

WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

Timber Plantations: Impacts, Future Visions and Global Trends

Date: November 13, 2003
Time: 10 am - 4.30 pm
Venue: MPB Auditorium, Nelspruit

Guest Speaker List:

Prof. Dr. Denis Goldberg
Special Advisor to Minister of Water Affairs
and Forestry
*Tree Growing as and element of Economic
Transformation, Reconstruction and
Development*

Prof. Braam van Wyk
University of Pretoria, Botany Dept.
The Value of Grasslands

Dr. Guy Preston
WWF
*Risks Associated with the Cultivation of
Invasive Species*

Wally Menne
TimberWatch S.A.
*Report back from GFC - Global Forest
Congress - Are Plantations and Forests
Compatible?*

Richard Spoor
*A Legal Framework which allows
Corporations to Externalize Costs*

Morne Lizamore
DWA
*Water Stress in South Africa and its Impact on
the Timber Industry*

Dirk Versfeld
Consultant
Forestry Alternative for Rural Development

David Lindley
Mondi Wetland Project
Wetland Trends in the Forestry Industry

Nhlanhla Mswili
Swaziland
*Timber Plantations and the Impacts on rural
people*

Bryan Ashe
Earthlife Africa: *Community Forestry*

George Dor
Jubilee 2000
*Ecological Debt - Reparations for Damage
by Industry, Mining, Dams and Monoculture*

Industry Representative
The Future of Forestry in South Africa

For more information contact:

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Best practices and innovative approaches to sustainable biodiversity conservation and management in the semi-arid western rangelands of the North West province:

Case studies from the Molopo district

The Desert Margins Program (DMP) has been developed in response to a recommendation made to the international research community at UNCED (United Nations Conference on the Environmental Development) to consider contributions for the implementation of the three International Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification. This program will address alternative land use activities, whilst simultaneously promoting parallel activities encouraging alternative

livelihoods. Not only does the focus of the DMP fall within the vision of The Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture, but it also falls within the scope of Agenda 21 and the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA-Act No. 107 of 1998) both of which the NW Province is a signatory.

Hence, the aim of this study and participation by the NW Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment will be to evaluate changes in biodiversity in different

land use strategies (evaluating current changes due to historical management practices) and management by using vegetation surveys and by using selected bio-indicators. Outputs expected by the NW DACE in this DMP/GEF multidisciplinary stakeholder participation project are:

1. Establish the processes/environmental parameters that maintain the biodiversity in the study area, as well as those that cause land degradation.
2. Determine the impact of various land use practices on the biodiversity of the study area.
3. Enhance effective exchange of information and collaboration between stakeholders.
4. Address best sustainable natural resource management practices, including alternative livelihood practices.

Three land-use types, within the Molopo area were identified:

- Molopo Nature Reserve
- Commercial areas-good farming practices ("conservation farmer")
- Communal areas (extreme opposite of good commercial areas)

The following has been achieved by the NW DACE:

Completion of experimental lay-out of study, approval of the project by management, NW DACE, approval of the project by the Western Region Forum, NW DACE Extension Services, approval of the experimental lay-out by PU for CHE (with special reference to ants as bio-indicators to complement vegetation surveys over a mini-veld potential gradient within three land-use types), co-operation with extension officers and specialist from NW DACE Field Services, Western Region. Communication and inputs from CSIRO, Australia, regarding experimental lay-out of project (using ants as bio-indicators to complement vegetation surveys), communication, co-operation and participation from farmers regarding surveys to be performed on their farms, as well as from the NW Parks Board regarding surveys to be performed in the Molopo Nature Reserve. A student is working on the project (using ants as bio-indicators). Furthermore,

base-line funding has been secured and made available from the NW DACE.

Fencing material for 12 benchmarks in the Molopo Nature Reserve and for three commercial farms, has been transported to remote sites in the Molopo area, NW Province. Six survey sites (three good veld condition and three poor veld condition) and 2 benchmark sites (one good and one poor veld condition) has been selected on three commercial farms (land use 1) and three communal villages (land use 2). Eighteen survey sites (nine good veld condition and nine poor veld condition) and six benchmark sites (three good and three poor veld condition) have been selected in the Molopo Nature Reserve (land use 3). Each benchmark site has already been erected. On the commercial farms, different cattle, goat and game management systems are represented.

The vegetation surveys that will be done are the following:

- Grass production and quality
- Species composition, veld condition and basal coverage
- Bush Counts
- Seedbed studies

Data analysis and interpretation will be performed by the following steps:

- Species information from the plots will be directly conveyed from the MONITOR to the personal micro-computer.
- The various data sets will be analysed, with the additional data, in CANOCO and ISPD.
- Ant data will be analysed with the PRIMER programme, and with CANOCO.
- The effect of management practices on the veld condition, herbaceous production, seedbed, bush density and ant biodiversity will be compared between sites within a land-use type at the poor and good veld condition extremes, as well as across land-use types. This will be brought in connection with the data of the

- benchmark plots. Tendencies within and between different land-use practices will be studied quantitatively.
- Possible tendencies and responses will be explained by incorporating the additional information and data in the analyses.

- Additional data will be evaluated on grounds of availability, significance and reliability.

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THREAT TO THE WILD COAST OF SOUTH AFRICA

from the Bishop of Umzimvubu

Sir, My diocese encompasses two areas of great natural beauty in South Africa, the Drakensberg mountains and the Pondoland Wild Coast.

The Wild Coast is exceptional, having remained "undeveloped" and therefore unspoilt. Of the half-dozen waterfalls in the world that cascade straight into the ocean, three are found along this coast. It has been recognised as one of 25 global botanical "hot spots", with more than 180 species found nowhere else. The relatively small Mkambati Nature Reserve on this coast contains 23 waterfalls and a colony of over 60 endangered Cape vultures in the Msikaba Gorge.

It should be proclaimed a World Heritage site. The South African Government recognises its value and intends declaring the Pondoland Wild Coast a national park. At the same time, it is agreeing to a bid by an engineering consortium to build a toll road of motorway standards through the area. It also appears that it will sanction sand-dune mining for titanium by an Australian company.

While sustainable development is welcome, this bid should be opposed on environmental, social and moral grounds. A road of this dimension (80m in width) will inevitably be environmentally destructive, with

subsequent deforestation and erosion. It will desecrate a quite unique part of the world. It will cause great disruption to the local communities who have requested the upgrading of existing roads, thereby providing access to hospitals and tourist centres. A motorway will benefit the engineering and trucking industries and not the local people.

The engineering consortium has now told the South African Government that it cannot run a toll road profitably unless the Government pays an anticipated R 1.5 billion (£ 120 million) for two bridges required to span the Msikaba and Mtentu gorges. One, over a mile long, will be the longest in Africa south of the Sahara.

If the South African taxpayer is to pay, the road should be built where the people want it and not where an engineering consortium can make money out of it.

A British engineering company has been commissioned to design the bridges. Its chief bridge consultant has been to South Africa at least twice, the route has been surveyed and is in advanced stages of preparation.

I still hope that the South African Government will turn down the proposal. If, as seems likely, it accepts it, I hope that no British capital, either from the private or public sector, is used in the building of this road.

Yours faithfully,
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