

derision, and even personal abuse. But despite indifferent health, she continues her work with determination.

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers lists nearly thirty small, independent conservation groups in the county of Surrey alone. Not all run a continuous programme in the manner of the McAlmont Trust but, taken together, they probably represent the best hope for the

English countryside in its continuous battle against official neglect and ill-planned development.

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The Social Origins and Impact of Deforestation in Central America

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) has recently released a Discussion Paper entitled *The Social Origins and Impact of Deforestation in Central America*, by Peter Utting. The paper, based on research conducted during the late 1980s, describes the principal processes underlying deforestation in the region, the ways in which deforestation has affected the livelihood systems of different social groups, and individual and collective responses to those changes. The Author highlights the role played by government policies and land-tenure systems in deforestation processes, and examines the ways in which contemporary phenomena such as militarization, agrarian reform, and economic stabilization and adjustment, have affected deforestation.

The experience of forest protection initiatives in the region is also discussed, along with a brief assessment of some of their strengths and weaknesses from the point of view of contributing to environmental rehabilitation and social development. The Author concludes by outlining the content of a second phase of research, consisting of case-studies in Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras, which will shed further light on aspects associated with the social impact of deforestation and the effectiveness of different types of forest protection initiatives in promoting sustainable development.

The Discussion paper is part of the UNRISD research programme on the Social Dynamics of Deforestation in Developing Countries. The programme is concerned with the national and regional implications of deforestation for the livelihood and living conditions of poverty groups in

rural and urban areas. Pertinent research is currently being carried out in Brazil, Central America, Nepal, and Tanzania, along with thematic studies on related issues.

The above research programme is being undertaken in coordination with UNRISD's ongoing work on Environment, Sustainable Development, and Social Change. Other programmes in this field include those of Sustainable Development through People's Participation in Resource Management; Women, Environment, and Social Change; Population Dynamics, Environmental Change, and Development; and the UNRISD Conference on Socio-economic Dimensions of the Environmental Debate.

UNRISD was established nearly thirty years ago to promote research on the most pressing social issues of development. Multidisciplinary studies are carried out in collaboration with the Institute's extensive network of scholars and research institutes. Conferences are held in conjunction with research programmes, and there is active publication of research reports, discussion papers, and books. Inquiries about UNRISD research programmes and/or available publications should be addressed to: Reference Centre, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

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Environment Protection Campaign in Southern India

Environmental problems in India arise particularly from the ever-growing human and domestic-animal populations which are making increasing demands on natural resources. The result is the over-exploitation of the environment and its consequent degradation.

Long-felt Need

In India over 80% of the people live in villages. These villagers contribute a great deal to the degradation of the environment — by cutting the trees for firewood, by polluting the atmosphere with wastes, and by living in unhygienic conditions. Consequently we thought of tackling this problem at the grassroots level, aspiring to turn these people into agents of environmental protection.

The present-day environmental awareness programmes — using books, films, newspapers, magazines, electronic media, television, etc. — throughout the world have chiefly reached the wealthier and better-educated segments of the urban population. The vast majority of rural masses have been untouched by these campaigns. With a view to educating and training the rural people — especially women, agricultural labourers, and coolie workers — the Development Wing of SHEPHERD (a social extension and people's development unit) has spread the message of

environmental protection and conservation from 1988 onwards.

Awareness and Training

As the village headman and the village development association are the most influential factors in any Indian village, we first gave a training programme on environmental protection to these people, and when once they had become convinced of our message, we were able to have wider influence and believe we have reached some 50,000 people in the last few years. We used a variety of teaching aids, including folk arts, puppetry, and street plays. The training is of three days' duration, and there is a follow-up every month to check that the trained people are following what they learnt during training sessions and to determine whether they take care to protect the trees and really do all they can to prevent pollution.

As a result of our training, villagers started forming Nature Clubs which act as the environment protecting and monitoring force in each village. The Nature Clubs raise seedlings in nurseries and distribute saplings to people. They also look after the cleanliness of the village. It is heartening to note that many of the villages which used to be barren when we began our work, can now boast of

beautiful trees which will become the living monuments of people's love for Nature.

