the need for the clean stove had become urgent as Nigeria account for 100,000 deaths annually out of the 2million death recorded globally.

"In Nigeria, available statistics shows that over 20 million people use fire wood and this account for 11 per cent of families food expenditure and result in the loss of 3 per cent of the nation's forest reserve," he said at a stakeholders meeting on the validation of the clean stove project.

He said that the alliance had entered into strategic partnership with various institutions including the Standards Organisation of Nigeria and the Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic for the fabrication and standardisation of the stoves.

He said that it was unfortunate that Nigeria being one of the biggest exporter of cooking gas has no provision for domestic use as only 150 tonnes was utilised out of the 4 million tonnes

per annual. "Under the clean cookStoves programme we are expanding the programme to include access to cooking gas for more Nigerians," he added.

Speaking earlier, Dr. Bukola Saraki, Senate Committee Chairman on Environment and Ecology said that indoor air pollution, black carbon emission, tree felling were tradeoffs of traditional cooking methods. "In Nigeria, household air pollution is the third most significant risk factor in health, killing almost 70,000 people per year," he added.

He said that the development of the clean cookStove in the country has become a matter of urgency and not a subject of debate. He also attributed the use of traditional cook stove to deforestation in the country adding that, "as the country with the second most severe rate of deforestation globally and one of the highest rates of fuel wood use, the introduction of clean cook Stove at this point in time will have a multifaceted impacts on the standard of living of Nigerians."

allafrica.com

Global: ESA approves biomass satellite to monitor Earth's forests

A satellite that can "weigh" the Earth's forests has just been given the go ahead by the European Space Agency. Biomass, as it will be known, is expected to launch in 2020.

The spacecraft will carry a novel radar system that is able to sense the trunks and big branches of trees from orbit.

Scientists will use Biomass to calculate the amount of carbon stored in the world's forests, and to monitor for any changes over the course of the five-year mission.

The satellite's data should help researchers understand better the role trees play in the cycling of carbon on Earth and, by extension, the influence this has on the planet's climate.

"Biomass will give us unprecedented knowledge on the state of the world's forests and how they are changing," said Prof Shaun Quegan, who was one of the key proposers of the mission. "This will give us a firm basis for treaties that aim to help developing countries preserve their forests, such as the UN Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) initiative.

"In addition, Biomass will return information on national forestry resources, and that's important for things like energy and biodiversity," the Sheffield University researcher told BBC News.

The satellite will be the seventh of the agency's so-called Earth Explorers - a series of spacecraft that are designed to do innovative science in obtaining data on issues of pressing environmental concern.

Three missions have so far gone into orbit, returning remarkable new information on gravity, polar ice cover, soil moisture and ocean salinity. A fourth, to study the Earth's magnetic field, launches this year; with satellites to study the wind and fine particles in the atmosphere further back in the development schedule.

Biomass will be a 1.2-tonne satellite at launch, meaning it will probably go up on Esa's new Vega rocket, which successfully conducted only its second flight overnight.

Its sole instrument will send down a 70cm radar pulse that will penetrate the leafy canopies of forests but scatter back off

the large woody parts of trees. It will sense the volume of material at a resolution of about 200m. In essence, it will be able to weigh the amount of carbon tied up in the world's forests.

A 12m reflector antenna will be needed to capture the return signal from the radar pulse.

An antenna of this size has to be folded for launch to fit inside the Vega vehicle, and then unfurled once the satellite has reached its 650km-high orbit.

Currently, Biomass will not be permitted to operate over North America, Europe and the Arctic. The US Department of Defense (DoD) says the spacecraft's radar would interfere with its missile early-warning and space-tracking systems. Prof Quegan said a dialogue with the DoD to get some operational data over these regions would undoubtedly continue as the mission moved towards its launch date, but even if the Americans stood firm on the issue the loss of coverage would not severely impact the project's science.

"First of all, it hardly affects the tropics where the really big unknowns are," he explained.

"It doesn't affect the whole of Eurasia where the big boreal forests are found; and it doesn't affect the temperate forests of China where the biggest re-growth on the planet is occurring. And in terms of REDD countries, we lose just a handful."

The UK's Natural Environment Research Council (Nerc) has funded much of the basic science underpinning the Biomass concept. "We're delighted to see that Esa has selected the mission and regards it as scientifically important," said chief executive Prof Duncan Wingham.

"Nerc is really looking forward to the marvellous science that this mission will provide and in particular the greater understanding it will give us of the carbon cycle, which is its primary goal," he told BBC News. Britain is a senior partner in Esa's Earth observation programme and will be expecting a significant industrial role in the Biomass mission.

bbc.co.uk

Trees on the record

Artist, designer and inventor Bartholomäus Traubeck has created an innovative record player that can translate the data from a tree's year rings into music.

In his project, 'Years', slices of wood from different trees are spun on the customised turntable and a camera then reads the unique year rings for their strength, thickness and rate of growth. This information is then fed into a computer and mapped to a musical scale, which is in turn played back as piano sounds.

Traubeck has also released an accompanying limited edition series of 12 inch vinyl records with their corresponding source material, including woods such as pear, ash, beech and oak. As the soundtrack to the life of a tree, these compositions have literally taken years to write, each cross-section producing different music based on the wood's physical structure and appearance.

You can listen to the limited edition recordings online at the artist's website, www.traubeck.com/years

Tree News

Mozambique: Corruption in world's fourth poorest country aids illegal logging & timber smuggling to China

Weak forest governance and corruption in Mozambique are facilitating illegal logging and timber smuggling to supply China's voracious demand, costing the fourth least developed country in the world tens of millions in lost taxes annually.

The new report *First Class Connections: Log Smuggling, Illegal Logging and Corruption in Mozambique* by the London-based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) exposes massive discrepancies in import/export data between Mozambique and China, indicating that half the timber flowing into China is illegal.

Compiling evidence from research and undercover operations in both countries, the report features detailed investigative case studies into some of the biggest companies engineering these crimes in Mozambique today, exposing both the smuggling techniques used and the political patronage and corruption that facilitate them.

EIA forests campaigner Chris Moye said: "Despite recent commendable efforts by the Mozambican Government to control the illegal trade in timber to China, our investigation uncovers how high-level politicians, in league with unscrupulous

Chinese traders, continue to not only breach Mozambique's export and forest laws but are now putting pressure on the sustainable yield of Mozambique's forests".

Mozambique's timber trade reveals major trade data discrepancies revealing that in 2012 Chinese companies imported between 189,615 and 215,654 cubic metres of timber that had been illegally exported from Mozambique – comprising a staggering 48 per cent of China's imports from the country.

China's 2012 imports from Mozambique dwarf not only licensed exports, but also exceed the licensed harvest by 154,030 cubic metres, generating an alarming 48 per cent illegal logging rate. Furthermore, the United Nations ranks Mozambique as the fourth least developed country in the world. Against the background of Mozambique's poverty, EIA estimates that about US\$29,172,350 in avoided tax may have been lost to State revenues in 2012 from unlicensed exports to China worth US\$130,834,350.

In comparison, the estimated financing need for Mozambique's National Forest Program's law enforcement system for 2006-10 was US\$1,051,470, while total zoning and detailed inventory costs for the same period were estimated at

US\$10,716,911. These costs could be covered almost three times over by the lost revenues.

Among the report's recommendations, EIA urges the Government of Mozambique to:

- Institute an immediate log-export ban of all timber species;
- Initiate a joint investigation with China into the illegal timber trade;
- Institute a wide-ranging investigation into forest sector corruption, including the involvement of police, customs and forest officials;

- Investigate illegal exports of unprocessed timber by companies named in the report.

EIA further calls on the Government of China to:

- Prohibit the import of illegal timber into China;
- Liaise with Mozambique on its timber export laws, and coordinate with them on imports into China;
- Ensure State-owned companies are not exporting illegal timber from Mozambique, nor importing it into China.

eia-international.org

USA: USDA does about-face, won't jettison Forest Service's shield logo

A plan to drop a recognizable logo in this part of the country — the Forest Service's iconic shield — generated so much outrage among the agency's retirees that the idea has been dropped. In early January, the U.S. Department of Agriculture quietly introduced a policy to phase out all of its sub-agencies' logos, including the Forest Service's, and replace them with the USDA symbol. But that policy was kept so under wraps that not even Pacific Northwest forest supervisors were told. Some of them only heard about it in retrospect late last week — after the USDA had decided, in light of the virulent opposition from the Forest Service's "Old Smokies" retiree group, to keep the service's shield logo intact.

"We were all getting ready for a good fight," said Jim Golden of Sonora, Calif., chairman of the retiree group. "Of course the alarm went off with our group. The strength of an organization like ours is we can say things in a different way — we can say things the Forest Service (current employees) can't because of politics. "We went into it with the attitude that it would be no holds barred."

The retirees, though, didn't swing into action until barely two weeks ago because the new USDA policy — while ostensibly already in force for 31/2 months — wasn't known to the people in the field. Questions sent Monday morning by the Yakima Herald-Republic to the office of USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack prompted a short email reply with this statement, which was "to be attributed to 'a USDA spokesperson'": "The US Forest Service shield is exempted from the One USDA branding directive."

Also Monday morning, Forest Service headquarters around the country received the same message, with this terse directive, from Forest Service headquarters in Washington, D.C.: "Good morning, colleagues. Per USDA, we are cleared at all levels to provide only the following comment when queried about the (Forest Service) shield. If we get further guidance, we will let you know."