Apart from this we also conduct regular training programmes on environmental conservation to college and school students. Through this we reckon to have trained another 50,000 students who, in turn, act as agents of environmental conservation in their own areas. Each student plants 10 saplings and follows their growth regularly, thus contributing to afforestation programmes in the areas where they live.

A Request

So far we have been able to contribute only a small

fraction to the stupendous task of protecting our environment. We believe that, by training and educating students and rural people, we will be able to build a better world for future generations.

We have been able to do all this with the meagre funds available to us and with the help of some donations. We would greatly appreciate contributions from Nature lovers to help us to carry on our work.

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Need of Universal Legislation to Protect Global Freshwater Supplies

We are appealing to you to invoke universal legislation to protect the world's fast-diminishing supplies of available fresh water. This, perhaps most valuable and utterly indispensable of all the Earth's natural resources, is fast being undermined by irresponsible governments allowing overexploitation, wastage, and pollution.

Here, on the Capricorn Coast of Central Queensland, we have a permanent and hitherto reliable freshwater supply, provided by a continuous flow from the high-dunes of Shoalwater and Byfield. But we are in an intolerable position where both State and Federal governments are intent on allowing two companies — one of them foreign-owned, the other foreign-funded — to sandmine this water catchment and dunal reservoir of fresh water.

Our governments do not appear to realize that a region cannot function without a reliable water-supply; nor will they admit and face up to the possible consequences of the loss or depletion of that water-supply.

The federal government has ignored all expert advice and scientific evidence, and has chosen to grant leases in the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area on the basis of only a single, biased environmental impact statement (EIS). Federal ministers ignored environmental legis-

lation and failed to comply with the terms of the pertinent Act. The State government is about to embark on the same farcical EIS process to achieve their ends in the Byfield National Park.

When global freshwater supplies are fast diminishing as a result of human impact and widespread abuse, not to mention the foreseeable effects of expected climate change, why would the world's driest continent deliberately destroy this most valuable of all its natural resources? We can only suspect some sinister motive of general or personal greed.

We call on your organization to protect the world's vital freshwater supplies and catchment areas, by pressing for universal legislation whereby governments are held accountable and responsible to international laws enacted for the general good.

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Nigeria's Forests Gain from New National Park*

Introduction

In an effort to preserve two of the country's remaining large tracts of rain-forest, the Nigerian Government has announced the creation of a major new national park. The Cross River National Park in southeastern Nigeria — established with the help of WWF-UK — will be situated alongside ecologically identical park areas in neighbouring Cameroon. Together they will include areas of rich biological diversity, with more species per square kilometre than almost any other moist equatorial forest in the world. The scheme represents a regional initiative to conserve valuable ecosystems and ecocomplexes, and the areas are also important for protecting the watershed in Cameroon and Nigeria.

The Oban Hills section of the new Park lies south of the Cross River, which 'snakes across the belly' of Cross River State. It merges with Korup National Park in Cameroon where a WWF programme is already under way. The Boshi–Okwangwo section to the north of the river lies next to Takamanda Forest Reserve, where protection measures are already being introduced. Together the areas formed part of a moist forest refuge during the

Pleistocene period, and have therefore experienced a prolonged period of uninterrupted evolutionary activity,' explains Peggy Allcott, WWF-UK's Conservation and Development Officer for Cameroon and Nigeria, continuing 'Oban (3,000 sq. km) and Korup (3,500 sq. km) will be one of the largest and most important conservation units in moist equatorial forests, and [together will] contain more kinds of plants and animals per square kilometre than almost any other in Africa or [indeed] the world.'

Implementation

Overall, the scheme is expected to cost between US \$55M and US \$60M over the next seven years. Funding for the development of the Park plan, and for the work so far, has been with support from the European Economic Community (EEC) and Overseas Development Administration (ODA). The EEC has also agreed to fund its implementation in the Oban Hills sector of the Park, but funding for the Boshi–Okwangwo sector has yet to be secured.

At the request of the Nigerian Federal and Cross River State authorities, a detailed plan for the Park was drawn up by WWF-UK with the help of a team of environmental consultants. The team conducted surveys in the field to identify current patterns, constraints, and potentiality, of

* Adapted, with appreciation, from *WWF Features*. — Ed.