While current Forest Service employees could not comment on the record, many retirees were aghast at the idea of what they saw as the USDA's usurping the service's shield logo. "I just think that's horrible," said Doug Jenkins, who retired as a Naches Ranger District information specialist four months ago. "It doesn't surprise me, as if they didn't have better things to do than do away with the Forest Service shield so they can have their own little realm."

The Forest Service's logo has been around since the agency's inception in 1905 under then-chief forester Gifford Pinchot. It was a former Gifford Pinchot National Forest supervisor who was instrumental in marshaling the opposition to the shield logo's removal.

Ted Stubblefield, who retired in 1999, said he was told about the shield logo's impending demise two weeks ago "from an insider, a person at a fairly high level," who asked not to be identified. Stubblefield spent the next day and a half verifying it, and then began getting the word out to the "Old Smokies."

Almost immediately, the retiree group began receiving and forwarding letters from former employees from all levels of the service. One retired 34-year employee sent sarcastic congratulations through the USDA's online feedback forum, calling the new standards "egotistical bureaucratic tunnel vision" and "the best example of top-down, super-centralized, micro-managed piece of bureaucratic direction that it has been my disgust to read."

Stubblefield said he and the "Old Smokies" began hearing from retirees "that had never commented on any issue prior to this. It really got to them. It's pretty sad for politicians to not really look at the history of something before they decide to discard it."

Golden, chairman of the "Old Smokies," said the decision to merge the logos into one would also cost "millions of dollars" to replace the shield "on thousands of uniforms, thousands of vehicles and office buildings, every darn campground sign. And to do this in this day and age of budget issues?"

The Forest Service is probably the only USDA agency that would qualify as a household name, and many would argue its employees have risked more than those in most other USDA agencies. Since the Forest Service's inception 108 years ago, 329 of its employees have died on the job — most while fighting forest fires. Seventy-five of those firefighters died during the catastrophic 1910 "Blow-Up" fire in the Coeur d'Alene National Forest.

And only the Forest Service has a readily recognizable logo, something that means something to everyone who wears it. "One of the proudest moments of my professional life," said Stubblefield, the former Gifford Pinchot forest supervisor, "was when I was given a badge to wear for the Forest Service. "It was pretty emotional for all of us, I think, to think somebody would treat it with such disregard, like so much poster card. It wasn't going to go down without a helluva fight."

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Sweden: The Marcus Wallenberg Prize 2013

The 2013 Marcus Wallenberg Prize is being awarded to Professor Derek Gray of McGill University, Montreal, Canada, for his pioneering study of nanocrystalline cellulose (NCC).

Through his research, Professor Gray has shown that cellulose crystals in water suspensions align spontaneously in a specific pattern, in turn creating unique optical properties. Like the iridescent wing sheaths of a beetle, films of these aligned cellulose crystals can change colour depending on the angle from which they are viewed. This discovery has extended the boundaries of the uses of forest raw material and in so doing has created the potential for a series of new products in the forest industry. Gray's research has inspired researchers throughout the world to intensify their studies of nanocellulose and its possible applications. Research into NCC will pave the way for

brand new business opportunities for the forest-based industry, separately or in partnership with other sectors.

Professor Gray discovered that NCC can form stable crystalline phases in water when present in sufficiently high concentrations. By forming solid films of these crystalline cellulose suspensions, it is possible to produce films with unique optical properties in wavelengths representing visible light. These ordered structures can be modified and controlled to create fascinating and unique properties, including polarizing mirrors, lasers and optical security systems incorporating pigments or thin films that show different colours depending on the angle from which they are viewed. It is not entirely surprising that such properties are already found in nature, for example in the iridescent wing sheaths of many beetles.

mwp.org

Cameroon: Rougier obtains the FSC certification in Cameroon

Rougier, a major player in the business of certified African tropical timber, has obtained FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification for three forest concessions located in the Mbang forest area in South East Cameroon and managed by the Rougier subsidiary SFID (Société Forestière et Industrielle de la Doumé).

During the past years, SFID has been strongly involved in forest certification and the FSC certification of responsible forest management delivered by the Rainforest Alliance is a natural consequence of this commitment. The certification was obtained for an area representing a total of 285 667 hectares of forest.

The continuous commitment of Rougier Cameroon in matters of good forest management is demonstrated by this achievement. This certification opens up new prospects for Rougier, henceforth in a position to propose a full range of FSC certified products with a FSC 100% declaration:

- Logs and sawn timber from all of Cameroon's traditional tree species,
- But also a great variety of machined products (glued laminated finger-joints, decking, joists with CE marking, round sticks, finger-jointed solid blocks carrying KOMO certification) from various species, notably: ayous, sapele, tali, frake, okan, etc.

As a forerunner in matters of certification in the Congo Basin, Rougier is in a position to guarantee its customers that 100% of the forests managed by the group benefit from legality and traceability certified by third-party independent bodies.

Rougier.fr

